

Good News.

Worcester, Mass., August, 1902.

No. 142.

Published monthly by WM. A. BURCH, 14 Mason St.

The Christian Sabbath; or THE SEVENTH-DAY PEOPLE ANSWERED.

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ANY devout persons in our churches are being confused and led astray by the persistent efforts of the "seventh-day people" to make proselytes to their faith.

This tract is written to answer these advocates of the Jewish Sabbath, and to save men and women from being unsettled in their faith in observing the Christian Sabbath. These people would tell us that we are living in open violation of the law of God, and so are exposed to eternal condemnation for the same. Some who have never given this subject their attention, may be confused by hearing one side of the subject.

The first day of the week is recognized throughout Christendom as the Sabbath of rest and worship. This of itself ought to be sufficient to answer our opponents, for there is no power under heaven that could have changed the day without the sanction of the Lord Jesus Himself. I know our friends will hasten to tell us that Constantine changed the day, or that we are following the decree of some pope. This is not true. Constantine did not give us the Christian Sabbath, as we shall endeavor to show farther on. Yet this is the shibboleth of all their arguments. Their little book, termed "*The Mark of the Beast*," turns wholly on this assumption.

The Christian Sunday did not come from Rome, but came from Christ. The Sabbath instituted at the close of creation, and renewed at Sinai, in the decalogue, was a demand for a seventh of time as sacred to the Lord, rather

than that the whole world should observe the same time, for this is impossible. Every degree of longitude changes the time, so that the same time cannot be kept by all nations. God demands a tenth of our money, and a seventh of our time, as sacred to Himself. When God says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," we need not place all the emphasis on *day*, but upon the latter sentence, "keep it holy." We are to labor six days, but the seventh is sacred to the Lord. It must take a man of considerable termerity who will claim that we have the original creation day of rest. The Jews were commanded to begin to reckon time with their deliverance from Egypt. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you." Ex. 12:2. If this change of time should have required any change of the Sabbath, as it doubtless did,* the people would not have questioned at all, for it was directly from God.

It is evident that the change, from the seventh to the first day of the week, was from the Son of God, for the day began to be recognized as the day of rest and worship, *from the very day of His resurrection*, the disciples meeting that evening.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."—*John 20: 19, 20.*

The Holy Spirit has taken pains here to tell us that the disciples were assembled, and that it was *the first day of the week*. Then the Spirit takes pains to tell us, also, that eight days afterward, which would be the *next Lord's day*, they were assembled again, and Jesus met them.

"And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."—*John 20: 16.*

*There is no evidence that the Sabbath was "made known" (Neh. 9:14) to the Israelites before they reached the Wilderness of Sin. (Deut. 5:3; Ex. 34:28.) Saturday, the 22nd of Zif, is the first recorded Sabbath kept by man. The 15th they were on the march, and, reckoning back, on Saturday, the 16th of Abib, they selected the lambs, and on the 17th crossed the Red Sea.

Now, Jesus was with His disciples for five or six weeks after His resurrection, long enough to have corrected this error, if He had wanted to, and He certainly would have done so if He had wished them still to keep the Jewish Sabbath. He certainly sanctioned the first day of the week, or it could never have been recognized.

That we were to look for such a change of day, at the opening of the Christian dispensation, is clearly foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the closed bud, the New Testament is the opening flower from that bud. Every doctrine or truth of the New Testament has its shadow in the Old, and there are foregleams in the Old Testament which have no answers in the New, except in the resurrection day, the first day of the week. Why is the eighth day so often spoken of in the Jewish economy? The first-born of the cattle and the sheep were to be given to God on the eighth day.

"Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days shall it be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me."—*Ex. 22: 30.*

Why was not the gift to be made on the seventh day, or on the ninth day, instead of the eighth? It was a pointer to another eighth day, when His own first-born was to be given back to Him in resurrection life. The Christian dispensation was to be an advance on the Mosaic dispensation, so that we might expect a new memorial day in commemoration of the mightier work of grace.

God has given us a foregleam of this Christian Sabbath in requiring the act of circumcision on the eighth day. Jesus Himself was circumcised on the eighth day, fulfilling the Jewish law, but at the same time revealing that there was to be the cleansing of grace beyond the Jewish law. The triumphs of grace were to be manifested on the eighth day, after the cycle of Jewish law was complete.

Again, what is the significance of the great jubilee year, after seven times seven years have passed? Have we not in this jubilee the wonderful type of liberty in grace? This was to be on the fiftieth year, after the Jewish cycle was complete. The dispensation of grace was to be a move upward from the dispensation of law, and the jubilee year, which was to be the type

of it, was on the eighth or fiftieth year. This, it seems to me, is significant, as pointing to a new memorial day for rest and worship, for the Christian dispensation.

The numbers of the Bible are significant: 3 stands for divinity, 4 for the earth, 12 for government, 40 for probation, 7 for completeness, 8 for resurrection. This is the foreshadowing of this last number in the Old Testament, as in the rite of circumcision, and the wonderful year of jubilee.

Let us repeat again, that the Christian Sabbath began to be recognized on the day of Christ's resurrection. The disciples met on that evening, with Jesus in the midst.

"And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."—*John 20: 26.*

Here is just a week between, for Jewish reckoning always counts the day mentioned. They might have had other meetings during the week, and probably did, but special pains is taken to show us that the disciples were assembled the *next Lord's day*. So we see that the first day of the week, thus early, began to be *recognized as the Christian Sabbath*.

Now, if the disciples were wrong in this, Jesus certainly would have corrected them, for He was with them five or six weeks, time enough to have corrected such an innovation, if He had wanted to, but instead, He must have sanctioned it, for the first day of the week has been observed by the followers of Christ from that day to this. This is proven beyond dispute by the Fathers, who followed immediately after the apostles. Before taking their testimony, however, let us hear what John and Paul have to say on the subject. John, who wrote the book of Revelation, had the vision given him, on "the Lord's day," the first day of the week. He says:

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book."—*Rev. 1: 10, 11.*

It seems very fitting that this vision, unveiling heaven, should have been upon the day our Saviour rose from the dead, for we hear Him saying to the Seer of Patmos, "I am He that liveth,

and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever more." It was not on the Jewish Sabbath, but on the Christian Sabbath, that this most wonderful revelation was given.

Paul shows us that he observed the first day of the week, preaching to the gathered assembly at Troas and breaking bread.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."—*Acts 20: 7.*

We are informed that he tarried seven days, so they were not preaching or breaking bread every day. It was a Sabbath service.

Our opponents will tell us that Paul often preached in the synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath. Very true; but never to the disciples. He spake to the Jews whenever and wherever he found them congregated, just as our missionaries do to-day. They take advantage of every sacred day when the people come together; so did Paul. But whenever he would meet and minister to the disciples, he found them congregated on the first day of the week, in memory of that mightiest event of all in human history, the resurrection of Jesus.

Another utterance of Paul is much in evidence just at this point: his charge to the brethren at Corinth concerning the collection.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."—*1 Cor. 16: 2.*

This reference shows conclusively that the first day of the week was recognized by Christians everywhere, for he says, "As I have given order to the churches of Galatia." You will notice the order was given to the churches, making it certain that this was their worship day. It was a general order to all the churches.

Jesus met His disciples congregated for worship on the first day of the week. Paul preached and brake bread to the assembled disciples on the first day of the week. Now, if we find the early Fathers, who immediately succeeded the apostles, observing this day, then it is clear that the Christian Sabbath was given by Christ, and not by Constantine.

Let us give enough of this evidence to show beyond question that Sunday was the Christians' worship day. Our "seventh-day people" depend largely on the claim that Constantine changed the day from the seventh to the first day, which they assert is "the mark of the beast," as mentioned in Revelation.

Now, if we can show that the first day of the week was observed as the Sabbath by Christian people for three hundred years before Constantine was born, then it seems to us that their argument breaks utterly at just this point. The two days were recognized side by side, for the Jews, of course, continued to observe the creation Sabbath, or what they believed to be such, for they had no Christ and no resurrection. The disciples only would keep the first day. Let us hear what the Fathers say on this question, the men who immediately followed the apostles. In a recently discovered document, called "*The Teaching of the Apostles*," we find this sentence: "On the Lord's day of the Lord, come together and break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure." "The Lord's day," is the term generally used by the Fathers in speaking of the Christian Sabbath. Ignatius speaks of those whom he addresses as "no longer Sabbatizing, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life sprung up again." Eusebius has preserved a letter of Dionysius of Corinth, A. D. 175, written to Sotus, Bishop of Rome, in which he says: "To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle." The same historian mentions "that Melito of Sardis, A. D. 170, had written a treatise on the Lord's day." So we have at this early date a written defense of the Christian Sabbath, a century and a half before the days of Constantine.

Justin Martyr describes how, "on the day called Sunday, the town and country Christians alike gathered together in one place for instruction and prayer, and Christian offerings, and for the distribution of bread and wine." He says, "They met together because it is the first day, in which God made the world, and because that *Jesus Christ on the same day rose from the dead.*"

We are left in no doubt, then, about the day on which Justin Martyr worshiped, one of the great characters who rose up after the apostles.

As long as the Jewish Christian element continued with any prominence there would be a tendency to observe the Sabbath as well as Sunday. Eusebius mentions "that the Ebionites continued to keep both days," and there is abundant evidence from Tertullian onward, that, so far as worship and fasting were concerned, the practice of observing both days was widespread among the Gentile churches. Other evidence might be given, but we think this sufficient to show that the first day of the week was observed as a worship day by the Fathers long before Constantine was born.*

After Constantine came to the throne he was converted to the Christian faith, and sought at once to marry Church and State, and to give new authority, by the edicts of the State, to the Christian faith and the Christian Sabbath. He did not give a new Sabbath, but he did make legal enactments for the keeping of the Christian Sabbath, and so sought to crush out the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and to secure unity of Sabbath worship throughout his kingdom. The first edict was given in 321 A. D., and there has been more or less legislation concerning this day ever since, or until the temporal power of the Papacy was overthrown, in 1870.

We have seen, then, that the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath, was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, was observed by Christ and his disciples in the New, and by the early Church for three hundred years before Constantine. (Psa. 118:24.)

A new day of rest and worship was the natural thing to expect, when we come to the new dispensation. The redemption of man was a higher work than creation, and it seems the most fitting thing in the world that the memorial day should move on, to stand for the work of redemption, which is epitomized in the resurrection. The law of Moses was now to give place to the higher law of grace. Old things passed

*Any who wish to trace these references further can find help in the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*," Vol. 22, page 653.

away, behold all things became new. The law of circumcision passed away, giving place to the higher law of cleansing through the Spirit. The Passover feast gave place to the Lord's Supper; and the Sabbath of the legal dispensation gave place to the Sabbath of grace. This is just what we should have looked for, and what we should have looked for is just what transpired.

One of the most unanswerable arguments, to us, for the first day, is that the Holy Spirit was poured out on that day, at Pentecost, not on the Jewish Sabbath.* Pentecost was just fifty days after the resurrection, making it on the same day of the week as the resurrection.

Why should God have chosen the first day of the week, rather than the seventh, for this glorious revelation of Himself, the mightiest thing that ever transpired on earth, except the resurrection of our Lord? Is it not clear that God intended to impress the infant Church that this was their sacred day of worship? The last Jewish Sabbath before the resurrection was one of the darkest in human history. He who had come as the hope of the world *was lying in the grave!* A pall of gloom covered the earth. Surely God never intended this day to be kept as the memorial of redemption, but rather that day when the bars of the tomb were sundered, and death and hell were conquered by the risen Lord. This is the day toward which circumcision and the jubilee year of the Old Testament pointed; this is the day sealed to the apostles by Jesus Himself; this is the day which the apostle Paul observed, and which he charged the Church to observe; this is the day which the new-born Church has recognized through all the centuries, and which will be recognized until the Sabbath of time shall be merged in the never ending Sabbath of eternity.

*It is fatal to the 7th day theory, that the Holy Ghost, in the Council at Jerusalem, gave no command for its observance (nor elsewhere in the N. T., Acts 15: 28); that, "written and engraven in stones," it is "a shadow" "done away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3: 7, 14; Col. 2: 16; Hos. 2: 11); and that all the arguments in *Galatians* are opposed to it. (Send 2cts. for "Sunday Observance not the Mark of the Beast," or 10 cents for samples of other leaflets.)