



The Sabbath Recorder.

Alfred Centre, N. Y., Fifth-day, March 11. REV. N. W. HULL, D. D., EDITOR.

ALL communications, whether on business or for publication, should be addressed to THE SABBATH RECORDER, Alfred Centre, N. Y.

THE CHRISTIAN SECRETARY ON THE SABBATH.

Some one has been asking the Secretary its Scripture authority for observing the first day of the week. Our object in following the Secretary through its argument is to show how completely it has failed in its answer.

"A correspondent asks us for the Scriptural authority for the observance of the first day of the week rather than the seventh as the Christian Sabbath. We are free to confess that we have no expectation of being able to satisfy any one on this point, who has made up his mind that the seventh day is the day to be observed."

"Why should the Secretary be so despondent concerning the success of its efforts 'to satisfy any one on this point, who has made up his mind that the seventh day is the day to be observed'?"

"When the Secretary comes to it, what kind of evidence satisfies it 'that it is the will of Christ that his disciples should observe the first day of the week?' It is true, 'should we find that the Son of Man, who is Lord of the Sabbath day, has so signified his will,' that this would be a sufficient reason why we should observe this day, but the question is, has he so signified his will?"

"The Secretary confesses that Christ has not, 'in so many words,' released us from keeping the seventh day, and commanded us to 'keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath;' but how else could we know he has done this? It seems to us a strange proceeding to do all this, and yet say nothing about it. In certain respects, the command to observe the seventh day was the most notable of all the precepts of Jehovah. How, then, could it be set aside and another day put in its place, and yet no record made of the transaction, nor any reason given for it?"

"We have heard any number of reasons given by men for this, but have never read one given by God for it, and we object to being called a 'mere legalist' because we call for a Scripture record of this transaction. We have a right to say, if there is no record of this in the Scriptures, that Christ has not done it, and that the Secretary shows weakness and not strength in speaking as it does. Does any one suppose if the Scriptures gave any account of this transaction, the Secretary would not quote it in defense of its position?"

"And we say on our own part, that the Bible did give any such account, that would end the controversy. The whole difficulty on this subject is that our brethren assume the thing that needs proof. They infer from certain passages that of which they do not even hint. But we will not anticipate. The Secretary says: 'Well, what authority have we for appointing pastors and deacons as officers in a church of Christ? We can not produce a command of the Master which bids his disciples, in so many words, choose a pastor and deacons in every church that shall be organized. But do we say, therefore, that to appoint these officers is an act unsanctioned by the Head of the church?' A strict legalist might say so, he reasoned as he does concerning the Sabbath. Yet the fact remains, that the apostles, ordaining and sent forth by Jesus Christ, specially commissioned as his witnesses, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, did appoint or direct the churches. They appointed 'bishops and deacons.' In doing this they were executing the will of Christ, or they were not. On the first supposition, their action in this matter is as significant as the will of Christ is. On the other supposition, they conspired together to usurp authority over God's heritage—a conclusion that we decline to accept. We bow to apostolic authority. We respect apostolic precedent."

"But no comparison can be drawn between these cases, because of their dissimilarity. The question under consideration concerns a religious ordinance named in the Scriptures; the other concerns officers of the church that are named. The above reasoning, then, is inapplicable here. If anywhere the Scriptures had said the apostles observed the first day of the week, or that they ordered the churches to do so, that would alter the case; but nothing of the kind is on record. Indeed, there is not one word said in the Bible about anybody's keeping this day."

"The Secretary says: 'Now in reference to the observance of the first day of the week, the risen Savior himself sanctioned it. When his disciples were assembled on the evening of the first day, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said, 'Peace be unto you.' He did more than that, he breathed on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit.' He proceeded to invest them with a sacred authority to administer, an authority which gave them

the power to declare in his name the conditions of forgiveness, and to pass judgment in reference to the fact, whether the sins of the penitent had been forgiven. Remember that this was done on the first day of the week. How could the apostles fail to regard a day thus hallowed by the presence of the risen Savior as sacred? And on the next day, as the men of the evening, Jesus came again. Could there be any mistake in their convictions thus confirmed?"

"It is true that on the evening of the first day of the week following Christ's resurrection the disciples were together in their own hired room, but it was not a religious gathering of any sort, for the disciples did not believe that Christ had risen from the dead. It is also true that at this time Christ breathed on them, and said, 'receive ye the Holy Spirit;' but not until he had 'upbraided their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not those who saw him after he was risen.' In all this, what sanctification came to the 'first day of the week?' The fact of Christ's resurrection was indeed joyful to his disciples, but what had this to do with making the time in which he convinced them of this, sacred? And further, if this time became sacred to them, why did they not say something about it afterwards? That after eight days from this time they were within, and doubting Thomas with them, and that at this time Christ appeared to them and convinced the unbeliever of his resurrection, is true; but what has that to do with making this time sacred? If they should meet ten times in one day, that would not sanctify that day. Another act is required for this, but that was not done."

"Again, it is generally agreed, so far as we know, that the day of Pentecost fell on the first day of the week; and so this day was hallowed by the fulfillment of that great promise, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Was there no significance in the selection of that day for such a blessing?"

"But it by no means is certain that the feast of Pentecost occurred this year on the first day of the week, as is known to all who have carefully examined the subject. Dr. Hackett says: 'It is generally supposed that this Pentecost, signified by the outpouring of the Spirit, fell on the Jewish Sabbath, our Saturday.' But suppose that Pentecost did fall this year on the first day of the week, and that the Holy Spirit did fall on the disciples on this day, did these things occur because the day was sacred? Or did these occurrences sanctify the day? It is passing strange that any such interpretation should be put upon these events. Who but some one badly in want of a reason could have found one in so barren a soil?"

"Again in Acts 20: 6, 7, we find Paul on a visit to the Church at Troas. He remained there a whole week. He certainly could have met the disciples on the seventh day, if that had been their stated day of meeting. The fact is, the disciples came together on the first day of the week. A modern Sabbatarian would have made a vigorous protest against such a practice. But Paul said no such thing. There is no hint that he saw anything irregular in the practice. He joined in their worship and preached them a long sermon."

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churches to observe it. That some of the Jewish Christians, in addition to this, observed the seventh day is admitted. They were not under obligation to do this; but it did no harm as long as they observed the first day also. To us the change seems fitting. The Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the completion of creation. That greater event, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, thus completely investing him with mediatorial power, is now commemorated by it."

"Inasmuch as the Secretary does not seek to strengthen its position by referring to 1 Cor. 16: 2, which is directly against it; nor to Rev. 1: 10, we also will pass them. We however at the outset agree that if Col. 2: 16, 17 refers to the weekly Sabbath, then it is abolished, and we are without one. From this we do not see any escape. The difficulty in the way of this is, that every fair rule of interpretation the sabbaths here are the annual sabbaths of the Jewish economy, and not the weekly Sabbath. The word is plural, sabbaths, and not sabbath. These sabbaths were associated with other ritual services of this dispensation, and together with these, were abolished. On this passage Mr. Barnes says: 'Or of the sabbath days; Greek, of the sabbaths.' The word sabbath in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day, but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of their great festivals. There is, doubtless, reference to those days in this place, as the word is used in the plural number, and the apostle does not refer particularly to the Sabbath properly so called. There is no evidence from this passage that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe any holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number—the sabbath—it would, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that the commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connection, show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not on the moral law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law, no one of the ten commandments could be spoken of as 'a shadow of good things to come.' These commandments are, from the nature of the moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation."

"There is no evidence to show that during the apostolic age the first day of the week was observed by either the Gentile or Jewish Christians."

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THE SEVENTH-DAY BAPTIST PRAISE BOOK.

To the Editor of the Sabbath Recorder: Will you permit, in your columns, a few words in explanation of the action of the committee of the General Conference, on Hymn and Tune Book? This explanation seems to be called for by the criticisms passed upon the committee and their work in various ways, but more particularly by an article, recently published in your paper, by the Chairman of a Hymn and Tune Book Committee of the First Alfred Church. Let it be remembered, then, that this committee received its appointment at the General Conference held in West Virginia, September, 1877, and that it was specially charged with the work of adapting to the use of Seventh-Day Baptists a given book—"The Book of Worship"—which had been recommended by a former committee. At the same session of Conference another committee was appointed to publish the book after its adaptation, provided he could do so without involving the Conference in any financial responsibility. These two committees, though charged with separate and distinct duties, were mutually dependent, neither being able to reach the end after which the Conference was striving, without the cooperation of the other. As a consequence, the two committees were only consulted, and worked much together. Wherever, in this article, it is necessary to distinguish between them, I shall call the former "The Committee," and the latter "The Publishing Agent."

Soon after their appointment, the attention of the committee was called to a book—"The Service of Song"—published since the work of the former committee was done, and, in the judgment of the present committee, superior to the one on which they were instructed to work. The committee, therefore, deemed that it would be far more satisfactory to the Conference, and to the denomination at large, to let the matter go over to the next session of the Conference, to be held in Plainfield, N. J., September, 1878, than to publish the inferior book according to instructions. In the meantime the committee gave the new book a pretty thorough examination, and careful notes were made of the change which it would be necessary to make in order to adapt it to the use of our people, and with these notes in hand, the Publishing Agent had several conferences with the publishers of the new book, as to the probable cost of the changes necessary to be made, and the ultimate cost of the book entire, including the changes, new title page, etc., provided the Conference should adopt the recommendations which the committee proposed to make. Considering all these contingencies, it did not seem strange that the publishers of said book should say, in general terms, to our Publishing Agent, "If your Conference decides to take our book we will sell it to you at a fair price, you paying the additional cost of all changes made."

The matter was thus presented to the Conference at Plainfield, September, 1878, and that body approved the action of the committee. From this point there seemed to be but little more for the committee to do than to place the matter in the hands of the Publishing Agent, which they did. He entered into correspondence with the publishers, and, after stating that our churches were mostly in rural communities and widely scattered, that some personal effort would be necessary to get the books introduced, and some arrangements made for keeping them on deposit in convenient localities, he said, "With this explanatory introduction, and with the understanding that if the book is adopted, the expense of new plates where alterations are needed, will be paid by us, and the cash paid for the books when ready in lots of 500 or 1,000, we should be glad to have you give us your best terms per copy for the completed books in four styles of binding."

To this letter they sent a double sheet answer, in which they say much about the elegance of their book, their method of introducing it, and of their willingness to give liberal terms, and finally closed with this definite proposition: "You had better have the adoption made, and then come down and arrange details"—which is to say—obliterate yourselves to take the book, and then we will tell you what you can have it for. After duly considering this reply, the Publishing Agent notified the committee that he saw no chance for procuring the publication of said book, on terms that would be satisfactory to our people, that, in fact, he was unable to get any definite statement of terms from the publishers of the book. This announcement, together with the fact that the committee found, on further examination, that greater changes would be required to adapt the book to the wants of our churches than was at first thought, seemed pretty effectually to stay proceed-

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S. S. Department.

Under the Direction of THE SABBATH-SCHOOL BOARD OF THE S. S. GENERAL CONFERENCE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS, 1880.

First Quarter. Jan. 8. The Infant Messiah on the Way to the Saviour. Matt. 2: 1-6.

Second Quarter. Feb. 1. The True Light on the Way to the Saviour. Matt. 2: 13-18.

Third Quarter. March 1. The True Light on the Way to the Saviour. Matt. 2: 19-23.

Fourth Quarter. April 1. The True Light on the Way to the Saviour. Matt. 2: 24-28.

General Truths - Jesus, our Redeemer.

Golden Texts - To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Titles and General Texts.

Questions.

Answers.

Prayers.

Scriptures.

Prayers.

Scriptures.

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Scriptures.

Prayers.

Scriptures.

Prayers.

Lesson Leaf, either in tabular form, or in separate squares or division for each lesson.

Programme for Review.

1. Singing.

2. Prayer by pastor.

3. Reading by pastor.

4. Singing.

5. Collection for Missionary or other benevolent purposes.

6. Distribution of papers, etc.

7. Titles and Golden Texts, in concert.

8. Geographical review with maps.

9. Singing.

10. Our Gleanings Star.

11. Singing.

12. Benediction by the pastor.

13. Benediction.

Remarks.

The singing should be appropriate to the occasion.

Each verse to each song. Much can be done during the singing.

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Each verse to each song. Much can be done during the singing.

Oh, Thomas! You cannot mean it! Here, now, tell me again! Is Willie that's waiting to buy the place.

TRUTHS FOR SIXTY-SEVEN YEAR-OLD MEN.

Remember, my son, that the world is older than you are.

Be as smart as you can, of course! Know as much as you can.

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BELLS' BUCKEYE BELL FOUNDRY.

FOR SALE AT THIS OFFICE.

THE ERIE RAILWAY.

STATIONS.

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