

Christianity In The First Century---No. 2

By PAUL C. KELLER

In the February issue of this paper attention was called to a need for a constant study of "Christianity in the First Century". Due to typographical errors plus a limitation of space which necessitated a curtailing of the article, the first article in this series did not appear in the exact form intended. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate in this article some introductory matter that otherwise could have been omitted.

→ We are prone to use the wrong standard for judging the correctness of our faith and practice. Instead of allowing the practices of other congregations or individuals to be our guide we should always revert to the Bible. Neither the standard set by denominations nor the teaching of prominent preachers can be accepted as the safe guide in religion. Upon all matters of faith and practice the question should ever be: "What does the Bible teach?"

Two examples were presented of apostasies that came as a result of failure to adhere strictly to Bible teaching. (1) The apostasy from first century Christianity. This came gradually as men allowed their own likes and dislikes to replace the Bible as the standard of authority. (2) The "Christian Church" (or "Disciples") was presented as an example of the folly of substituting human judgment in the place of divine authority. When some in the "Restoration Movement" sought to "improve" upon the Lord's arrangement by introducing innovations—division resulted. These first departures were but introductions of the many that were to follow. The widescale apostasy of the "Christian Church" in less than a century of time has been so rapid as to be almost unbelievable. It could not have developed without a "beginning". Its "beginning" was the substitution of human wisdom for Bible authority. Thereafter men in this sect judged their teaching and practice in the light of that which had been handed down to them rather than in the light of Bible teaching. When we adopt the wrong standard of measurement for Christianity we shall "miss the mark" every time.

If we would know what Christianity should be in the Twentieth century we must learn what it was in the first century. In the last article it was noted that Christianity in the first century was—

UNDENOMINATIONAL IN ITS NATURE

This point was proved by the following considerations: (1) The church of Christ is not a denomination. (2) A denomination is not the church of Christ. (3) The gospel of Christ does not create denominations. (4) The requirements of the gospel in the first century were undenominational. To these points is added another: The results of gospel obedience were undenominational. All penitent believers who were baptized obtained salvation (Mk. 16: 16; Acts 2: 38); entered Christ (Gal. 3: 26, 27); and became members of the church. (1 Cor. 12: 13; Acts 2: 41, 47.) Since the Lord has "but one body" (1 Cor. 12: 20; Eph. 4: 4) which is the church, they were all members of the same church. Being "in Christ" they were "new creatures" (2 Cor. 5: 17) and hence, they had been "born again." (Jno. 3: 3-7.)

Now let us notice that first century Christianity was—

EXCLUSIVE

→ Christianity was not considered a "rival" of other religions. Men in the first century preached that it was above everything else. Nowhere did they intimate that it was merely "as good as" other religions. They continually called attention of men to Christianity's superiority to everything else. Because it was

(and is) superior to every other religion, New Testament preachers did not hesitate to condemn error wherever found.

(1) Paganism prevailed in much of the world at that time. Gospel preachers did not hesitate to expose its follies and call upon people to forsake it for the worship and service of Jehovah. The false religions of Corinth, Athens and Ephesus felt the "pressure" of Paul's attack upon them. (Acts 17, 18, 19.) He was uncompromising in his attitude toward idolatry. None were left with the belief that the preacher thought all religions good. Gospel preachers of the first century left the impression upon their hearers that Christianity was the only religion worthwhile and that all other religions were worthless. As surprising as it may seem to some members of the church today—this straightforward, uncompromising type of preaching converted thousands from the ranks of paganism.

(2) Even those who sought to worship the true God were not spared when their service was guided by the wrong authority. Judaism was ever subject to the unrelenting attack of gospel preachers. Into the temple and Jewish Synagogues they went calling attention to the fact that men could no longer serve God acceptably according to the Law of Moses. The Roman, Galatian and Hebrew epistles set forth the superiority of the gospel of Christ and the inferiority of the Law. New Testament preachers fought Judaism as bitterly as they did paganism.

(3) Judaism taught by church members looked no better to the apostles than that advanced by the scribes and Pharisees. Paul severely rebuked the Galatian Christians for their instability in turning back to Judaism. He pronounced God's curse upon those who preached any other gospel than that revealed by inspiration. (Gal. 1: 6-9.) In no uncertain terms he said: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5: 4.) No deviation from the gospel of Christ was tolerated.

(4) Theorists and innovators in the church were likewise opposed. The Corinthians were rebuked for their abuse of the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11: 18-34.) Hymenaeus and Alexander were "delivered unto Satan" for having "made shipwreck" of the faith! (1 Tim. 1: 19, 20.) Hymenaeus and Philetus were exposed because of their error in teaching that "the resurrection is past already." Their teaching had overthrown the faith of some and, hence, could not be tolerated. (2 Tim. 2: 17, 18.) False teachers in the church were opposed as strongly as were false teachers out of the church. Christianity was held to be better than everything else. Christianity in the first century was exclusive.

THIS CONCEPTION NEEDED TODAY

→ As Christianity in the first century was exclusive—so it needs to be in the twentieth century. The church of Jesus Christ is not merely "as good as" the denominations. It is better than any one of them—or all of them combined! Christians today need to be as unrelenting in their opposition to all error as were Christians then. Catholicism and all denominationalism needs to be denounced as false and contrary to the word of God. Errors in the church should no more be tolerated than the errors of sectarianism. Premillennialism looks no better coming from R. H. Boll and E. L. Jorgenson than it did from Pastor Russell and Judge Rutherford! Neither do innovations and digressions look one whit better coming from the brethren than they do from "Digressives" and other denominationalists! There is a need for a strict adherence to the Word

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)

baptized into him in order to have the remission of his sins. (Mk. 16: 15, 16; Gal. 3: 27; Acts 2: 38.) The Bible also teaches that one who is in Christ may have forgiveness of sins which were committed after he became a child of God by repenting, confessing his guilt and asking God to forgive him. We have an example of this recorded in Acts the 8th. chapter, verses 9-24. Philip preached the gospel in Samaria. Verse 12 tells us that men and women were baptized. Verse 13 says, "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed." This man Simon did the same things that the other people of Samaria did in obedience to the preaching that was done by Philip. They all believed the gospel and were baptized. According to the Great Commission of Christ, their past sins were forgiven. (Mk. 16: 15, 16.) Therefore, Simon was saved from his past sins. Later he sinned by desiring to buy the gift of God with money. (See verses 18, 19.) Peter rebuked Simon and told him to repent and "pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Thus, by a New Testament example we learn that it is not necessary for one who has been baptized into Christ to be baptized again every time he sins.

Objection No. 13: "You Do Not Baptize Babies."

We baptize believers. This is in harmony with the commandment of Christ. (Mark 16: 15, 16.) Infants cannot believe, therefore, they are not subjects of baptism. Baptism is for those who have repented of their sins. (Acts 2: 38.) Infants have no sin of which to repent. For this reason also they are not subject for baptism.

Objection No. 14: "You Invite Everybody to

Eat the Lord's Supper."

We do not invite any, nor do we bar any. The Bible teaches that this is an individual responsibility. Each one must examine himself. (1 Cor. 11: 28.) Jesus taught that the Lord's supper, or his table, would be in his kingdom. (Matt. 26: 28; Lk. 22: 29, 30.) The church and the kingdom are the same. (Matt. 16: 18, 19.) The Lord's supper is for those who are in God's kingdom. If one is in the kingdom of God, when he eats the bread and drinks the fruit of the vine which is served as the Lord's supper, it is the Lord's supper to him. If one is not in the kingdom of God, even though he eats the bread and drinks the fruit of the vine which is served as the Lord's supper it is not the Lord's supper to him. Since Jesus said in Luke 22 that his followers should "eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," one cannot eat and drink at Christ's table unless he is in the kingdom of God. The Bible tells men how to become citizens of the kingdom of God. An individual can learn from the Bible whether or not he is in the kingdom of God. If he is in the kingdom he should eat the Lord's supper. If he is not in the kingdom of God, he cannot eat the Lord's supper, it matters not how much bread he may eat or how much fruit of the vine he may drink. Let me repeat, we invite none, we bar none, so far as the individual is concerned. We serve the Lord's supper, we teach all men that the supper was placed in the kingdom by the Lord himself. Each one must determine in the light of God's word whether or not he is in the proper position or relationship to God to be able to eat the Lord's supper.

(More to follow.)

IT ISN'T EASY:

- To control one's temper,
- To resist conceit in the face of applause,
- To confess to a mistake,
- To smile when despondent,
- To see the humor of a situation when the joke is on you,
- To forgive quickly,
- To avoid jealousy,
- To halt criticism of others,
- To be temperate in all matters,
- To be unselfish.

(Continued from Page 1)

of God in all matters of faith and practice. There is a need for opposition to every deviation from the Scriptures. Every tendency toward digression must be curbed.

"WE CAN LEARN FROM THE DENOMINATIONS"

The notion is held by some that we can learn many good things by observing the denominations. It is my conviction that we can learn a good deal more by going to the New Testament! At least, we shall not run the risk of picking up "bad habits!" Some church members are heard to say: "Oh, if members of the church just had the loyalty of Catholics; the zeal of Adventists; and the vision of Methodists—wouldn't it be fine?" And then, they almost drift into "regions beyond" in their ecstasy! Poor, silly things! It would be much better if church members had the loyalty, zeal and vision of Christian in the first century! Such loyalty, zeal and vision (then and now) puts to shame anything the Catholics, Adventists, Methodists or anybody else can produce. It will be a happy day when the churches of Christ quit trying to imitate the sects and get back to the business of reproducing the New Testament church on earth. In instances where some churches have "borrowed" things from the sects, my advice would be: "take it back where you got it!" Let the divine pattern be the pattern of the church today. (Heb. 8: 5.) It is sufficient.

(More to follow.)

THE OLD FASHIONED PREACHER

Old Parson Stubbs, he used to preach
At Tobin's Schoolhouse and at Beach;
A preacher of the olden brand,
With Scripture verses right at hand,
With half the Bible learned by rote,
Right in his head where he could quote,
I'm sure the bells of heaven rang
Both when he prayed and when he sang!

He raised a loud, reproving din
Against old-fashioned breed of sin.
He spoke aloud—some say he raved—
About the need of "getting saved."
He held "revivals" now and then,
Where women, kids, and grown-up men,
With tear streams coursing down the face,
"Sought pardon, purity, and grace."

He thundered forth "the truth," "the word,"
In tones that were distinctly heard;
He had one "message" meant for all;
'Twas "seek redemption from the fall."
The parson died in ninety-three;
His last song was, "Abide With Me,"
His last words were, "It is His way."
"Good-bye; I'm going home today!"

A man now preaches in his place,
Who scoffs the very sound of grace.
He has A.M.'s and Ph.D.'s,
And other marks of high degrees.
He lectures on the planet Mars,
The glory of the moon and stars,
The beauty of the mountain range,
And other topics vague and strange.

His lectures might be very good
If they were ever understood;
But they don't put a man on pins,
And make him sorry for his sins;
They never stir a wicked gent
Up to the point where he'll repent!
I wonder what this man will sing
When slipping off to meet "the King,"
And if, like Parson Stubbs, he'll say:
"Goodbye; I'm going home today."

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The Sabbath Law

JOHN D. COX

Those who insist that the sabbath should be observed by God's children today, as it was kept by the Jews during the Mosaic dispensation, take the position that two separate laws were given at Mt. Sinai. One of these laws, relating only to ceremonial duties, was written in a book by Moses and was deposited by the side of the ark of the covenant, according to their claim. They say that this law was abolished by the death of Christ upon the cross. The other law, the ten commandments related only to moral duties and was written on two tables of stone which were deposited in the ark of the covenant. This law, they claim, has never been abolished. Thus they arrive at the conclusion that since the sabbath law was one of the ten commandments it has never been abolished and is binding upon God's children to-day. Regardless of the honesty of those who have accepted this argument, it is fallacious. Let us examine the teachings of God's word with reference to the law that was given to the Jews.

1. How Many Laws Did God Give Through Moses?

If the above argument is correct, it will harmonize with all that is taught in the Bible regarding the law that was given to the Jews. Does the Bible teach that two laws were given to the Jews? If so, we may expect the laws (plural) of Moses, not the law (singular) of Moses, to be referred to in the Bible. But, we read: "For the law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) Does this sound as if two separate laws were given through Moses? As we turn through the pages of the Bible we find the following statements about the law that was given to Moses: "The law of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 31: 3-4.) "the book of the law;" (Neh. 8: 3.) and "the law of Moses." (Mal. 4: 4.) Other passages could be cited which speak of the law to the Jews in the singular.

2. Where was this law written?

The book of Joshua quotes from the book of Exodus and speaks of it as "the book of the law of Moses." (Joshua 8: 31; Exodus 20: 25.) The book of Ezra refers to a statement in the book of Numbers and speaks of it as "the book of Moses." (Ezra 6: 18; Num. 3: 6.) Jesus quoted a statement from the book of Leviticus and spoke of it as "the law." (Matt. 22: 36-40; Lev. 19: 18.) The book of 2 Kings refers to a statement in the book of Deuteronomy and speaks of it as "the book of the law of Moses." (2 Kings 14: 6; Deut. 24: 16.) Therefore, the law of Moses includes the things set forth in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The ten commandments are quoted in two of these books, Exodus and Deuteronomy. (Ex. 20: 1-17; Deut. 5: 6-22.) Both of the books in which the ten commandments are quoted are spoken of as "the book of the law of Moses." (Joshua 8: 31; 2 Kings 14: 6.) Hence, the decalogue is not one of the two laws given to Moses, but it is a part of the only law that was given to him. When that law was done away with (Col. 2: 13-15; Eph. 2: 14-16) the ten commandments were also abolished, being a part of the law. And when the ten commandments were abolished the sabbath law was done away, being one of the ten commandments.

3. What about the "moral" and "ceremonial" duties?

It was stated at the beginning of this article that the claim is made by some that one law was written on stones and related only to moral duties and another was written in a book and related only to ceremonial duties. But, one has but to read Leviticus 19: 1-37 to be impressed with the fact that the law which was written in a book contained what may be referred

to as both moral and ceremonial duties. Those who make a distinction between moral and ceremonial law are doing so without the authority of God.

4. What about the ten commandments?

"If the abolition of the ten commandments means that we are not to keep the sabbath holy, does it not also mean that we may have other gods, lie, steal, kill, etc.?" The answer is this, nine of the principles set forth in the ten commandments are taught in the New Testament under the law of Christ. These principles are: (1) Worshipping Jehovah only (Acts 14: 15.) (2) Making no graven images. (1 Jno. 5: 17.) (3) To not take the name of God in vain. (Jas. 5: 12.) (4) Honoring parents. (Eph. 6: 1-2.) (5) To not kill. (Rom. 13: 9; 1 Jno. 3: 15.) (6) To not commit adultery. (1 Cor. 6: 9; Matt. 5: 27.) (7) To not steal. (Eph. 4: 28.) (8) To not bear false witness. (Col. 3: 9.) (8) To not covet. (Col. 3: 5.) We see that only one of the ten commandments is not taught in the gospel of Christ and that one is, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

5. What about a day of worship now?

Does the fact that the sabbath law has been done away mean that we have no certain day upon which to worship God? John speaks of "the Lord's Day." (Rev. 1: 10.) As we study the New Testament in an effort to learn which day is "the Lord's day," we notice the following facts: (1) The Lord arose from the grave on the first day of the week. (Mk. 16: 1-9.) (2) The Lord's church was established upon the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 47 K. J. V.) and Pentecost was on the first day of the week, being the next day after the sabbath. (Lev. 23: 15.) (3) The followers of the Lord assembled regularly for worship upon the first day of the week. (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 2.) Surely, the first day of the week is the Lord's day! If we follow the example of the apostles and early Christians, we will worship upon the first day of the week, not the seventh day.

6. Why and to whom was the sabbath law given?

The confusion with reference to the sabbath law would be cleared from the minds of many if they were to inquire as to whom the sabbath law was given and as to the purpose for which it was given. No doubt some will be astonished to find that nowhere in the Bible do we read of God's commanding the Gentiles to keep the sabbath day holy. This commandment was given to the Jews only. It was given to the Jews for a definite purpose. Many are under the impression that the sabbath law was given in the garden of Eden, from reading Genesis 2: 2-3. But, this verse says nothing about man's keeping the sabbath day holy. It says God rested and hallowed the seventh day, but does not say he commanded man to keep it holy. The first time that we read of God calling upon man to keep the sabbath as a day of rest is when he was speaking to Moses who was leading the Jews in the wilderness. (Ex. 16: 25-30.) To the Jews God said: "See, for that Jehovah hath given you the sabbath." (Ex. 16: 29.) But why did he command the Jews to keep the sabbath and did not command it of all men? The answer is: "And thou (the Jews—J. D. C.) shalt remember that thou was a servant in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5: 15.) So the Jews, not all men, were to keep the sabbath in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Gentiles cannot keep the sabbath as the Jews did because they have never been in Egyptian bondage and delivered from it as were the Jews.

Adventists And The Old Covenant

By ROBERT C. WELCH

Seventh Day Adventists have sent out copies of a sermon or tract entitled "The Law of Ten Commandments Is Not The Old Covenant". This tract is an attempt to prove that the seventh day of the week is to be observed in this age as it was commanded to be kept by the Jews in the ten commandments. The eighth chapter of Hebrew says that the old covenant is taken away. Sabbatarians are defeated unless they can show that the old covenant does not contain the ten commandments, for their argument is that the law of ten commandments containing the law of the sabbath is binding upon people in this age. Even if they prove that the ten commandments are a separate and complete covenant, which they attempt to do in the tract, they must still prove that this is not the one spoken of in Hebrews or that that group of laws has not been taken away. This article will review some of the arguments made in the tract, together with what the Bible teaches concerning the ten commandments and our observance of the first day of the week.

What Is "The Law"?

The point of argument is this passage, "In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." (Heb. 8: 13.) Now observe his comment on this covenant:

This did not mean the Ten Commandments because they did not vanish away. Everything that did "vanish away" became void and of no effect. We have Paul's words for it that no such thing happened to the law of Ten Commandments. Here they are, "Do we then make VOID THE LAW through faith? God forbid. Yea, we ESTABLISHED THE LAW" (Rom. 7: 4). Nothing could "vanish away" and be "established" at the same time. This proves that in point of duration there is a distinction between the "old covenant" and "the law".

The writer of the tract seeks to make the term "the law" apply to the ten commandments but the term "old covenant" to something else. He quotes a passage from Romans as proof that the ten commandments did not pass away, but he forgot to show that the passage applies to the ten commandments only. He only made the assertion. He must first show that the term "the law" means the ten commandments only. When he has done that he will be ready to try to show what it means to "establish the law". Until then he must remember that the word "establish" can mean "to verify," and not necessarily "to give permanence to".

In their arguments on Hebrews, Sabbatarians want to contend that "the law" is not the same as the "old covenant", and that it applies to the ten commandments only. But when they are forced to discuss such passages as the seventh chapter of Romans they will recede from that contention on "the law". They contradict themselves and cannot remain consistent in their interpretations and perversions. But the book of Hebrew itself defeats them. Chapters seven through ten are all on the subject of the covenant which is spoken of in their quotations. In this connection "the law" is used as well as the term "covenant". "There is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. 7: 12.) Again it says, "For the law is now having passed away." (Heb. 8: 13.) This one fact alone shows the covenant changed says in the context that the law is changed. If the term "the law" applies to the ten commandments, then Hebrews says that the "old covenant" law has been changed.

Since they argue that the ten commandments have not been taken away, thus the Sabbath is binding upon us, let us see just what the Bible says about that group of laws. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who

was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7: 4.) Notice that it says we are made dead to "the law". That is what the tract says is the ten commandment law. But when Sabbatarians get to this passage they want to retract. They will argue here that the term "the law" means only the old ceremonial law, and that the ten commandments are not included in the term. But when arguing on the covenant they insist that the term "the law" means a separate group of laws including only the ten commandments. Does it mean the ceremonial law and not the ten commandments in Romans? Let the chapter explain itself, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7: 7.) All who know the ten commandments know that this commandment is the last one of the ten. Thus in Romans, chapter seven, the term "the law" applies to the ten commandments. Also it says we are made dead to "the law" therefore, we are made dead to the ten commandments. It is indeed unfortunate for their cause that Sabbatarians have so defined the term "the law".

The former passage does not specifically mention the sabbath day. But there is specific mention made of it in another place that tells what has been taken away. Certainly it is included in the former, but is specifically named in this one as having been taken away. "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. . . . Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day." (Col. 2: 14-16.) Again, on this passage, they will argue that the "bond written in ordinances" refers to the ceremonial law only, that it has nothing to do with the ten commandments. But they cannot destroy the fact that the sabbath day is said to have been taken away in the passage just quoted. In every quarter they lose the battle when they are forced to consider the context. It is a common and vicious practice to lift sentences from the context and give to them interpretations in support of doctrines which are altogether contradictory to the sense of the context.

What Is The "Old Covenant"?

The tract makes a great play upon the word "promises" as found in this passage, "But now hath he obtained a minister the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises." (Heb. 8: 6.) The writer of the pamphlet argues that there is only one promise in the ten commandments, hence, since the word is plural it cannot apply to the ten commandments. Of course this argument is based upon the preceding one that the ten commandments is not a part of the "old covenant". He made nothing but assertions on that point, and proved nothing. ~~Now he says that the word "promises" refers to the ten commandments only, that the word "promises" is plural that God said to them. Certainly, there are many promises to be found in the old covenant or covenant, even if no promise was contained in the ten commandments themselves.~~

This folly is to be seen, however, in his application of the "promises" to that which the people said, "And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." (Ex. 19: 8.) He says it cannot apply to God's covenant because there is only one promise in the ten commandments; but he applies it to the people, using a quotation which contains only one promise. Notice the wording of the tract.

"Speaking of the first covenant, Paul said, 'For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been

(Continued on Page 4)

ADVENTISTS AND THE OLD COVENANT

(Continued from Page 1)

ought for the second? Then going on to explain he says, 'For finding fault with them.' They made 'promises' but did not keep them. The words 'with them' does not apply to the law. They apply to the 'promises' of the people. This proves that the Old Covenant was the contract of Exod. 19 where the people said, 'All the words which the Lord hath spoken, we will do.' Here we find the 'fauls', the 'bondage' and the poor 'promises' of the Old Covenant."

The writer of the tract would have a hard time proving that the pronoun "them" refers to the promises instead of the people. It is far easier to assert than to prove. Even his assertion is based upon a doubtful rendition of the text (see footnote in American Standard Version).

If he had continued to quote the passage he began he would have found the covenant that was taken away. He would have found that it was not the promises of the people, but that it was the words of Jehovah:

"For finding fault with them (he saith, Behold, the days come, said the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with thy fathers, but in my covenant, and I will put it in thy heart, said the Lord." (Jer. 31: 31-34)

Notice that the covenant to be taken away was God's covenant. The covenant the people broke was God's covenant. The pronouns "I" and "my" refer to God and not to the people.

These points have been noted in this study: 1. The "old covenant" spoken of in Hebrews is also spoken of as "The law"; 2. Both the "old covenant" and "the law" are said by Hebrews to have given way to the new; 3. We are made dead to "the law" which contains the ten commandments; blotted out; 5. The "old covenant" that was to be changed for a new one was God's, not the people's. Let us observe the teaching of the New Covenant.

First Day Of The Week

Nowhere is the teaching he found where the sabbath was changed from the seventh day to the first day. The person who tries to defend the observance of the first day of the week instead of Saturday by such arguments will be unable to meet a Sabbatarian. We must observe the first day of the week as the New Covenant tells us to observe it. Neither are we to become Judaistic by attempting to go back to Sabbath keeping, nor are we to become Judaistic by trying to enforce sabbath observance on the first day.

Sabbatarians labor hard to convince people that the observance of the first day of the week is not taught in the New Covenant, but that it was instituted by the Catholic Church, and is to be compared with other pagan observances which they borrowed. Note these words of the tract:

"In Heb. 13: 20 Paul spoke of 'the blood of the everlasting covenant.' It was this 'blood' which ratified the New Covenant and brought it 'in force'—for a testament is of force after men are dead' (Heb. 9: 17). But after it is ratified by death, 'no man disannulleth or addeth thereto' (Gal. 3: 13). In the face of these Bible facts how could first-day observance be 'added thereto' after the death of the testator?"

Observance of the first day is a part of the New Covenant and is ratified by the blood of Christ. Its observance was not added by Catholics after the death of Christ. It began to be practiced after his death because "a testament is of force after men are dead". But it was taught and practiced by inspired men who were enabled by inspiration to carry out the will of Christ. Sabbatarians are guilty of trying to "disannul" the New Covenant by teaching that we are not to observe the first day of the week, but are to go back to Judaism by keeping the seventh day.

None of the New Testament was written before the death of Christ. We have that covenant written after his death by inspired disciples who proved that they were writing the truth by signs and wonders (Heb. 2: 1-4). Before he died, Christ said to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

(Jno. 14: 25, 26). On the night of his betrayal as he ate the last supper with them he told his disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22: 15, 16.) Again he said, "that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." (Luke 22: 30.) When did they obey that command? On the sabbath day or seventh day of the week? No. "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them." (Acts 20: 7.) To the church at Corinth Paul wrote, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper." (1 Cor. 16: 2.) That is the way they were to observe the first day of the week. I have no more reason to doubt that it was to be done on the first day of the week than I have to doubt that he commanded the Lord's supper. All was written after his death. But they were writing and doing what he taught them. It is the will, the testament, the covenant of Christ, ratified by his blood, made sure by the Holy Spirit as he guided the writers into all the truth. Let us follow the New Covenant, not the old, on the first day, every day, in every way that the New Covenant teaches.

BAPTISM BY TELEPHONE

(Continued from Page 2)

was not guided by the Bible in his decision to join the Methodist church.

The crowning proof that God's Word had no part in this transaction is shown in the fact that the major was baptized by telephone—so they thought. NT baptism is (1) for those taught, believers, penitent, confessors of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God—Mt. 28: 19; Mk. 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; Acts 8: 36-39; (2) a burial—Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12; Eph. 4: 5; (3) to induct one into Christ, for remission of sins—Rom. 6: 3; Acts 2: 38. No NT passage says that "we are sprinkled with him by baptism into death." There is no instance of baptism by sprinkling in the NT. Since "there is one baptism" (Eph. 4: 5) and that is the burial of Rom. 6: 4, the major was not baptized.

The newspaper report was altogether truthful in saying that this was "in Methodist fashion." With a nurse administering the water in California and the preacher "reading the baptismal service" in Texas, with a sprinkling the mode, with the major joining the Methodist Church, and all of this being done by telephone, we agree that it was "in Methodist fashion" for there is nothing about it that resembles anything in the New Testament. But we should not be surprised, since the Methodist Discipline of 1948, in its Historical Statement, page 3, admits that the Methodist Church "had its origin in the Church of England" and not in the NT. This shows how far people drift from the New Testament.

I will always believe what Solomon said, but I am afraid that they are crowding him a little—Jack Meyer in the Gospel Visitor.

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