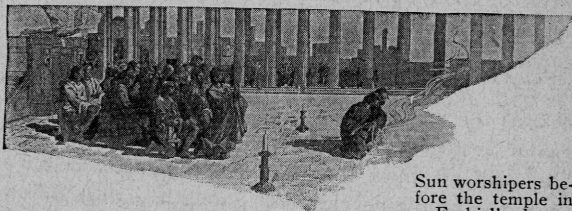


WHO ORIGINATED Sunday Observance?



Sun worshipers before the temple in Ezekiel's day.

Many people who are conscientiously observing the first day of the week as a rest day, think that the Bible somewhere countenances Sunday, and that Christ and His disciples changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. If you are one of those who so view the question, you will be surprised to know who attempted to change the day.

OF patriarchs and prophets, apostles and disciples, the foundation of the church, and Jesus Christ, the chief corner stone, we have no record that they ever rested on any other day than the Sabbath day "according to the commandment." No example or precept for the observance of any other day as the weekly Sabbath is laid down in God's word.

Consistency is indeed the glorious jewel of the Bible. Although patriarchs lived before the prophets, and apostles and disciples came thousands of years later, every man followed the same line of doctrine. Of the patriarch Abraham, it is written that he "obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 26: 5. The prophet David wrote: "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Psalm 119: 97. It is written of the followers of our

blessed Lord, that they "rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23:56. And of the great apostle Paul, it is written that he "reasoned . . . *every Sabbath*, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Acts 18:4.

In strange contrast with the consistent lives of those who have kept the faith before us, there is a manifest inconsistency in the lives of those to-day who are holding aloft the banners of Christendom. Sincere believers in the writings of the patriarchs and prophets, and followers of the very same Jesus, are observing and have observed for centuries, Sunday, the first day of the week, as the day of rest. Surely every believer knows that the Creator rested on the seventh day and hallowed it as the Sabbath. And all know that the fourth commandment enjoins the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Most followers of Christ know that He, every Christian's example, never kept any other day than the Sabbath day. Yet, in spite of these salient Bible evidences, the majority of the Christian world observe Sunday, the first day of the week, and worship on that day.

Absolutely No Record of Change in the Bible

No change from seventh-day to first-day worship is recorded in the Bible. If the change were catalogued there, it would cease to be so perplexing. But our Creator says, "I am the Lord, I change not." Malachi 3:6. The commandment must still stand; for the Saviour declares that "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17. Since heaven and earth are still standing and very much in evidence, the fourth precept of that law must still be obligatory. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law;" and, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matthew 5:17; 19:17.

Notwithstanding all this, an attempt has been made to change the day of rest. The majority to-day are not keeping the day that Jesus kept. And the question is, Who changed the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day of the week, and by what authority? Every Christian who desires to "enter into life"

should be concerned about this. We ought to know how this change came about, and if the greater part of Christendom is right in observing Sunday instead of the Sabbath day.

Sun Worship in Ezekiel's Day

There is light on this question in the very etymology of the word "Sunday." In early ages, mankind, forgetting the true Creator of the heavens and the earth "and all that in them is," and being possessed, as all men are, with that inherent instinct which goes seeking after an object or being to worship, began to look about for such an object or being. Their choice rested on the biggest and brightest thing their eyes could see. They chose the sun as god. With its brightness and welcome warmth, it caused earthly life to bud, blossom, and bring forth; surely it must be the true god and the author of man's being. Thus we find in history sun gods a-plenty. They are pictured on temples and monuments of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Ra, Isis, Osiris, Baal, Mithras, Hercules, Apollo, and Jupiter are all heathen gods of the sun. Even in the Bible, sun worship is mentioned. In Job 31:26-28, we read: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, . . . and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above." Again in Ezekiel 8:16: "At the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east."

The pagans had "gods many and lords many." Besides the sun, they worshiped the moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus, and Saturn. And they bestowed upon the days of the week the names of their gods. The sun, whence come light and heat, being the biggest and brightest, was accorded first rank; and the first day of the week was given over to this first and foremost of all gods, and called the sun's day, or Sunday. The moon took second place and also the second day; hence Monday. Saturn held Saturday, the last day. So from antiquity, Sunday has been held as a day of worship.

Paganism Worshipped on Sunday

Paganism was worshipping the sun on Sunday when Christ came. When the gospel from Judea came to our own ancestors in Europe, it found them paying homage to the sun on the first day of the week. As the Spirit of God, manifested in Christ, began to work upon the hearts of men, many left the worship of Apollo, the sun god, and joined the Christians.

After Christ's return to heaven, the great majority were still pagans worshipping the sun on Sunday, while the followers of Jesus worshiped God on the true Sabbath, or seventh day. With mighty manifestations of God's Spirit, Christianity mounted, and paganism began to wane. The Spirit-filled preaching of Paul in Asia, Macedonia, and Italy won thousands to the ranks of Christ. The church at that time was powerful, because of its zeal and earnestness and consecrated lives. The worship of the true God and the following of His commandments spread over the whole world.

Before Paul laid down his life, however, he wrote to the Thessalonians: "Now we beseech you, brethren, . . . that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, . . . as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. . . . For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work." 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-4, 7, R. V.

Here is warning of apostasy. Paul saw it working in the church. A "falling away" was to come "first." A "mystery of lawlessness," or a spirit of making void the law of God, was already at work. A "man of sin" was to be revealed sitting right in the church, "setting himself forth as God." It is quite evident that from this one source was to come the tendency to change the law of God. There can be but little doubt that Paul was acquainted with the prophecy of Daniel 7: 24, 25, regarding that "little horn" which was to come up out of Rome, with eyes and mouth like a man's (verse 8), and "speak words against the Most High," and "wear out the saints of the Most High," and "think to change the times and the law." The same Bible con-

sistency works here. Daniel had prophesied of a man of sin that was to "think" to change the law; and Paul, by the same Spirit, prophesied of the man of sin that had the mystery of lawlessness. God, who made eyes, is not blind; and through these two seers, He made known to the people of God the fact that there was to come into the church a power that would "change the times and the law." And true to the prophecy, we find its fulfillment.

Soon after Paul was put to death, there swept over the church, in the midst of its prosperity, a sharp rivalry among the bishops of the leading churches as to who should be the greatest. They became thirsty for more power. They did almost anything to inflate their membership, increase their bishoprics, and add to their power. They lowered standards of truth to raise membership. Multitudes joined the church. The white horse of purity and simplicity that the church had ridden, "conquering and to conquer," was exchanged for the red horse of strife and worldliness. She traded her "gold tried in the fire" for the tinsel of popularity. Paganism stalked into the church without a changed heart or life. Scarcely a century after his death, Paul's prophecy was meeting its fulfillment. There was a "falling away" from purity, and an induction of pagan principles and philosophies into the church.

Constantine Combines Paganism and Christianity

In the early dawn of the fourth century, Constantine, a Roman general, ambitious for the throne, adopted Christianity as a matter of political advantage. He saw paganism declining. In reality, it was being absorbed by the church. Merely as a measure of popularity, he proclaimed himself a Christian. The fawning bishops acclaimed him. As the poor old elephant secured the bird of paradise to sit upon her head, in an endeavor to outdo the millinery of Jungland, and the bird got all the praise and popularity, so the church bore Constantine to favor.

Constantine faced this situation: More than half the people worshiped on Sunday — pagans. The others observed the Sabbath — professed Christians. He conceived the idea of cementing the two factions. Though professing Christianity, he did not want to conflict with the prejudices of his pagan subjects. Artfully balancing himself between the two, he allayed the

"fears of his subjects by publishing in the same year two edicts, the first of which enjoined the solemn observance of Sunday, and the second directed the regular consultation of the aruspices"—a pagan practice. (Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chapter 20.)

Here we are, then, face to face with the first law, human or divine, ever given for the purpose of making Sunday a day of sacred rest. And it is entirely a man-made law, uninspired by Divinity. On the seventh day of March, 321, Constantine gave forth his Sunday law:

"Let all the judges and town people and the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun (*Dies Solis*); but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by Heaven."

In the foregoing paragraph, the genesis of Sunday keeping is manifest.

Sunday Only a Human Ordinance, Says the Historian

You will notice that Constantine did not forbid the desecration of the *Sabbath* or of the Lord's day, but the day of the sun, *Dies Solis*. The gradual intake of paganism into the church had its effect. The new pagan converts brought in their new ceremonies and their new rest day. The *Sabbath* loaded with Jewish traditions was counted a burden. Sunday was a day of festivity. Neander says (Rose's translation, page 186), "The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intention of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the *Sabbath* to Sunday." "Encyclopædia Britannica" says (article "Sunday"), "The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in 321 A. D., enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday (*venerabili die solis*), with an exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor."

The church followed the leadership of Constantine, and in the year 364, at the council of Laodicea, passed a law requiring

that Christians must "not Judaize by resting on Saturday." Eusebius, a noted bishop of the church, states, "All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day." Here, then, it is plain that a human hand, and not a divine, changed the Sabbath. Eusebius says, "We have transferred."

Finally the Sabbath was crushed, and Sunday, the pagan holiday, was instituted. Henceforth it was espoused by the church, and supported, as it is in our day. Doctor Eck, the astute lawyer and champion of the Roman Catholic Church in its controversy with Martin Luther, admits, "The church has changed the observance of the Sabbath to Sunday on its own authority, without Scripture, doubtless under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." That same church admits to-day that the change was brought about by its own action, and not by Christ or the apostles. In the "Doctrinal Catechism" of the Catholic church, by Keenan, page 174, we read:

The Church Boasts the Change

"*Ques.*— Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"*Ans.*— Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her,— she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."

And still further, in her "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine," R. C. (Tuberville), page 58, we read:

"*Q.*— How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

"*A.*— By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church."

Thus the Sabbath was superseded by the pagan Sunday, through human machination, and not on divine authority. The only part of Holy Writ that was written by God's own finger, the Ten Commandments, the law the psalmist says is perfect (Psalm 19: 7), has been altered by man. In sanctuary times, the ark that contained God's holy law was so holy that man was not allowed even to touch it. Uzzah paid the penalty of this transgression with his life. What will God do, then, to those

who have dared tamper with and change the commandments themselves?

The acts of Christianity compromising herself to paganism have produced a litter of mongrel doctrines, that are now fostered by the modern churches. True, we have long observed an error; but to have been a thousand years wrong will not make us right for a single hour. As Martin Luther said, "If the years should make wrong right, the devil would well deserve to be the most just one on earth, for he is now over five thousand years old."

There are two great contending powers on the earth in matters of religion — Christ and Satan. The whole world is divided in its allegiance to these two. You and I are on one side or the other. Your face and mine are in the picture somewhere. Those who obey Christ are on His side. Those who disobey Christ are on the side of the enemy. One of these powers, either Christ or Satan, changed the Sabbath. Clearly it was not our Christ. There is only the other alternative. The change must have been inspired by the enemy. Every loyal follower of the dear Lord Jesus, upon learning this, should reject this change, and say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6: 16.

IS the SABBATH a DEFINITE DAY?

Peter and Paul and all the other apostles kept the Saturday Sabbath. Does it matter which day we keep just so it is one of the seven? Is it Jewish and for Jews only, as some say? Can it be kept on a round world?

WE RECOMMEND, for those who wish to study this important subject, the following books:

"The Lord's Day: The Test of the Ages." 25 cents, postpaid.

"The Sabbath and the Sabbath Day." 35 cents, postpaid.

"Which Sabbath Shall We Keep?" 5 cents, postpaid.

PACIFIC PRESS PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION, Mountain, View, California
Portland, Oregon Cristobal, Canal Zone Omaha, Nebraska