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EDITORIAL.

THE LORD'S DAY.

We promised in the last CHRISTIAN, when treating of the Sabbath day, to give in this number special attention to the Lord's day. This day is first brought to our notice in Matt. xxviii. 1. After Jesus had spent the last Sabbath in the grave, very early on the first day of the week the women came to the sepulchre to see His body, but met an angel who had rolled away the stone and who informed them that He had left His bed of death, and they were sent to tell His disciples of His resurrection. John also testifies that He rose from the dead, and that on the evening of the same day He appeared unto His disciples who were assembled with the doors closed for fear of the Jews. He says, also, that when they met on the next first day of the week Jesus was in their midst. (Jno. xx. 19, 26.)

We are not told *why* the disciples met week after week on the first day. It might be that Jesus before His death had told them to do so, and that although they never expected to see Him again their love for their departed Lord prompted them to obey Him in this matter. Be that as it may, it is *certain* that the disciples did assemble on their Lord's rising day, and also on the next first day, or, as it is expressed, after "eight days." It is also certain that Jesus approved of their meeting on each of these days, for He met with them to comfort their hearts and instruct them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Thus we have the approved example of the Lord's disciples for meeting on the first day of the week, reaching back to His resurrection.

It was on the first day of the week when the disciples were together, with one accord that the Holy Spirit came from heaven and qualified them for their great work. On that day Peter preached the first sermon to his Lord's murderers, and 3,000 souls were added to the saved. "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." (Acts xx. 7.) This is a natural description both of the meeting and of its purpose, showing it to be their general custom. It does not say on a first day of the week they came together to break bread, nor the first day of that week on which they came together to break bread. It does not say they came together to hear Paul preach. He had been at Troas all the preceding week, and very likely it was well known. But they did not meet to hear even the great apostle of the Gentiles, but they came together in the name of Christ, to meet Him and remember His death in His commemorative institution. Had Paul not been at Troas, they would have met all the same, but he being there they gladly availed

themselves of the best talents, and so the plain narrative runs. *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, etc., etc.*

Paul tells the churches in Galatia and Corinth how to collect money for the poor saints. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store according as God hath prospered him that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) And it was on the first day of the week that John was in the Spirit and received from Jesus Christ the last revelation of the mind of God. (Rev. i.)

From the foregoing we learn that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, repeatedly met with His disciples on that day, and sent down the Holy Spirit to be with them continually. That they met to break bread on that day, and were to lay by them money for the service of God on it, while the seventh day is never alluded to in all these matters. It was on the Lord's day that the Author of the faith or gospel plan descended to be its finisher, when He gave on Patmos His last revelation to His servant John. This is the commemorative day of the New Testament.

But what did this day commemorate? Not Jehovah's rest on the seventh day. On the first day He began to create, and it would not commemorate His rest on the seventh. A commemorative day cannot be changed from one day of a year or month or week to another. This is plain enough. The Sabbath could not be changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week. The first is another day, and commemorates another event; an event, of course, which happened on that day. The great event of the first day is THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, hence the first day of the week commemorates it. How to keep the first day of the week is shown by the approved and recorded example of the Lord's disciples. They came together to break bread, Paul met and worshipped with them. They commemorated the Lord's resurrection by meeting, and His death when they were met. While they proclaimed to all men the great facts of the Gospel, "*How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*" they celebrated these facts on the Lord's day. Compare Acts xx. 7, and 1 Cor. xi. 26, with 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Thus they remembered the Lord's death and resurrection by the two commemorative institutions of the New Testament—the Lord's day and the Lord's Supper.

"But," says one, "we are not required to break bread every week. If we do it on the first day of the week once a month, or once every three or even every six months, we follow the primitive example because it does not say that the disciples came together every first day of the week to break bread." Let us examine this: 1st. This objection is as much against meeting every first day of the week as against breaking bread every first day. The same record gives their meeting and the purpose for which they met. Both stand or fall together. 2nd. When anything is to be commemorated by a certain day of the year or month or week, it only requires to mention the day and everybody knows when the day comes round what is meant. Should an American say, I keep the fourth of July once every ten years. Or should a Jew say, I observe the seventh day of the week only once a month: another, I keep it every three months, because the Lord did not say, "Remember every seventh day, to keep it holy." Would that American reason soundly? Would those Jews be approved of God? But both reason precisely as the man reasons who thus objects to breaking bread every first day of the week. The fourth of July here means every fourth. The seventh day means every seventh, and so does the first day mean every first day of the week. If the disciples met for a certain purpose, and we meet

for another and different purpose, are we following their example?

Why should the American wish to pass over nine years and keep the tenth? It must be that he did not enjoy the fourth, and thinks it needless to observe it every year. Why should those Jews wish to observe the weekly Sabbath only by the month or quarter? It must be because the Sabbaths are a weariness to them, and they wish to dispense with the greater number. And why, we may ask, would the Christian seek to depart from the weekly remembrance of his Lord's death to the monthly or quarterly?

The New Testament worship is the simplest and divinest ever seen on earth, and it recognizes the weekly as the only division of times. The Christian needs the weekly celebration of his Lord's death and resurrection, and hence this gracious provision. When even primitive Christians desired again to be in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements, and observed days and months and times, and years, Paul was afraid of them lest he had bestowed on them labor in vain. (Gal. iv. 10, 11.)

But it may be asked, what claim has the Lord's day upon the unconverted? They do not take the Lord's Supper. It would be wrong for them to do so. Are they at liberty to do as they please on this day? By no means. They are bound to respect this day, as will presently be seen. Jesus loves the unconverted, most sincerely. He died for them, and claims them as the purchase of His blood. He pleads with them to be saved, to enter His kingdom and come under His laws. When they refuse all this they are not at liberty to do as they please. There are laws in the land which prevent certain wrongs and defend certain rights. These laws guard the Lord's day, so that all men inside of civilization must respect it. It confers blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon all; and all are bound in some way to keep it. Its rest from labor, and its opportunities to read and hear and learn of God, how to gain eternal life through Christ, are its blessings; and whether men use or abuse them, the law says: "You must cease from labor to-day." This law is good, and the power to enforce it are ordained of God; hence the worst of men are not allowed to disregard the Lord's day.

On Monday we enter the office of an infidel who owns a factory and employs men by the hundred. "How is it," we ask, "that on yesterday all your machinery was stopped and everything was as silent as the grave?" He replies, "Although hurried with business we had to stop everything, for the law forbids work on Sunday." "Then the law guards this day because it commemorates the resurrection of Christ, does it?" "I presume," he says, "that is the reason. But I don't believe in any such person, and all that is said about His resurrection is mere fiction." But when asked he can give no history of a day kept or a monument built to commemorate a fiction. Men may misrepresent or over-value the worth of a man or of a battle, or a victory, and may from age to age perpetuate the exaggeration by monument. But in no age nor among any people will men consent to sacrifice time and money to remember a man who never lived, a battle which was never fought, or a victory never won. He could not tell how it is, then, that among the most enlightened, most tolerant and powerful nations of earth this day is kept and by law guarded from violence to commemorate the resurrection of Christ if He never rose.

But he charges the law with intolerance which compels him to keep a day to commemorate what he regards as fiction. This charge is null when it is remembered that he is not compelled on that day to worship or do anything against his consciousness of right. The law virtually says to him: There are hundreds in your employ who believe with all their hearts that Christ rose on that day