

Monuments of the Christian Faith

*A Thesis on the Sabbath Day Versus the First
Day of the Week and Other Memorials, Sacred
to the Heart of Blood-bought Believers.*

By

O. E. PHILLIPS

Philadelphia, Pa.

PRICE 20 CENTS

Published by

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH PUBLISHERS

FINDLAY, OHIO

Printed in the U. S. A.

MONUMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

When I was in Akron, Ohio, in a Bible Conference there appeared in the daily newspaper an advertisement challenging all Christians, especially the ministers, to show any Scriptural authority for observing Sunday as a day of worship. This message is not only an answer to that challenge, but also a statement of the reasons why we observe other ordinances of the New Testament. I believe that our reasons for observing Sunday as the Lord's day, as well as other closely connected ordinances, should be clearly stated and taught to all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A good understanding of the grounds upon which we stand makes it almost impossible to be led away by false cults; whereas, if we lack this understanding we become the prey of every "false wind that blows." I am indebted to numerous teachers in the past for what I know about these things. May the God of all grace richly reward them for the part they have had in presenting the truths which shall be given.

There are certain facts connected with all monuments which must be recognized if we are to obtain a clear knowledge of the doctrines which they teach. Monuments are as old as time, erected at various places during the ages, for divers purposes, and made of numerous materials and actions. The shaft at Bunker Hill is marble; the ringing of the Liberty Bell is an action; July the Fourth is an anniversary; the Louisiana Purchase is an exposition; the Alamo is a building; Washington's Monu-

ment in the nation's capital is a tower. All of these are monuments, erected at different periods in the history of our country for the purpose of keeping in the memory of our children outstanding events which are sacred to the hearts of our people. One is marble, another is an action; one is an anniversary, another is a tower, yet all of them are monuments.

There are five things which are common to monuments of the Christian Faith. They are also applicable to all other monuments. They are as follows:

1. They are commemorative.
2. They refer to events which are considered important.
3. They depend upon events back of them for their meaning.
4. They are convincing evidence that the things which they commemorate transpired, else they would not have been erected or observed.
5. They are as sacred to those who observe and preserve them, as they were to those who erected them.

Unless we understand the background of the monuments in the Old Testament, we cannot get the full meaning of the monuments of the New Testament. I shall, therefore, give a brief review of the outstanding ones of the Old Testament, before noticing those of the Christian Faith, in the New Testament.

1. THE RAINBOW is a monument which takes the mind of every believer back to the flood. This monument has all the five elements common to all monuments. It is not only a memorial to man but is a constant re-

minder to God of the covenant that He will never again destroy the world by water. (Gen. 9:13-17.)

2. JACOB'S LADDER. Jacob erected the stone which he used for a pillow at Luz. This was a memorial of God's appearance to him in a dream, renewing the covenant which He made with Abraham and his seed. The stone was also a memorial of Jacob's vow to return one-tenth of all his earning to God from that day forth (Gen. 28:22). Years later God brought him by this place again as he journeyed homeward. Jacob did not forget his vow when he looked upon the stone. He and his family built an altar there and worshiped God (Gen. 35:6-7).

3. THE PASSOVER. This was an outstanding memorial of the passing over of the death angel on the night of Israel's delivery from Egyptian bondage. "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever (Exodus 12:14). The reader will be helped by applying all five common points to this memorial.

4. LAYING UP OF THE MANNA. "This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations" (Exodus 16:32-33). This memorial was very significant to every Hebrew. The Scripture reference speaks for itself.

Space will not be taken to discuss the stones upon the priest's garment (Exodus 28:15-29), or the twelve stones at the Jordan River (Joshua 4:7); but they are

memorials to the house of Israel, worthy of the reader's investigation.

THE SABBATH

The Sabbath was given to Israel on the thirty-second day after their departure from Egyptian bondage, for proof of which we call attention to a number of facts. In Exodus, the twelfth chapter, is the record of the slaying of the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month in Israel's new year. The death angel passed over at midnight slaying the first born in every Egyptian home; before the break of day the Egyptians expelled Israel from their borders, which necessarily made their departure come on the fifteenth day of the first month. Now, if the reader will notice the sixteenth chapter and the first verse, he will see that Israel camped in the wilderness of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month, just thirty days after leaving Egypt. On that very day God brought the quails for meat in the evening, and the following morning He gave them manna for bread. On the day the manna was given, Moses announced that the next day would be the rest of the holy Sabbath (vs. 23-24). On that day they were to do no work, prepare no food, make no journeys.

Up to that time, the keeping of the Sabbath had never been revealed to a single soul on earth. If God had revealed it, there would have been something in the records of Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or one of the twelve patriarchs regarding it. During Israel's long stay in Egypt they knew nothing of it. Four hundred and thirty years had passed since God called Abraham, and this is the first mention ever made of the Sabbath. Why had God waited so long to reveal it to them? The answer is significant.

The book of Deuteronomy is the record of Moses' last talk with Israel before his death. In the fifth chapter and the fifteenth verse he reminds Israel of a very important truth regarding our subject: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: *therefore* the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the sabbath day." We conclude from this revelation that the Sabbath day was a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Never were they, nor any other people, commanded to keep it until Israel had crossed the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his army were drowned. From that day, the Sabbath became their national memorial, which God subsequently commanded to be observed every seven days. Israel certainly understood the significance of it, but Moses waited until his last address before a record was made concerning its meaning.

It is my belief that Israel was delivered from the Egyptians on the Sabbath day. The following reasons are given: Moses said to Pharaoh, "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us" (Exodus 8:27). When they left Rameses they journeyed to Succoth for their first stop (Exodus 12:37). The second day of their march they camped at Etham in the edge of the wilderness (Exodus 13:20). The third day of their departure from Egypt God turned them farther toward the wilderness along the shores of the Red Sea, in order that Pharaoh and his host might be enticed to try to recapture them. The end of the third day found all Israel camped at Pi-hahiroth (Exodus 14:2).

Pharaoh's army overtook the Hebrews in Pi-hahiroth where they expected to find them an easy prey, but the

Angel of God placed His cloud between Israel and the Egyptians. All night long it was darkness to Pharaoh and his army while it was as light as day for Israel. During the night God divided the waters of the Red Sea by a strong east wind. When morning came, *which was Israel's fourth day out of Egypt*, Moses gave a command to march. Soon all Israel, with their possessions, were on the opposite side of the Red Sea. Immediately the Angel of the Lord lifted the darkness from the Egyptians, whereupon they saw Israel through the lane in the sea. Without hesitation they followed in pursuit. When they were all in the midst of the sea, God told Moses to lift his rod over the waters, which was the signal for the destruction of the Egyptians. The waters returned to their strength, drowning the entire army. This was a great day for Israel, a day never to be forgotten. The remainder of the day was spent in singing praises to God for His mighty deliverance. No other people had ever experienced such love and devotion from the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

Now, if we will take the fourth day, the day of deliverance, the day of singing and shouting, the first day of Israel's rest from her enemies, and add to it twenty-eight more days we will arrive at the first Sabbath. In proof of this, note that Exodus 16:1 tells us that Israel had been out of Egypt thirty days. The next day was the day manna was given, and the following day was the Sabbath (Exodus 16:13-25). It is therefore evident that Israel's deliverance was on the Sabbath day, and three more weeks intervened before Moses gave the command to keep it every seven days.

Though the children of Israel spent their first Sabbath in rejoicing because of their deliverance, and praising God for His mighty power and His regard for them,

they did not know that God was going to make the Sabbath a law for them to observe, until four weeks later. Why did God wait those four weeks? We shall not be dogmatic, but there are certain facts which bring us to a conclusion. Israel had come to the end of all her resources. All her supplies were exhausted. God had to feed them, or they would have perished. God gave them quails in the evening for meat and manna in the morning for bread. The manna could not be preserved over night; yet on Friday they could gather enough for two days and God would preserve it for them. After their first full meal of heavenly food, quails in the evening and manna in the morning, God revealed that the next day would be the Sabbath day. They would be required to keep it every week from that time forever. It was a national day of rest during which no work was to be done (Exodus 16:23-25; 35:2. See also Numbers 15:32-33).

Israel's deliverance took place on the same day in which God finished His creative work and rested. Without question God planned it that way, but He had never commanded anyone to keep it until He gave it as a law to Israel. Neither has He ever ordered any other people to keep it, unless it be to Jewish Proselytes who lived before Christ died on the cross. We recognize and respect the truth with respect to the Sabbath and God's care for Israel in the mighty rescue. We know that He finished His creative work on that day and rested. We also know that He has given a day for a memorial that has as much, yea, even more meaning for us than the fourth day out of Egypt had for Israel.

In the book of Acts of the Apostles, which is the historical book of the New Testament Church, the Sabbath is mentioned in connection with the Jews, but never in connection with Christian service, worship or ordi-

nances. The Apostles often took advantage of the meeting of the Jews on the Sabbath day to bring them the Gospel. They met with them for the purpose of telling them of a greater day than the Sabbath day, and a greater deliverance than a release from slavery in Egypt.

The remainder of the New Testament makes only two references to the Sabbath (Col. 2:16; Heb. 4:4). In both passages the Apostle is careful to explain that the day is not one to be observed by Christians as a commandment from God. He explains that he is using it as a type of the rest which every individual should enter when he is born again and accepted of God. As God rested from His labour when He finished His creative work, just so the Christian enters into a present rest and peace of mind when he trusts Christ for salvation, instead of trusting in his own good works, obedience to commandments, or observance or ordinances. Such a person will do good works, obey every command, and observe every ordinance, not through fear or in the hope of meriting salvation, but in gratitude for the salvation which he knows he possesses. He is no longer under law, but under grace.

If one keeps the Sabbath *day*, then he is under obligation to observe the Sabbath *year*. In Leviticus 25:1-7 Moses gave the commandment, upon God's order, that the land should be tilled for six years. The seventh year, he said, the land must not be tilled. That would be the Sabbath *year*. From the eighth verse through the twenty-fourth, God instructs the children of Israel, through Moses, that they should number seven times seven Sabbath *years*, which would make forty-nine years. The following year (the fiftieth) would be the jubilee year. The year was to be observed by not sowing or reaping. If they possessed any slaves they were to be released. If they had purchased any land, it must be returned to its

original owners. Debts would be forgiven, and there was to be a general time of rejoicing throughout the land. Let those who try to bind the Sabbath *day* upon Christians set us an example by observing the Sabbath *year* and the jubilee *year*.

In the millennial day when the Israelites will have been restored to their land and will have become a holy nation of born-again worshippers of God, the Sabbath will be restored and kept by them forever (Isa. 66:23). The command to observe the Sabbath is for Jews. It is their memorial. It is not for Christians.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

The First day of the week is not the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, not the first day. In the very nature of the case, one cannot change the seventh day into the first day. It is wholly unscriptural to call the First day of the week the Sabbath day, or to refer to the Bible school as the Sabbath school. Let us talk Scripturally. Saturday is the seventh day of the week, while Sunday is the first. But do Christians have any Scriptural ground to worship on Sunday, the *First Day of the Week*? We answer "Yes" and "Amen!" The Scriptural reasons are abundant. The First Day of the Week is the most momentous day in the history of the world. It is a day to be remembered throughout all eternity by all the nations of saved people. The angels in glory can never forget it. The Devil and all fallen angels will recall the day throughout the ceaseless ages. The day means nothing to the unsaved, as is evident on every hand, but to those who have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, it means much.

When Christ was crucified, hope died in the hearts of His disciples as completely as the body of our Lord died. They had lived in the highest hope that He could raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, control the winds, walk upon the waters and cure the withered hand, could, and would be their king. They, no doubt, thought He would crush those who opposed Him and would redeem the nation. This sentiment is expressed by two of His disciples as He walked along the highway with them to Emmaus. "But we trusted that it

had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:21).

The disciples still loved Him and believed Him to have been a great prophet, but thought they were mistaken about His being their Messiah. The risen, but unrecognized Lord accepted the invitation of the two disciples to lodge with them that evening. As they sat at meat with Him He took bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave to them. He was recognized at once and then vanished from their presence. The disciples arose immediately and retraced their steps to Jerusalem. Upon their arrival they found the eleven apostles gathered together, others being with them, doubtless discussing the reported resurrection of the Lord. When these two disciples entered the room they announced that the Lord had risen from the dead and had appeared to Simon. While all of them continued discussing these momentous things, the Lord of glory appeared in their midst and identified Himself by showing His wounds. There can be no doubt that this was the greatest day they had ever experienced. *This was the resurrection day, the day when hope was born anew, never to die again.*

The resurrection of our Saviour was recorded in detail by each of the four Gospel writers. See Matthew, twenty-eighth chapter, Mark, sixteenth chapter, Luke, twenty-fourth chapter, and John, twentieth chapter. Let special emphasis be laid upon the fact that these things occurred upon the *First Day of the Week*. On that same day He gave them the great commission to carry the Gospel to the ends of the world. On that day He breathed upon them and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (Jno. 20:22). One week later Christ met with them again when Thomas, who was absent the Sunday

previous, was with them. After convincing Thomas He was really alive, He pronounced a blessing upon all who believe, though they have not seen Him, nor handled Him with their hands.

On the *First Day of the Week*, the resurrection day of our Lord, "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after His resurrection, and went into the city, and appeared to many" (Matt. 27:52-53). *Could a day like this ever be forgotten? Has there ever been a day in the history of man that brought more hope?* If there had not been a resurrection we would be without hope of a like resurrection and His shed blood would not be available for our sins. Surely, those who belittle this day, and at the same time claim to believe on Him, have not given the matter due consideration.

Christians are without Scriptural authority for observing this day?

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord the day of Pentecost came. Counting the resurrection to be upon the *First Day of the Week*, Pentecost also came upon the First Day of the Week. It was upon this day that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles in mighty power (Acts 2). Upon that day the Apostles were heard in the seventeen languages which were spoken by the Jews who had assembled from all the world. Upon that day Peter preached Jesus Christ, crucified, dead, buried, resurrected. Peter declared that at that moment Christ was seated at the right hand of God. Upon that day salvation was preached in power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

Upon the day of Pentecost believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were commanded to be baptized. Upon that day the Holy Spirit was promised to all believers. Upon that day the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was established. From that day forward "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). For centuries, the prophets had looked for the fountain for cleansing, which the Holy Spirit announced on the *First Day of the Week*. Here was a prepared day, a prepared audience, a prepared apostleship, a great miracle, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, an inspired sermon, a great question, a God given answer, a mighty response, an everlasting salvation, an unprecedented baptizing, and the Church of our Lord was born. Do not forget that all this took place upon the *First Day of the Week*. Who would dare to say

The Church at Troas

Twenty-three years after the first momentous *First Day of the Week*, the resurrection day of our Lord, twenty-three years after the establishment of the Church in Jerusalem on Pentecost, the *First Day of the Week*, we find the Church at Troas meeting for holy communion, "the breaking of bread," upon this day to keep in memory the greatest day of all time. "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). It was therefore a custom for the church to assemble upon the First Day of the Week, which we call Sunday. On that day they held their communion service, a service which took their minds back to the suffering Saviour Who shed His blood that we might be saved.

The Churches of Galatia and Corinth

"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 has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Twenty-three years from the first great *First Day of the Week* Paul gave instructions for the Church at Corinth to obey the same order which he gave the churches of Galatia. We therefore conclude that the churches of Galatia and Corinth were assembling regularly on that day. Upon that day, which is commemorative of the resurrection of our Saviour, they put their offerings into one common fund, ready for the arrival of Paul. The meeting together

was not only memorial, but looked forward to the second coming of our Lord. The communion bread and wine were taken with both a backward look to the cross, and a forward look to the coming of the Saviour (1 Cor. 11: 26). Who can doubt that the First Day of the Week is a monument of the Christian faith?

SUMMARY

Christ arose on the First Day of the Week.
 Many others arose on that day and appeared to many.
 Christ met with the two disciples on that day.
 He met with all the disciples and many others on that day.
 He met with them again the next Sunday.
 The Holy Spirit came upon that day.
 The Church was established on that day.
 The greatest sermon in my opinion ever preached by mere man was delivered upon that day.
 The great invitation was given on that day.
 The great acceptance of the 3,000 was on that day.
 The great baptizing of the 3,000 was on that day.
 The church at Troas met on that day.
 The churches of Galatia met on that day.
 The church at Corinth assembled on that day.

The First Day is the only day mentioned in the record as the time of a general meeting of the churches. As there was conformity in all the churches we cannot but conclude that it was the order everywhere for them to meet on that day. There is not a single Scripture which intimates that the church ever observed the Sabbath at any place or time.

The Two Days Contrasted

1. The Sabbath day commemorated a finished creation. The First day, a finished redemption.

2. The Sabbath day commemorated Israel's deliverance. The First day commemorates our Deliverer from the grave.

3. The Sabbath day was a legal obligation, with the death penalty for violation. The First day is a day of voluntary worship of Him who was raised from the dead.

4. The Sabbath day was a day of rest and quiet; no command for religious services. The First day is a day of worship and praise.

Objection

Some one may object that Christ kept the Sabbath day and gave it His indorsement in Luke 4:16, "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up for to read."

Christ kept the law and observed the Sabbath day as long as it was in force. But Christ was the Lord of the Sabbath. He went before Israel in the wilderness and doubtless was the one who gave the law concerning its observance. In Luke the sixth chapter is the account of Christ going through the grain fields plucking the grain on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees complained that He was doing that which was unlawful to do upon that day. Christ replied: "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." He had a perfect right to deal with it as He saw fit. After His resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write the following words: "having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of

a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day" (Col. 2:14-16). Revised Version.

Another passage bearing on the subject is Ephesians 2:15: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

It is evident from these passages of Holy Writ that Christ abolished the observance of the Sabbath day, though the early disciples did not realize it for some time after His ascension. The Sabbath day, with its death penalty for disobedience, was against us and contrary to us. This was one of the reasons why it was abrogated. If one object by saying that the death penalty connected with it was removed, I reply that in the same passage of Scripture where the penalty was removed one will find that the observance of the day was also removed.

The synagogue probably does not date further back than the Babylonian captivity. Though it was permitted of God it was never commanded. The synagogue was strictly a community institution for the benefit of Jews who were in exile. After their return from Babylon the Jews found it convenient to keep it up. Even to this day the synagogue is found wherever Jews have settled in numbers sufficient to justify them in erecting one.

The First Day and Other Days

1. On July the Fourth we celebrate our independence from England. The First Day commemorates our Deliverer from the dead.

2. July the Fourth our people said we are sovereigns of our country. The First Day our Deliverer said, "All power in heaven and earth is given into my hands."

3. June the Nineteenth celebrates the emancipation of the colored man. The First Day celebrates our deliverance through Him who was delivered for us.

4. July the Fourth means nothing to the nations of Europe, June the nineteenth means nothing to the white races; but those days are dear to the hearts of the ones they affect. In like manner the Sabbath day means a lot to the Jews, but has no significance for those who are saved by the blood of Christ. The First Day of the Week is the mountain peak for the saints this side of the cross, both Jews and Gentiles who believe the Gospel.

BAPTISM A MEMORIAL

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5). To this author this passage of Scripture establishes the fact that baptism is another monument of the Christian Faith. Baptism means nothing to those who do not believe in the atoning death of our Lord, but it has all the sacredness of the First Day of the Week to the believer.

In baptism we have all the elements common to all monuments, namely:

- (a) It is commemorative.
- (b) It refers to an important event, namely, the resurrection of Christ.
- (c) It draws its meaning from important events, namely, the incidents at Calvary and Gethsemane.
- (d) Its continued observance through the centuries is evidence that the thing it commemorates transpired, namely, that Christ died, was buried and rose again.
- (e) It is as sacred to born-again believers today as when it was first commanded and obeyed.

We who believe in the atoning death of our Lord feel that it is sacrilegious for unholy hands to administer this rite, or for the unconverted to submit to it. Like the marriage ceremony, which publicly announces a private contract between a man and a woman, so baptism announces to the world that the believer has become identified with the dead, buried and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. In the private communion of a man and a woman who are in love with each other, they plight their lives one to the other. They feel that they know they belong to each other the moment they make the pledge. The marriage ceremony is the public announcement of it. That moment will be precious in their memories for life. Just so it is with baptism. Usually when the believer has been born again he knows a great change has been wrought in his heart. The fact is also well known to God. From that moment he knows he belongs to God and God knows that another soul has passed from death unto life. That moment he is born again. Baptism is the public announcement of his confession. The world sees by this act that he professes that he has passed from their realm. However, many fine Christians reared to believe in the Christian Faith from infancy cannot recall the outstanding moment when they were born again, but their lives and experiences and their faith at present establishes it.

It is to be lamented that to a great many people this memorial has become nothing more than a religious ritual. Thousands think of it only as an initiatory act to conduct them into some denomination. Others make it a meritorious act to obtain salvation. Among this latter group are many radical points of view, which bring reproach upon the atoning blood of our Saviour. Either of these positions partially destroys the memorial, if it does not take all the meaning from the ordinance.

THE COMMUNION A MEMORIAL

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you” (Luke 22:14-20).

These two passages of Scripture establish the communion service as another memorial of the suffering of our Lord for the sins of the world. The observance of this sacred ordinance means nothing to those who are not born again, but to those who have been bought with the price of His blood it is a priceless keepsake. When we partake of it in the proper spirit our minds go back to Calvary.

When our Lord suffered on the cross, God refused to look upon the sad scene. He threw a cloud of darkness around Him and quickly extended it over the world (Lk. 23:44). For three long, weary hours the Saviour of men suffered alone for our sins. This was not an eclipse of the sun. It is said that a total eclipse of the sun has never

lasted for more than fifteen minutes. While all this darkness endured we can imagine the animals going to their places for the night, the birds and fowls going to roost, business coming to a standstill, the earth shaking, the rocks falling, the veil of the temple rent from top to bottom, and men and women shaken from their composure. Such a scene can never be forgotten by those who have come to know Him. The Lord arranged to help us keep it in memory by giving us the communion service.

In this divine service our five common points stand out clearly:

- (a) It is commemorative.
- (b) It refers to an important event, namely, the sufferings of Christ.
- (c) It goes back to Calvary for its meaning.
- (d) Its continued observance through the centuries is evidence the Lord established it.
- (e) It is as sacred to those who observe and preserve it as it was to those who first began it.

The early church solemnized the emblems of the broken body and the shed blood of our Redeemer on the *First Day of the Week* (Acts 20:7). In this way they could put their hearts upon the suffering Lord and the risen Christ in one meeting. Church historians indicate it was observed upon that day in all the churches of the apostolic day. Doubtless this had apostolic approval. As they were inspired of God, it had His approval.

“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s

body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29). This passage of Scripture has to do with the manner in which one partakes of the emblems; it does not refer to their own worthiness. If one should wait until he is worthy to commune, he would never partake of it; but one can eat it in a worthy manner. Before one communes he should examine his heart with prayer and confession. One should not take the emblems in undue haste or irreverently, but quietly, deliberately, and with thanksgiving.

Let it be said here that keeping the First Day of the Week, being baptized, or observing the communion service has never saved anyone; but these things are memorials of the ONE WHO DOES SAVE. Salvation is not won, earned or merited. It is the free gift of Jesus Christ. These memorials take our hearts and minds back to the time when our Saviour purchased this great salvation for us.

These memorials may be regarded as Christian keepsakes. All of us know the meaning of keepsakes. Yours may be a lock of golden hair, a baby picture, or some relic made more precious by the passing of a loved one. While the loved one lived, the treasure did not mean so much, but after his departure the little remembrances became priceless. Doubtless the "breaking of bread" did not mean so much to the Apostles the night Christ gave it to the disciples, but after He went home to His Father the ordinance became very precious to their memory.

PRAYER AND ALMS GOD'S MEMORIALS

A most beautiful passage of Scripture is found in Acts 10:40. "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Cornelius had been praying, together with his whole house, and the record says "he prayed always." Perhaps he wondered whether God would ever do anything about his prayers; nevertheless he prayed and waited. Could he have wondered if his alms were wisely given? Our text declares that his alms and prayers kept mounting up before God. At last God dispatched an angel from heaven to bless Cornelius and his house. The blessing he received was priceless. Up to that date he did not know the way of salvation. The angel directed him to send for Peter who would bring to him that wonderful message. When Peter arrived, Cornelius said, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33). What an audience! A gathering like that would thrill the heart of any servant of God.

The first chapter of Luke tells us the lovely story of Zacharias and Elisabeth. They had never been blessed with children because Elisabeth was barren. We know from the thirteenth verse they had prayed earnestly for God to intervene in the matter and give them a child. Years went by and they quit praying about it. Doubtless they felt both of them were too old, and that it was not God's will for them to have such a blessing. At an unexpected moment an Angel appeared. Zacharias was frightened when he saw him, whereupon the Angel said, "Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard." Zacharias,

being a praying man, was puzzled to know which prayer the Angel had reference to. The Angel explained that Elisabeth would bear him a son and they should call his name John. This seemed too good to be true, so Zacharias asked for a sign. Therefore, the Angel told him that from then on he would be dumb until the child should be born. God had not forgotten them. He gave them far more than they had ever hoped for. Their child was to be the forerunner of the coming Messiah.

Christians should never be discouraged about praying. God never forgets. Our prayers are continually mounting up before Him as constant reminders. He will give a mighty answer before we realize it. He will in some unexpected moment, pour out a blessing of which we may feel so unworthy.

Neither does God forget our alms, although we may think He is not giving much heed to our contributions. The sacrifices we make to share what we have with the unfortunate, or to spread the Gospel, mount up before God. One day He will look upon our offerings and He will pour out a multitude of blessings.

A few years ago a story was told about a missionary making a talk to a church in Louisiana concerning taking the Gospel to the heathen. A little girl was in the audience listening to his message. Her people were very poor and of course knew nothing of luxuries such as many enjoy. She had worked hard to save up five dollars, with which she expected to buy some much needed clothing. Five dollars would buy a lot of the kind she was accustomed to wearing. She listened to the missionary tell how millions were dying in heathen lands without God and without hope. Her heart was touched. She knew something should be done about it. When the offering

plate passed by her she put in the entire five dollars she had worked so hard to earn. Who can doubt that God saw her do this?

After the service was over, the little girl went home with a happy heart. She walked along thinking what her money might do among the idol worshippers of the dark continents across the seas. When she reached home the radiance of happiness could be seen in her face. Immediately she told her father and mother what she had done, believing they would be delighted. She was greatly surprised when they began to reprimand her for being so foolish. The father said, "Honey, you will never know where that money went." She replied quickly, "Yes, but God knows." Yes, He knows and will never forget. I wish I knew the blessing God visited upon that little girl, but we may be sure He did not overlook her sacrifice. I know He has blessed me in similar ways.

Keep on praying, my brother, and keep on giving. God knows all about it. He will visit you one of these days and will measure you out a blessing you cannot contain. When we reach the land of Eternal Day, doubtless we will meet face to face someone for whom our gifts were used in leading that one to a saving knowledge of our blessed Lord.

SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS

It has been shown that all monuments commemorate important events, that they go back to the event they celebrate for their meaning, they are evidence that the event they portray actually transpired and that they are as precious to those who observe and preserve them as they were to those with whom they first began.

30 *MONUMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH*

Monuments peculiar to the Christian Faith may be summed up as follows:

1. The First Day of the Week commemorates the resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

2. Baptism commemorates the death, burial and resurrection of our Saviour and witnesses to our identification with Christ in those events.

3. The Communion Service commemorates the sufferings and death of the Son of God for our sins.

4. Earnest Prayer is a memorial before God of the faithfulness of His children.

5. Alms are other reminders to the great God who made us—reminders of the sacrifice and love we have had for our fellowman and for God's Word.

That these pages may bless the reader to a better understanding of the memorials of the Word of God is the prayer of your servant.