

SUNDAY NOT THE SABBATH.

BY ELD. D. M. CANRIGHT.

THOSE who keep Sunday claim that the first day of the week should be observed in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ on that day. But there is no Bible authority for this claim. The first day is never called the Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's day, or a holy day of any kind. There is not even a reference to such an institution nor an intimation of it in the Bible. Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever kept it. No command is given for any one to keep it. God never rested upon it, nor blessed it, nor sanctified it. There is no penalty for its violation, nor regulation for its observance.

Reader, think of these facts. What do they mean? Paul says, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. 4:15. As there is no law of God for keeping the first day, there can be no sin in working on it; for Paul says again, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. 5:13. Then why keep Sunday? God does not leave men to guess at their duty, but he states plainly whatever he wishes done. Does he wish men to keep the seventh day? How explicitly he has said so. Ex. 20:8-11. How plainly baptism and the Lord's supper are enjoined. Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Cor. 11:23-26. So if the Lord wished us to keep the first day, would he not have plainly said so? Certainly; but he has said no such thing.

Let us examine every text in which the first day of the week is mentioned in the New Testament, and we shall thus learn all the Lord has said about it. There are but eight texts. Here is the first: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." Matt. 28:1. This is all that Matthew says about it. He relates that the angel opened the tomb; that the women saw him, ran to tell the apostles, and met Jesus on the way; but not a hint is given that there is to be any change of the Sabbath, not a word is said about keeping the first day in honor of the resurrection. Think of this.

Next, Mark mentions the first day twice. "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun." "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." Chap. 16:2, 9. This is all the mention he makes of the day. Here, again, there is a profound silence as to any change of the Sabbath or any sacredness for the first day. There is not the slightest intimation of any such thing. Read the whole chapter and see for yourself.

Luke mentions the first day only once. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." Chap. 24:1. What does this say about the change of the Sabbath? Nothing. What intimation is there here that the first day then became a holy day? The candid reader will admit that there is not the slightest reference to such a thing. Yet these are the texts always relied upon by Sunday-keepers to sustain their position. Luke does state that two of the disci-

ples went that day seven and a half miles, on foot, to Emmaus. Verse 13. What were they going there for? Evidently on business. Jesus walked with them and made himself known to them. Verses 15-31. Then they went back to Jerusalem to tell the others. Fifteen miles they walked that day. Not much of a Sabbath! It was nearly night when they got back, verse 29; yet, as late as that, few of the apostles believed in the resurrection of Jesus. Mark 16:12, 13. While they were eating supper, and doubting and disputing about the resurrection, Jesus came in and upbraided them for their unbelief. He took fish and honey from the table, and ate before them, to convince them. Luke 24:38-43. Certainly, then, they were not keeping that day to commemorate an event in which they did not yet believe! The absurdity of such a view is too evident to need further notice.

John mentions the first day twice, stating substantially the same facts as the others. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher." Chap. 20:1. She ran and told Peter and John. Then they went to see if it was so. Later, Jesus appeared to Mary, and sent her to tell the others. Verses 11-18. "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." Verse 19. This is all that John says of the first day. Reader, how much do you find here about the change of the Sabbath? Like the others, John is silent upon this subject. He makes no reference to it; he simply states the events that occurred at the resurrection of Jesus. There he leaves it.

But were not the apostles assembled together when Jesus met them? Yes, at their own home, eating supper. John 20:10; Mark 16:14. And where else should they be? Even then, Thomas was off on business somewhere. John 20:24. So there is no evidence here of any religious meeting held on that day.

John mentions the first day twice, but does not call it the Sabbath, the Lord's day, nor by any other sacred title. He says nothing about the disciples' keeping it, nor does he record any intimation from the Lord that they should keep it. There is not even an inference to that effect in the four gospels, and the whole argument in favor of it is pure assumption.

Another Sunday meeting is claimed from verse 26: "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." This did not occur on Sunday, but as late as Monday evening. Verse 19. *After eight days* is not on the eighth day. Count from Sunday evening. After *one* day would take us to Monday evening; after *two* days, to Tuesday evening; and so on, till "after eight days" brings us to the next Monday evening. Hence this was on Monday evening. Just one week is "after seven days," as the reader will see by 1 Chron. 9:25, 32. Then "after eight days" is one day more than a week.

But suppose it had been the first day of the week: that does not prove that it was the Sabbath, nor that there was any sacredness to the day. The disciples were not even holding a meeting. They were "within," that is, at home. Verse 10: "Then the disciples went away again unto their own home." This is where they were when the event occurred which is recorded in verse 26. See Acts 1:13. Jesus came because Thomas was there; but there is not a word, or even a hint, that the day was sacred.

The next time Jesus met them was on a fishing day. John 21:1-6. They all went fishing, and toiled all night, but caught nothing. In the morning Jesus stood on the shore and told them where to cast the net to get a good

draught. Was this on Sunday? Then it is a working day. If it was not on Sunday, then Jesus met them on any day, just as it happened. So we see from Acts 1:1-4, that his farewell meeting with them was on Thursday. It was on the fortieth day after his resurrection. Verse 3. By a moment's reckoning it will be seen that it fell on Thursday, as all agree. Thursday is ascension-day the world over. So the claim that Jesus always met with his disciples on the first day of the week is utterly false. As we have seen, the day of his resurrection was one of the greatest confusion among his disciples; the next time he met them was on Monday evening, the next time was on a fishing day, and the last was on Thursday. So much for the example of Christ.

A desperate endeavor is made to find evidence for Sunday-keeping from the day of Pentecost; Acts 2:1-4; but there is not the remotest hint of it here. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." Verses 1, 2. Then the Holy Spirit rested upon them. But what has that to do with Sunday-keeping? Sunday observance is not mentioned, nor even referred to. It is not stated what day of the week it was, as that was a matter of no importance. It was the *Pentecost* which was to be signalized, and not the day of the week. The very best scholars, even among the observers of Sunday, admit that Pentecost fell that year upon the Sabbath, or Saturday. Prof. Hackett says, "It is generally supposed that this Pentecost, signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit, fell on the Jewish Sabbath, or Saturday."—*Com. on Original Text*.

Barnes says, "If the views of the Pharisees were followed, . . . then the day of Pentecost would have occurred on the Jewish Sabbath, that is, on Saturday."—*Kuinöl, Lightfoot*.

Olshausen says, "The fiftieth fell, therefore, it appears, upon Saturday."

Dean Alford, in his *New Testament for English Readers*, remarks, "It is probable, however, that it was on the Sab-

bath, i. e., if we reckon from Saturday, the 16th of Nisan."

Next, Acts 20:7-11 is supposed to furnish some little proof for first-day observance. "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. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together." Then a young man fell from a window, and being taken up dead, was restored to life by Paul. And when he "had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." We notice these facts: 1. The first day is not called the Sabbath, Lord's day, or by any other sacred title. 2. This is the only religious meeting upon the first day of the week of which we have any record in the New Testament. This is remarkable, if that was the common day of meeting. But we have a record of eighty-four Sabbaths which Paul kept, and on which he preached. See Acts 13:14, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:1-4, 11. 3. Nothing is said about its being their custom to meet on that day. 4. There is no record that they ever met on that day before this occasion or afterward. 5. But what settles the whole matter is the simple fact that it was only an evening meeting. When they assembled, Paul began to preach to them, and "continued his speech till midnight." After breaking bread, he again talked "till break of day," and then went on his journey. Evening meetings are frequently held on all days of the week. No one thinks of calling a day holy for this reason. So in the above case; this meeting does not furnish the slightest evidence that Sunday was a holy day. Moreover, this was not an ordinary meeting, but a very uncommon one. It was Paul's farewell meeting, verse 25; hence it lasted all night. A dead man was raised. It was for these reasons that it was mentioned, and not because of any sacredness belonging to the day. Then there is not a particle of evidence here for Sunday observance.

Only one more text mentions the first day; viz., 1 Cor. 16:2: "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." From this a public meeting for Sabbath worship on the first day is inferred. But what is said here about keeping that day as the Sabbath, or even holding meetings on that day? Not an intimation of such a thing is given. Paul does not say that when they came together for meetings they should bring their gifts, nor that they should put them into the public collection box, nor anything of that nature. "Let every one of you *lay by him* in store," is the direction; that is, at home, by himself. The original Greek term means by himself, at home, as the best critics say on this passage.

The "Lord's day" of Rev. 1:10 is the seventh day, as may be seen by Ex. 20:8-11; Isa. 58:13; Mark 2:28.

Now, reader, you have before you all the texts in the New Testament that mention the first day of the week in any manner. You must see that they do not intimate that the day has any sacredness, or that there is an example for keeping it, or any commandment that any one should observe it.

But should we not, then, celebrate the resurrection of Christ? Yes; but the Lord never told us to keep Sunday for that purpose. God has given us baptism, burial in water, as the fitting memorial of this. "Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism*." Rom. 6:4. We are buried in the water just as Jesus was in the earth. Then we are raised up out of the water "also in the likeness of his resurrection." Verse 5. Again, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him." Col. 2:12. Baptism, then, is the divinely appointed memorial of the burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is appropriate. To be buried in the water and raised out of it, resembles the burial and resurrection of Christ, which it commemorates.

Then why do you keep the first day? It is simply because you have been brought up to do it. It is a Catholic tradition, received from the pagans, without any foundation in the word of God. Be careful how you make void the law of God by your traditions,

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