

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. JUNE, 1894

EDITORIAL.

REASON OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

THE TWO COMMEMORATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—THE LORD'S DAY AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q.—What are the nature and design of commemorative institutions in general, and those of the New Testament in particular?

A.—They are laws commanded to keep in memory important events, and corroborate the written history of these events. One night an angel killed all the first-born in Egypt, except in such houses as had on their door posts the blood of the pascal lamb. These the angel passed over, and God commanded Israel to commemorate this deliverance by the yearly feast of the *Passover*.

God rested from his work on the seventh day and commanded Israel to rest on the seventh day of the week to commemorate his rest. So the Sabbath was to keep in mind God's rest. Americans commemorate their independence on the 4th of July.

Two events occurred of everlasting importance to all mankind. The first is, that Christ died for our sins, and was buried. The second is, that he rose again the third day. God has given us written testimony of these facts, and sent it to every creature. He has also given us two institutions to corroborate this testimony. The Lord's Supper shows His death, and the Lord's day shows His resurrection. A commemorative feast on a commemorative day, to be kept the one by the Lord's positive command; the other by the approved example of his disciples.

I. We will first speak of the Lord's day:

Q.—Who first changed the weekly worship from the seventh to the first day of the week? Many say Constantine and the Pope were the first.

A.—Jesus was the first to change it. He met with His assembled disciples on the very day He rose, and again on the next first day. *Before His death* it was His custom to meet on the seventh day, but there is no account of His meeting on the first day. (See Luke iv. 15; Mark vi. 2). *Put after His death* there is no account of His meeting on the seventh day, but always on the first day, and this was the religious day of His disciples.—John xx. 19, 26; Acts i. 2; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2, etc.

Q.—Is there no account of Jesus or His disciples meeting on the seventh day of the week, after His resurrection?

A.—None whatever. It was their constant practice to meet on the rising day of their Redeemer. Wherever the Christian religion went this day was kept. Constantine was the first Roman Emperor who favored Christianity, and he commanded men to observe the first day of the week among the other ordinances of the Christian religion, and those who would reject the observances of the first day of the week because Constantine commanded it, would reject the whole system for the same reason. It is the Lord's day, because its observance began with the Lord, and is kept ever since by His disciples to commemorate His resurrection—that grand event without which all their preaching and faith would be vain, and they would be of all men most miserable.

Q.—Sabbatarians contend that we should now keep the seventh day, because God by Moses commanded all men to keep it, and he has not positively commanded us to keep the first day instead.

A.—God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, etc.—Heb. i. God by Moses commanded the Jewish fathers to keep the seventh day, but did not command any other nation to do so. It was given as a sign between God and that nation.—(Exodus xx. 13, 14, 17; Ezekiel xx. 12, 20). We can no more claim what God so distinctly gives to another nation, than I can claim a letter clearly addressed to another person, or a legacy which a neighbor leaves to his own family. Among all the crimes repeatedly charged against the Gentile world, sabbath-breaking is never named for this reason—"Where there is no law there is no transgression." Gentiles were never commanded to keep the new moons nor the sabbath days. Jesus, as a Jew, kept them till he abolished them on the cross. But after that, no Christian was to be judged by them. They were a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ—(Col. ii. 15, 16, 17).

It is an old and fatal crime to belittle Christ by extolling Moses as a law-giver. God did not speak to these fathers by His Son, but by the prophets. He has not spoken to us in these last days by the prophets, but by His Son. The contrast is as clear as it is important.

I cannot tell what is the peculiar theme of those who meet on the seventh day, whether or not it is the creation and not the Creator. But I know it would be entirely anomalous to meet on that day to preach the gospel or to talk of the love and the finished work of Jesus. What would we think of Orangemen meeting on the twelfth of July, and making the battle of Culloden their grand theme? or, of Americans spending the 4th July in rejoicing over the victory of Waterloo? But it would be more inconsistent for men to meet to speak and sing of Jesus' death and resurrection, on a day that commemorates an entirely different event. The Disciples of Christ, from the day that Jesus rose from the dead till the present day, met to show His death and commemorate His resurrection. Wherever the Bible and civilization go, the Lord's day is kept, and the laws of the land protect Christians in their worship on this day.

Q.—But is it not tyrannical to make men worship on this day whether willing or not?

A.—Wholesome laws do not compel men to worship on the Lord's day, but they protect those who do worship. Society is so constituted that Christians could not meet for weekly worship without the law's protection, and it says to all—"Stop your business, and allow Christ's followers to celebrate His rising day." It also gives all a day on which to hear the gospel. The hardest infidels have it before their face from week to week. God declares that the time is coming when every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God; and he seems to foreshadow that time by what we now see and hear. Every paper we read, every letter and document is useless without a date, and all date from A. D. *the year of our Lord*. No business can be done without A. D. The Creator and Ruler of the Universe is thus proclaiming to our race that His dear Son was born so many years ago at the time and place His prophets had foretold. The same Ruler has decreed that a day of the week shall commemorate the triumphant resurrection of His dear Son in finishing the work he came to earth to accomplish. Many are the attempts which have been made to blot out A. D. and obliterate the Lord's day, but such have all realized a defeat. The determination and dis-appointment at the Columbian Exposition last year, tell the story of such madness. He that sitteth in the heavens holds such schemers in derision, while His own King and His institutions are exalted. The weakness and malice of God's enemies will be exhibited; and the day will remain to the end of time, proclaiming to all nations, and people, and tongues, that God

has raised His Son from the dead. The Disciples esteem it a great privilege to meet on the Lord's day to remember both his death and resurrection.

We expect, the Lord willing, in our next, to consider The Lord's Supper.

Original Contributions.

THE ROYAL ROAD OF LIFE.

II.

"These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation."—Acts 16: 17.

What was the teaching of inspired apostles concerning "the way of salvation"? Was there anything definite in their teaching? Was their message a message of light to men? Can the poor lost wanderers of earth, groping their way blindly in sin, receive direction from the teaching of these men which will lead them into the way of life? Or is it true, what the world has too long been allowed to think, that religion is a mystery, and the standing of the soul in God's sight necessarily a thing of doubt? Let us turn to the preaching of these men. The words at the head of this paper were the words of one possessed. Yet they could have been no more true had God spoken them by His own mouth. The mission of the apostles was to show men the way of salvation. They were always about the business of this mission. Their sermons are expositions of "the way." What do they teach?

I. THEY PREACH A PERSONAL SAVIOUR. Nothing is more striking in the sermons of the apostles than the way in which they hold Christ up before the world. They tell the story of His life. They repeat the tragedy of His death. They dwell with triumphant emphasis on His resurrection from the dead. They assert His exhalation to the throne of the universe at the right hand of God. They proclaim Him the one, only, Lord, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth; who is exalted high above all principalities and powers, above all might and dominion; who has been given a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. They point men to Him as the only Saviour. There is salvation in no other; there is no other name under heaven given among men wherein men must be saved. But there is salvation in Him. He died for our sins; He rose for our justification; He lives that we too may live; He lays hold of men with an infinite power. He keeps men in absolute safety. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." His saving power never fails. He ever lives. And He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Thus do the apostles fix the eyes of a lost world on this majestic personality. They know nothing about systems of theology "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," says Paul. They labor not to build up party. Their great effort is to turn men to the Lord. They are not anxious to make men all of one opinion. They wish to lead them to the obedience of faith. They do not seek to conform men to a certain set of dogmas about a thousand questions of theology. They endeavor to lead men into right relations with Christ. They know that if they do this Christ will lead men to know and to do all things that are for their good.

In a word—in proclaiming the way of salvation the apostles preach first, Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, as the Saviour and rightful