

## THE LORD'S DAY.

The sanctification of the Lord's Day was a favorite theme with Mr. Campbell. In the *Harbinger* for 1837 [*sic*], page 279 [*sic*], he writes:

Time and eternity are the Lord's. The Heir of the universe, his is unbounded dominion, and an everlasting title. Still, for the best of reasons, one day above all others, is rightly called *the Lord's*. That is the day on which, as on a monument more durable than brass, is inscribed his name.

The division of time into days, months, and years is natural; the farther division of time into hours, minutes, and seconds is artificial; but the division of time into *weeks* is supernatural and divine. Sun, moon, and stars have decreed the first; men have sanctioned the second; but God ordained the third. It is old as time, and was as universal as the human race. Still it obtains in every land and in every tongue in which the name of Abraham's God is known.

It is a mystery which no man but a Christian can explain. The Deist, the Atheist, or the Antitheist, could as easily unfold the arcana of ages yet unborn, as give a reason good and relevant for this most ancient and universal mode of counting time by weeks. Its history is briefly this: "In six days God made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it." By a reservation, and for a reason as old as Adam, the seventh day was God's--"And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." The weeks of Father Noah and of the immortal Moses are, then, a standing monument of the truth [151] of the first fact in the annals of time, which stands inscribed in the first period of the oldest book that lives in any nation or in any tongue--"*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

In promulgating the law of the Two Tables, Moses, by the instruction of his Master, intimates that the Sabbath was not a new, but an old institution at the time of the *exodus* from Egypt. It is described as an old acquaintance--"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." It is older than sacrifice, and, like it, not instituted by a law positive and express still extant, but intimated only on the page of man's eventful history, and sustained in after times on the ground of a divine origin by all the great, wise, and good fathers of mankind.

But there is a work still more worthy of remembrance than even the creation of the world; for without the redemption which we have through the mediation of the Lord Messiah, the universe were lost to us forever. The consummation of that glorious interposition is, to say the least, as worthy of a weekly celebration as was the completion of the mundane system. The hosannas of ransomed millions should rise higher than the shouts of angels. And if at every pause in creation's work the morning stars sang symphonious and "all the sons of God shouted for joy," at every recurrence of the day of Christ's triumph the church should tell the wondrous story and raise her hallelujahs to the skies.

The Messiah's second birth being the beginning of a new creation, as well deserves the grateful commemoration of a redeemed people as did the end of the old creation from any portion of the heirs of the Adamic inheritance. It was the *first* day of the week and the beginning of a new series; and, therefore, being the day of Messiah's first triumph, it was fitly styled *the Lord's day* by the last of the Holy Twelve. From that day's triumph he obtained the title of the "FIRST BORN from the

dead." Paul intimates that on that day were verified the words of the Father, as written by David in the 2nd Psalm--"Thou art my Son; *this day* I have begotten thee."

But we have solemnly declared our faith in that event, and our regard for Jesus as the RESURRECTION and the LIFE, and have promised homage to all his institutions. We therefore regard the first day of the week to the Lord. In one word, we denominate the first day of the week the *Lord's day*. Then the question arises, which we desire to have solemnly answered, *Do we observe that day to the Lord?* To call it the "Lord's day," and then appropriate it to our own business or amusement, would be to rob the Lord with acknowledgment and confession of judgment against ourselves. If it be peculiarly his in any sense, in that sense we should devote it to him.

We have already seen that it is the day of his triumph over both death and the grave, and on this day all who hope to triumph over [152] death and the grave by him, gratefully and joyfully commemorate his triumph both for his sake and their own. It was therefore anciently celebrated by assemblies, by feasts, by gongs, by speeches, by thanksgivings, by donations. To this all ancient ecclesiastic history bears witness. From the Acts of Apostles and from their Epistles, we clearly learn that the first Christians consecrated this day to the Lord in all their communities by assembling in one place, by breaking and partaking of the monumental loaf and cup, by songs of praise and hymns triumphant, by public speeches, exhortations, and addresses of every sort, by prayers for one another and for all mankind, and by donations for the poor, the ignorant, or the afflicted. It was therefore a day of pure, holy, and celestial joy--a day of social bliss--a day of grateful commemorations--of training children, servants, and all under Christian influence for a better world--and of showing forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness to his marvelous light. Thus to regard the day in the sense of the Apostles and primitive saints, was to regard it to the Lord; and not thus to regard it, is not to observe it to the Lord.

Those professors of the Christian faith and manners, who lounge about home--who forsake the assembling themselves together--who refuse the monumental loaf and cup--who seek for recreation in the company of aliens--who attend to the affairs of state, of trade, of agriculture, of general business--from whose lips ascend not the hymns of Zion, and from whose hearts rises not to heaven the incense of social praise and thanksgiving--whose hands withhold donations from the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted--of all such it must be confessed that they rob the Lord of the glory due to his name, and consecrate not to him the day which he calls by his own name.

Those "ministers of religion," who pervert these social joys by converting the day into a day of sermons and harangues, without the social institutions; who enjoin silence upon all, that they alone may be heard, and who have no higher conception of the Lord's Day than as a mitigated and unpenal Sabbath, designed for rest and making sermons, with a psalm and a prayer, called "the public worship of God" or Christian "divine service," have yet to learn the New Testament religion, however skilled they may be in mystic and scholastic divinity.

Those Christians, too, who, while on the way to the Lord's institutions, or returning from the house of song and prayer on "the day of breaking bread," converse on the affairs of state, the times, the crops, the business or the pleasures of time and sense, show that their conversation is not in heaven; that their hearts are not sacred to the Lord; that they "mind the things of the flesh;" that the Lord's day is not their supreme delight, nor the hope of heaven their [153] greatest bliss; and consequently need to reform and set their affections on things above rather than on the things of earth and time.

Those, too, whose children and domestics are permitted to wander in the streets and lanes of vice and immorality, or stroll through the fields and forests in quest of sensual pleasures, without the teachings and admonitions of parental authority, while their parents and guardians are gone to the house of prayer, of Christian festivity and delight, need to be taught the way of the Lord more

perfectly, and to listen to the yearnings of natural affection and the demands of Christian precepts touching the training of their households for the Lord.

As "the Sabbath was made for man," so the Lord's day is appointed for Christians. They need this institution as much for receiving and communicating spiritual instruction, health, and comfort, as the body requires rest after the toils of six days. All the means of God's ordination are essential to the acquisition and enjoyment of all the blessings of his grace. The neglect of any ordinance as necessarily precludes the enjoyment of the peculiar grace of that institution, as the neglect of food and raiment, of exercise or repose, necessarily debars us from the peculiar physical comforts and advantages which God has connected with them.

We need the respite from the worldly cares and toils, from the conversation and business of life, which the meditation and prayer, the social ordinances of the church and the discharge of all domestic or relative duties of a moral nature must necessarily create.

[A. C.]

There never was but *one* Sabbath--the seventh day--the commemoration of the creation in six days. This was in the Jewish institution made a *type* of a rest which remains for the people of God. Jesus is the Christian's Sabbath. The Lord's day is by no apostle, prophet, scribe, or wise man called a Sabbath. The day of the resurrection and the day of the assembly of the Christians is a day of rest, of peace, of joy, a festival sacred to the Lord; but not a Jewish nor Patriarchal Sabbath. This subject is fully discussed in the *Christian Baptist*, vol. 1, page 121, second edition. We can not now repeat what is there said. But let the reader consult and compare Col. ii. 16, and Heb. iv. 1-9, if he desire to understand how the Apostles regarded the Sabbath. He that keeps the Sabbath of the Jews is a debtor, to do the whole law. It is not the sanctification of the seventh part of time, but *the seventh day*, which God enjoined. The Sabbath could not be changed from the seventh day to the first day, for the reasons given for its observance; nor can the first day of the week be changed into a Jewish or Patriarchal Sabbath, for the reasons which consecrated it to the Lord. But the curious reader is referred to the articles above alluded to. [154]

[A. C.]

One of our oldest objections to popular and fashionable Christianity, is its desecration of the Lord's day. When first we joined the Baptists we had to stipulate for the privilege of sanctifying the natal day of Christ's church, the glorious triumph of the Captain of our salvation and our faith, by meeting together on every sacred return of that most memorable of all the days, not only of the week, but of all the years of time, to partake of the symbolic loaf and cup. They generously, after some debate, allowed us the privilege of thus not forsaking the weekly assembling of the household of faith to enjoy the family meal of God's beloved children. Still our doing so was often alluded to with no very kind regard; and it was represented rather as a singular peculiarity of ours, than as an essential and divinely ordained part of the sanctification of the Lord's day.

[A. C.] 1841, page 541.

In 1845, page 50 [*sic*], concerning the Lord's day, the *Harbinger* says:

What are the obligations to observe the Lord's day? And in what manner ought it to be observed? These two interesting and highly important questions I propose to discuss in the present essay. I begin, therefore, by remarking in the first place, that with men of the world, as well as professing Christians, there is nothing more 'lovely,' or of 'better report,' than a strict observance of the first day of the week by those who fear God. It is, then, obligatory according to Phil. iv. 8.

In the second place, I remark that it is right to observe the first day of the week, as a benevolent provision, calculated to afford a wholesome respite from toil to man and beast.

In the third place, I urge that it is right to observe the first day of the week, because, as far as any experience has been had on the subject, its observance has greatly advanced the cause of good order, good morals, and practical godliness.

In the fourth place, I affirm that the general observance of the first day of the week gives to the laborer, the mechanic, and the business man, an opportunity which, in many instances, they could not otherwise enjoy, of reading the Word of God, and teaching it to their children.

In the fifth place, I aver that the general observance of the first day of the week is a necessary regulation if we would sustain the public worship of God, the preaching of the gospel, and the moral and religious instruction of the world.

In the sixth place, I conclude that those professing Christians who excel in a due observance of the first day of the week, are generally foremost in every good work, and the most conscientious and devout in the Service of God.

From the foregoing remarks I infer that the world requires the observance of the first day of the week as a day of rest from labor, and [155] as affording at the same time, an opportunity for mental, moral, and religious improvement. I infer also that the church requires it, as almost, if not altogether, indispensable in order that she may carry out the great and gracious designs of her existence; namely, the glory of God and the salvation of men. These things being so, who will deny that the observance of the first day of the week is from heaven?

But I rest not the argument here: the Bible when carefully examined furnishes evidence on the subject under consideration, which, to my mind, is conclusive. In Rev. i. 11, the phrase "the Lord's day" occurs, referring, as is almost universally agreed, to the first day of the week. Now, if the Saviour decided that a piece of coin belonged to Caesar because it bore his superscription, shall I not be justified in claiming the first day of the week for the Lord, when I discover *his* name impressed upon it? With what peculiar and strong emphasis, then, does the saying of Jesus Christ, "Render unto God the things that are God's," apply to the first day of the week, and enforce its observance. The "Lord's day" is a phrase belonging unquestionably to the same category with "the Lord's supper," and means, therefore, a day peculiarly and exclusively the Lord's, and sacred to his service. "Ye are not of the world;" "I have chosen you out of the world," said the Saviour to his disciples; and the same might be said with equal propriety of every thing which the Lord appropriates to himself, and of the first day of the week in particular, if for no other reason, at least for this one, that *it is the only day which does or can celebrate the triumphant resurrection of the Son of God from the dead, having been distinctly chosen for that especial purpose.* I might still further illustrate my argument by many other allusions and considerations did I deem it necessary; but as I wish to avoid tediousness, I shall omit doing so for the present.

My second argument in support of the observance of the Lord's day shall be based on the example of the Saviour and the primitive Christians. First, then, the example of the Saviour. He appeared to his disciples on the evening of the day of his resurrection, *and not again* until the next first day of the week. Why did he not appear to them during the week? Why not on the intervening Sabbath, when they, being Jews, would have been religiously employed? Was it mere accident? Was it not rather intended to direct the disciples to the observance of that day? For, certainly, if the Saviour acted in such manner as to warrant them to expect his presence on a particular day of the week, they would note that day, and assemble prepared and expecting to meet him. But, again, the day of Pentecost, according to Lev. xxiii. 15-21, was invariably fixed for the first day of the week. Now if the Lord had no intention of giving a preference to the first over the other days of the week,

why, in addition to what I [156] have just noticed above, did he on that day, according to Acts ii., pour out his holy spirit upon his servants, and publicly set up his kingdom on the earth? Was this, too, accidental? Is it not more in harmony with the wisdom and goodness of God to conclude that by this additional notice of the first day of the week, the Lord intended so definitely to mark it for himself, that his disciples in all ages, without the necessity of any express commandment, would discover the propriety and privilege of observing this day, by celebrating the last recorded triumph of our illustrious leader over the enemies of God and man, and the first authorized public proclamation of his gospel?

I consider next the example of the primitive Christians. In Acts xx. it is stated as follows:--"*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,*" etc. In I. Cor. xvi. and i. 2, the Apostle directs that they should lay by them in store on the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered them, and we are at the same time informed that the same order had been given to the churches of Galatia. From These two passages it is abundantly evident that it was the uniform practice of all the primitive churches to meet, on the first day of the week, and that this practice was recognized and encouraged by the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

We have, then, in favor of the due observance of the Lord's day, besides a crowd of valuable considerations, the example of the Saviour and the first churches. Do we want, or can we have, greater or higher authority? Certainly not. I will then close this article by briefly noticing how the Lord's day ought to be observed. And first allow me to observe that all unnecessary traveling on that day is a desecration of it; that all light or worldly conversation on that day is a violation of its sanctity; that the reading of secular newspapers, pamphlets, novels, or irreligious books, I regard as incompatible with its observance; that for Christians to be owners of boats, stages, wagons, etc., which travel on the first day of the week, is really as much a violation of the Lord's day as it would be for them to keep open their stores and workshops on that day.

I answer, then, that the first day of the week, being the Lord's ought to be appropriated religiously to the service of God in the family and in the sanctuary; and in order the more fully to do this, every preparation should be made on the preceding day.

[SAMUEL CHURCH.]

Whilst we find no command to set apart the first day of the week, we can not fail to observe in the facts which transpired thereon, enough to endear it to the inmost hearts of the disciples.

1. It was on this day that the Lord Jesus arose from the dead, and poured upon their desponding minds the light of life and immortality. making himself known to two in the breaking of the loaf appearing in [157] the midst of others, and with great condescension proving to their doubting, fearful hearts, that he was indeed the conqueror of Death and Hades.

2. It was on this day (the day of Pentecost) that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, enabling those illiterate Galileans to speak in some fifteen different languages; in accordance with the prediction of the Prophet Joel and in fulfilment of the Lord's own promise to them (Acts i. 8), "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

3. It was on this day that remission of sins and the resurrection from the dead, in the name of the Lord Jesus, were for the first time proclaimed to man; as foretold by the Prophet Micah (iv. 2), "For the Law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

It is difficult if not impossible at this distance of time, and amid the circumstances which surround us, to form an adequate idea of the gloom with which the Apostles and their companions beheld all their expectations destroyed by the Master's death on the Cross; of the heart-sickening despair with which they gave up the fondly cherished trust, "that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." Neither can we conceive the greatness of the reaction, when they beheld him triumphant over the before unconquered enemy, Death, and received his assurances that they also should thus triumph: when they learned that the blessings which he brought were not temporal but eternal; that the crowns he promised were unearthly; the inheritance he proposed was incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. But we can readily apprehend that they would regard with more than ordinary emotion the day on which they were so joyfully roused from such gloom and despair, to the most glorious prospects, and feel bound to hold it in blessed remembrance. That no command was given on the subject harmonizes better with the worship, which is in spirit as well as in truth. Its commemoration would be the spontaneous offering of hearts deeply affected by the wonders of *his* mercy, who, for such gracious purposes, "had thus humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And thus the first day of the week became sanctified in the affections of the primitive Disciples, as the memorial of the new Creation, the Moral Universe: holding the same superiority over the Sabbath, that spirit does over matter. For in the last creation we see displayed the mind of Jehovah, whilst in the former we behold "his handy work."

But the Master had given to his Disciples a touching memorial of his dying love. On the night before he suffered, when the body [158] of the Paschal Lamb was before the eye of each of his Apostles, showing forth the great deliverance of their fathers from the bondage of Egypt; he took the loaf and said: "This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me," in remembrance of a far greater passover than that in which their fathers rejoiced: of a deliverance from bondage far more galling than that of Egypt--the dominion of sin and death. He left the times of its observance with those who had freely and truly given up all things for his service: the very name given to his people (congregation) rendered it imperative that they should assemble themselves together; it was on the first day of the week that they had hailed their victorious, triumphant King, returned from the consummation of that great work which assured to them an "eternal weight of glory;" and it followed as the inevitable result of love, gratitude, and triumph, that "upon the first day of the week the Disciples should come together to break the loaf." And though the statement occurs but once in the sacred writings, the circumstances which accompany it irresistibly establish the fact. The narrative states (Acts xx.) that Paul, with his fellow travelers, abode seven days in Troas, waiting, as it would seem, until the first day of the week in order to meet the disciples when they should come together to break the loaf. It is certain that they did come together on that day,--not to hear the great Apostle to the Gentiles preach, but to break that loaf and partake of that cup, which told of the dying love and risen glory of their great Redeemer. The object of their assembling was to honor the institution: the incident attending it, was the preaching of Paul. These are the facts: who can escape the conclusion?

But more light is thrown upon the object of this institution by Paul in I Cor. xi. 23. He there tells the church at Corinth that he had received it direct from the Lord. Paul, it will be remembered, was converted some time after the first promulgation of Christianity: and he declares in his Epistle to the Galatians, that he received his Apostleship, and the gospel which he preached, directly from the Lord Jesus; that "he conferred not with flesh and blood," and received nothing from man. It follows, therefore, that some two years after his resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus delivered this institution to his chosen servant Paul, to be by him enjoined on his people; and that apostle assured the Corinthians, that in eating of the loaf and drinking of the cup, they published or preached the Lord's death till he shall come. The word translated "shews" in this passage means to publish or preach, and is rendered by the latter term several times in the Acts of the Apostles. True, then, every believer by participation in the loaf and cup not only commemorates the Saviour's wondrous love, but preaches the gospel; proclaims openly in action-- [159] "Christ died for my sins, was buried and rose again on this day, according to the Scriptures, and I wait on this institution in full faith that he

will come again;" "to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." And the institution itself bears powerful testimony to the facts which it commemorates; for never yet have the pages of history recorded the establishment of a monumental institution to commemorate a falsehood.

We now pass from the origin and object to the obligations of the day. The Apostles were sent forth by the Lord Jesus with the most ample authority and strongest credentials--"God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. ii. 4). Their precept and practice, and *theirs only*, are therefore positively binding on all the Churches of God. We have seen that the Church at Jerusalem, under the immediate direction of the Apostles, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking the loaf and in prayers;" and also how the day and institution were observed at Troas, under the personal supervision of the Apostle Paul. Let us now consider the repeated injunctions urged upon his disciples by the Master, to evince their love to him by their obedience in that memorable interview, recorded in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John xiv. 15); again, at the 21st verse, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," with numerous other charges to the same effect; and fully does the Apostle John respond to the obligation when he declares (I. Epistle ii. 4), "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him."

To what commandments does he here refer? Without benevolence, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, and general philanthropy, we can not be his obedient people; and yet there have been moralists who have exhibited these various virtues without faith, and therefore without love to him. And perhaps all the acts of goodness and forbearance which the Master has enjoined, might be performed by believers themselves, without coming up to the requirement involved in his declaration (Matt. x. 32), "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father who is in heaven." It is in actions which derive all their interest from their personal connection with himself, that his people evince their special love for the Lord. Such is the day and the institution we are contemplating. Endeared by his precept, consecrated by his action and example, they are so exclusively connected with his Kingdom, that no one can render to them due honor and observance, without being recognized by all who knew him as a disciple of the Lord [160] Jesus, as confessing him before men. It does, therefore, appear necessary that in order duly to observe the Lord's day, that the Disciples should always come together to break the Loaf.

From all these facts it is evident that there is no provision made for the observance of the day on the part of unbelievers. The Apostle says (Rom. xiv. 23), "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," even in the believer; it is therefore utterly impossible that an unbeliever can offer homage or service acceptable to God. But if the Church will fulfill her high destiny, and be indeed "the pillar and ground of the truth," the chaste column on which hang the Masters Laws and Edicts, the glorious field in which are exhibited his institutions, then will her light shine forth and men will see her good works, and glorify the Father who is in heaven. In her light every Christian parent is bound to bring up his children, for here only is to be found the full "nurture and admonition of the Lord," and to her light every Christian of every degree is bound to attract and persuade their fellow creatures, according to the word of God, "who will have all men to be saved, come to the knowledge of the truth," for "the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come." These are the only influences which Christians can exercise over the world, consistently with apostolic precept and example. The Apostle says to the church (I. Cor. v. 12), "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do ye not judge them that are within? but them that are without God judgeth?" The Christian is a soldier, but the weapons of his warfare are not "carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II. Cor. x. 4, 5). "His sword is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," and he must

wield it in "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." It was thus the fishermen of Galilee they achieved the most glorious victory ever chronicled, for they triumphed over the blind gainsaying generation of Israel, as well as the, ignorance and superstition of pagan Rome, and planted the banner of "peace on earth and good will toward men" in the capital of the world: in that mighty city, which was founded in murder and violence, nourished by cruelty and rapine, and whose haughty warlike spirit breathed scorn and contempt upon the meek subjects of a crucified King.

The same armory, the same means, and much more favorable circumstances, are now at the disposal of Christians. Why should they not be equally successful? Surely it is worth the trial. In this land of civil and religious freedom, they can obey every command and honor every appointment of the King without fear or shame. Let, [161] therefore, this convention first resolve that they will themselves observe the Lord's day, according to the Apostolic practice, and then urge upon all believers to do likewise; entreating them as they desire the honor of the King, the salvation of sinners, and the prosperity of Zion; that they be diligent in obeying his laws and upholding all his institutions: and thus, whilst they "work out their own salvation," they will win those that are without to admire and enter upon "the ways of pleasantness and paths of peace."

[RICHARD LEMMON.]

**Sources:**

- 1.** Alexander Campbell. Extract from "Reformation.--No. XII. The Lord's Day." *The Millennial Harbinger* 7 (September 1836): 418-420.
- 2.** -----, Extract from "The First Day of the Week Is Not the Seventh Day" (Reply to Letter from W. D. L.). *The Millennial Harbinger* 5 (September 1834): 466.
- 3.** -----, Extract from "The Sanctification of the Lord's Day." *The Millennial Harbinger* 12 (December 1841): 541.
- 4.** Samuel Church. "The Lord's Day." *The Millennial Harbinger* 16 (February 1845): 53-55.
- 5.** Richard Lemmon. Extract from "The Lord's Day." *The Millennial Harbinger* 16 (March 1845): 129-133.