

Eusebius says (Ecclesiastical History Bk. I):—

"They (the patriarchs) did not therefore regard circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, neither do we."

Cyril, of Jerusalem (345-386), says:—"Henceforth, reject all observances of Sabbaths."

Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, (367-402), says:—"God regarded not outward cessation from works upon one day more than another."

Jerome, a learned and extensive writer (374-420), says: "Considered from a purely Christian point of view, all days are alike."

Thus, we have clear evidence that no particular day of the week was recognized as more sacred than another, during the first four centuries of the existence of the Christian Church. Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, says:—"Many also observe the fourth day of the week (on which Jesus was betrayed), and the sixth (which was the day of the Crucifixion)," Dr. Heylin says, "Sunday in the eastern churches had no great prerogative above other days, especially above Wednesday and Friday. The religious services of the primitive Christians occupies only a portion of the day, and when these were ended they resumed their occupations."

"So we may conclude that neither Jesus nor His followers observed any particular day, and that such an institution as a Christian sabbath was unknown in the early days of Christianity."

We may have good reason to be suspicious of our present-time formalists who require a higher or larger amount of ceremony than the founders of Christianity did; especially, when we find that the history of all religious systems shows that the greater the ceremony the less the genuine piety and righteousness.

The first day of the week was the people's weekly holiday, not only in ancient Rome, but all over the pagan world, that day being the festival of all the Sun-gods—Sol, Bacchus, and Apollo, of Rome; Hercules, of Greece; Mithra, of Persia; Osiris, Horus, and Serapis, of Egypt; Buddha, etc.

It was the Imperial murderer, Constantine, who made the first authoritative attempt to convert the people's holiday into something like a sabbath. Seeing the advantage to be gained by conciliating the Christians, he conceived the idea of blending the discordant systems of paganism and Christianity; he became a Christian, but he did not absolutely renounce paganism.

Pagan temples were now converted into Christian churches. "The cross, which had been hitherto a pagan emblem, became, what it never was before, a Christian emblem,—and images of pagan gods became Christian saints."

In 321 Constantine issued an imperial edict as follows: "Let all judges and all people of the towns rest, and all the various trades be suspended on the venerable day of the Sun. Those who live in the country, however, may freely and without fault attend to the cultivation of the fields, lest, with the loss of favorable opportunity, the commodities offered by Heaven be destroyed."

Even this edict placed no restriction on pleasure-seeking and amusement. The clergy, seeing the advantage to them of having a special day set apart for the attendance of the laity at the temples, offered little opposition to the edict. But its observance never became general, for it was not liked by either the pagan or Christian sections of the people, and the edict was repealed by Emperor Leo in the ninth century.