

The Christian.

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THE TWO COMMEMORATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE LORD'S DAY.

A discourse delivered by the editor at the opening of the Christian meeting house in Charlottetown.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death until He come."—I. Cor. xxi:11.

Memory is an extraordinary faculty of the human mind. It is a tablet on which can be inscribed ten thousand times ten thousand images, ideas and words without in the least impairing the original back ground.

Commemorative institutions are intended to impress upon the memory signs of past events, to preserve these events from oblivion and to corroborate their history to future ages and generations.

When the Lord designed that Israel should in future ages remember that their nation was delivered from Egyptian bondage, and their first-born from death by killing the pascal lamb and sprinkling its blood on their door posts, he commanded them to observe the feast of the Passover from year to year.

The testimony of two witnesses is sufficient in all law human and divine, and in order that our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ might rest secure, God has vouchsafed to us both written and commemorative testimony of these great events. He saves those who believe in the death and resurrection of His beloved Son and accept of Jesus; and He has ordained that these events should be clearly written in the New Testament and commemorated till the end of time, one by the Lord's supper, the other by the Lord's day. Along with the gospel is a commemorative feast and a commemorative day. These are to be kept by Christians, one by the positive command of Christ, the other by the approved example of His disciples. To a consideration of these two institutions I invite your attention to-day.

We will speak of the first day of the week, called the Lord's day. And I would here remark that nature has sundry divisions of time. It has daily, monthly and yearly divisions, but it has no weekly division. Art has its divisions of hours, minutes and seconds but no weekly division. It is neither natural nor artificial but spiritual. There is nothing in nature or in art to suggest why one day should be kept differently from the other six. If this is to be done at all it must be by the positive command of God.

God commanded the Jews to work six days and to rest on the seventh because He had created all things in six days and rested on the seventh from all his work. It was His Sabbath and must be the Sabbath of Israel throughout their generations. Every time the day came round it corroborated the written history of creation. It was a commemorative day set apart by God. Neither the Jews nor surrounding nations could find any natural reason for its observance; but it was the Lord's Sabbath, telling all that Israel's God was the Creator of the ends of the earth; hence the monumental character of the seventh day. Our Lord was a Jew and strictly kept the Sabbath until He finished it, when He rested from all His work in the cold grave of the Aramaethian councillor. When the Sabbath was past and the first day of the week began to dawn He left the grave forever, walked out to begin a life of activity and glory which would never end. He met His disciples, turned their sorrow into a joy that no man could take from them, and they were be-

gotten again into a hope of life by His resurrection from the death.

We learn that the disciples met together on the first day of the week and for worship, for the doors were shut to prevent Jewish assault. We learn that Jesus had previously told them to meet (Mark xxvii:7), and we concluded that He appointed the day as well as the place for this meeting. If so, which is highly probable, then Jesus had told them before His death to meet Him on the first day of the week; and although they did not expect to see Him alive, yet they had such loving respect for their crucified Master they would obey this command regardless of Jewish rage.

It is certain they did meet together on this and the following first days, and that Jesus approved of these meetings and met with them, although there is nothing said of their meeting on any other day than on His rising day.

The approved example of Christ's disciples is our authority for meeting to worship the Saviour on this day, and to honor His Divine Majesty and to expect and enjoy His blessed approval.

It was on the first day of the week the disciples were together praying and waiting for the promises of the Father, and the Holy Spirit came from heaven, filled the apostles, and they began with great power to gather thousands into the fold of God. And it was on the first day that the disciples met to break bread at Troas. It is the only day of the week since Jesus rose that is mentioned in connection with Christian practice or worship, all showing that it is the Lord's day, and to be devoted to His service.

The Jewish religion had its annual and tri-annual worship. It also had its daily, weekly and monthly observances, its seven years and fifty years divisions of time. Christianity has only its weekly public worship. The Jewish religion was national and largely natural, and somewhat conformed to nature. But the religion of Christ is spiritual. In this, as in other things, we have first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. Christians are kings and priests to God, and they can rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks; but they have neither yearly nor monthly public worship. Only weekly worship is enjoined by Christ.

History abundantly testifies that the first day of the week was observed by Christians until the law kept that day free from secular business. Wherever the Bible and civilization go that law which protects the Lord's day goes with them.

If we ask why steamers, railroads and factories which were all astir for the last six days are so still to-day, the answer cannot be: Because God rested to-day from all His work. On the first day He began to create and it cannot celebrate His rest.

Ask the infidel who owns a large factory: Why is all your machinery still to-day? His answer is: The law commands us to stop to-day. But why was such a law made? He replies: "It is said that Jesus Christ rose from the dead to-day, but it is a fiction; He never rose." I ask him if he ever knew a day kept through the centuries and the millenniums to commemorate a fiction, and he is silent. No monument was ever built to celebrate the fame of a man who never lived or a battle which was never fought, although both may be greatly exaggerated. What proof has the infidel that Jesus did not rise? The best history of the times says He did. The most determined vigilance of the Jewish nation, with the mighty power of Rome to assist, could not find His dead body. Those who saw Him after His resurrection and suffered and died for saying so, declared it true, and this day commemorates it.

The British nation is the strictest on earth to keep the Lord's day. Is it because this nation is the weakest, most ignorant, superstitious and

despotic on earth? Who will so affirm? Wherever her armies go light and civilization follow. Wherever her banner floats each subject, be he prince or beggar, has perfect liberty of conscience and full protection in all civil and religious matters.

But it may be asked: "Is not that law tyrannical which requires men whether willing or not to worship on this day?" The answer is: The British law does not compel men to worship against their will on this day. No just law does this. But it protects those who wish to worship God this day. Society is so constructed that Christians could not meet for worship on this day without the law protecting it; and it says to all, "Stop your business and allow Christ's followers to celebrate His rising day."

God's word declares that there is a time 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 letter we receive, every message and every paper or document of any kind is useless without it is dated, and all dates from A. D., the year our Lord. No business can be carried on without A. D. All literature is useless without it. The Creator and Ruler of the universe is thus proclaiming to our race that His dear Son was born in the time and place that His prophets had foretold.

It stings infidels to the heart to be continually reading and writing "the year of our Lord," and so far acknowledging Jesus as Lord. In the French revolution they invented the habit of dating from another event, and struggled hard to have A. D. expunged from the world's literature. But after a desperate attempt they failed, and the year of our Lord rings through all civilization and proclaims the Saviour's birth. The same is true of the Lord's day. It proclaims to all men that the same Lord who was born in Bethlehem so many years ago and led a pure and perfect life and died on the cross, rose on this day by the mighty power of God. And while He protects this day for His people to worship Him, He also affords others the privilege of hearing the gospel that they might be saved by faith in Christ Jesus. Who can describe the blessings bestowed on men by this day or the happiness of those who spend it in the true worship of God, and in active labors to spread the knowledge of the Son of God among the lost, until He calls them to the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

In our day men are laboring in different places to abolish the observance of the Lord's day. This is not done in reality so much for temporal advantage, because men need a rest from care and labor, but it is done to oppose Christ and His Father. In some instances they seem successful, and get laws to suit their mad attempts to "break their bands asunder and to cast away their cords from them." But their triumphs will be short. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." He will exalt His own King and exhibit the malice and weakness of his enemies. This day remains, and will remain to the end of time, proclaiming to all that God has raised His Son from the dead.

Original Contributions.

CHURCH GROWTH.

This is a very important subject. I know I am not able to write upon it as it demands, but from personal observation I see a necessity for our brethren to take this matter deeply into consideration. It is a question that affects our success as a distinctive people, and if we want to make ourselves felt as a Christian body we must build up our churches. Some one thinks the answer simple