

Preach the Word

by James S. White

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word." 2Tim.iv,1,2.

A MORE solemn charge cannot be found in the Book of God. The apostle Paul brings Timothy up in the presence of God, and of Christ, and before the solemnities of the last Judgment, as he gives him this solemn charge - "Preach the word." But what adds solemnity to this charge, is the fact that it is as it were the apostle's dying testimony, as may be seen from verses 6,7. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

But the first clause of our text is worthy of special notice. "I charge thee therefore." This seems to be a conclusion from facts before stated. We turn back to chap.iii, for a statement of the great facts on which Paul bases this solemn charge.

FIRST FACT. - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form

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of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Verses 1-5.

Here is a catalogue of eighteen sins resting upon the professed church of Christ - those who have "a form of godliness." The word reproves all these sins. And if it be faithfully preached, believed and obeyed, it will put them away. It is the only remedy that can possibly reach the case.

SECOND FACT. - "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Verses 14-19.

Precious Bible! With the inspired Scriptures, men may become wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. In the formation of your religious sentiments, come to the Bible; for it is profitable for doctrine. In cases of correction, or reproof, take the Bible. Would you be instructed in righteousness? learn from the word. It is given that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "I charge thee therefore," says Paul, that is, in view of these two great facts. "Preach the word." He continues, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers,

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having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." The Apostle points to the future. There were men in the Apostle's day who would not endure sound doctrine, and this has been the case ever since his day; but Paul is looking forward to a time when this shall be so universal as to constitute a sign.

We now inquire, To what time does he here refer? Answer. To the very time he had just described: namely, the *last days*. The last days, then, are characterized,

1. As perilous, and the nature of the perils are seen in Paul's description of the last days, where he repeats eighteen sins upon those who have a form of godliness.

2. In the last days there will be very many religious teachers who will labor to defend popular *fables*, and the masses will follow their teachings. The Apostle says that they shall "heap to themselves

teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

3. In the last days the plain truth of the word will be proclaimed. This is evident from the work of those who support fables. They labor to turn the people from the truth to fables; therefore the truth is proclaimed abroad in the ears of the people.

Dear reader, are not these things beginning to have a fulfillment before your eyes? We solemnly believe that we now stand amid the

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perils of the last days. God is raising up men to go forth and fearlessly preach his word. Their faithful testimony arrests the attention of the people, and this furnishes work for the teachers of long cherished errors, to stand in their defense, and turn the ears of as many of the people as possible back again to popular fables. It is therefore necessary to contrast the plain word with fables, that the honest be not deceived. The Apostle speaks of *fables*, a plurality; but we at this time propose the examination of but one. We therefore invite the careful and prayerful attention of the reader, while we endeavor to contrast the Bible evidences for Sabbath-keeping, with those urged for Sunday-keeping.

But here we are invited to come to the New Testament. All admit that the Old Testament teaches no other weekly Sabbath than the seventh day; but many honestly suppose that the New Testament teaches the observance of the first day of the week, and such wish us to come to the New Testament, and decide the Sabbath question by what is called the Christian Scriptures.

We are happy to come to the New Testament. Not because we have not a perfect right to the testimony of both Testaments on this question: but to come as near as possible to those we wish to benefit, we will at this time examine the question by the testimony of the New.

And we inquire, When was the New Testament written? Answer. In the Christian dispensation. It is said that the gospel by Matthew, the first New Testament writer was

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written six years after the resurrection of Christ. For whose benefit, then, was it written? Ans. The men of the Christian dispensation. How was it written? Ans. By inspiration of God. Therefore the inspired terms of the New Testament should be received as they are handed down to us.

The first day of the week is mentioned in the New Testament only eight times, and is not, in a single instance, spoken of as a sacred day. Inspiration gives it the simple title of first day of the week.

On the other hand, inspiration in the New Testament, gives the seventh day of the week the sacred title of Sabbath, fifty-nine times.

We will here give the eight texts which mention the first day of the week, and see if they furnish evidence that the day should be observed as the weekly Sabbath.

FIRST TEXT. - Matt.xxviii,1. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre." Here two days are mentioned. One is called the Sabbath, and the day following it, is called, simply, the first day of the week.

SECOND TEXT. - Mark xvi,2. "And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. We give this passage, and the following three, because we are making clean work in giving every text that mentions the first day of the week. They only show that the first day of the week is called simply the first day of the week.

THIRD TEXT. - Verse 9. "Now when Jesus

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was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

FOURTH TEXT. - Luke xxiv,1. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."

FIFTH TEXT. - John xx,1. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

SIXTH TEXT. - Verse 19. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." From this text it is asserted that the disciples met on the day of our Lord's resurrection to commemorate that event, and that Jesus sanctioned this meeting by uniting with them. To this assertion we reply -

The disciples at that time did not believe that their Lord had been raised from the dead. Mark xvi,9-14 proves this. It is there stated that he first appeared to Mary, who "went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not." Verse 11. They did not believe Mary.

"After that he appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it

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unto the residue; neither believed they them." Verses 12,13. They would not believe the two disciples to whom Jesus had that day made himself known at Emmaus. Read Luke xxiv,13-36.

"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." Verse 14. Jesus reproved the disciples for their unbelief in regard to his resurrection. And it is not remarkable that he should find his disciples together that evening, inasmuch as they had one common abode. Acts i,13. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James and John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James." See also Mark iii,19. And our Lord appeared to them "as they sat at meat." They were enjoying the last meal of the day.

The simple facts in the case, then, are that Jesus appeared to his disciples at their home, as they were enjoying a common meal, and

that they did not, two excepted, believe that he had arisen from the dead. But ministers gravely assert that they were assembled in religious worship, commemorating the resurrection of their Lord! Whether assertions of this kind be made in ignorance of the facts in the case, or to deceive the people, is it not time that those who make them be rebuked,

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and the people read the facts for themselves out of the New Testament?

It is also asserted that Christ often appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week. But only one text [John xx,26] is cited to prove this assertion, and this proves nothing to the point. "And after eight days again his disciples were within and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you." The text says, the disciples *were within*, which does not mean that they had *gone out* to meeting. They were at home. Again, after eight days does not mean seven, but carries us past the next Sunday to Monday night, at least. But here we are met with the assertion that the phrase, *after eight days* is indefinite, therefore does not prove that Christ appeared to his disciples on Monday evening. But if it be indefinite who knows that it means just one week? In the name of common sense we protest against making the phrase indefinite in order to remove the circumstance from Monday and then making it definite in placing it on Sunday. The phrase is either definite, or is not; if it is not definite, then no one can tell the day on which Jesus met with his disciples the second time. If it be definite, then the second time that Jesus appeared to his disciples was as late as Monday night.

SEVENTH TEXT. - Acts xx,7. "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight."

It is asserted that the disciples after the ascension

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of their Lord, assembled on the first day of the week to commemorate his resurrection by the breaking of bread. We reply

that the communion does not commemorate the resurrection, but the crucifixion of our Lord. 1Cor.xi,26. And as it was celebrated at Troas on a different day from that on which it was first instituted by our Lord, we conclude that it was not designed to be celebrated on any one particular day of each week. The meeting at Troas seems to be an occasional meeting to break bread as Paul was to depart on the morrow.

From the circumstance of there being "many lights in the upper chamber," where the disciples were assembled to break bread, we conclude that it was an evening meeting. Paul preached all night, and at day break started off on foot to Assos and there joined his brethren in a ship, and came to Mitylene.

Now comes the inquiry, On what day of the week did that meeting hold all night? Ans. "Upon the first day of the week." As each day commences at sunset, according to God's division of time [Gen.i.] that meeting at Troas, was held on what is called Saturday night, and Paul and his brethren started off on their long journey to Jerusalem on the morning of the first day of the week. Here is apostolic example for labor on the first day of the week.

If it be said that the meeting at Troas was held on Sunday night, and that the disciples started on their journey Monday morning, we reply that in that case the meeting was held on the second day of the week; for the first

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day of the week had passed, Sunday night at sunset. And those who with this position plead apostolic example for Acts xx,7, should keep Monday as the Christian Sabbath.

But leaving the question in regard to what night this meeting was held, there is an important fact which places the subject beyond all controversy. The first part of each of the seven days of the week is the night, the last part is the day. The disciples held a meeting in the first part of the day at Troas, and journeyed on the last part of the same day. If, then, this day received the stamp of sacredness by this meeting of the Apostles in the first part of it, their journeying in the last part took the stamp off.

EIGHTH TEXT. - 1 Cor. xvi, 2. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." It is inferred from this text that Paul enjoins a public collection; therefore the Corinthian church met for worship each first day of the week; therefore it is the Christian Sabbath. But it is an important fact that the Apostle enjoins exactly the reverse of a public collection. He says, "Let every one of you lay by him in store." This is an individual work for each to attend to at home.

Justin Edwards in his notes on the New Testament, comments on this text thus - "Lay by him in store; at home. That there be no gatherings; that their gifts might be ready when the Apostle should come." J. W. Morton, late missionary to Hayti, in his Vindication of the True Sabbath, says; "The whole

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question turns upon the meaning of the expression, 'by him;' and I marvel greatly how you can imagine that it means 'in the collection-box of the congregation. Greenfield, in his Lexicon, translates the Greek term, *pareauto* 'by one's self, i.e., at home.' Two Latin versions, the Vulgate and that of Castellio, render it, '*apud se,*' with one's self, at home. Three French translations, those of Martin, Osterwald, and De Sacy, '*chez soi,*' at his own house, at home. The German of Luther, *bei sich felbit,* '*bei sich selbst,*' by himself, at home. The Dutch, '*by hemselven,*' same as the German. The Italian of Diodati, '*appresso di se,*' in his own presence, at home. The Spanish of Felipe Scio, '*en su casa,*' in his own house. The Portuguese of Ferreira, '*para isso,*' with himself. The Swedish, *naer sig fielf,* '*naer sig sielf,*' near himself. I know not how much this list of authorities might be swelled, for I have not examined one translation that differs from those quoted above."

We have now briefly noticed the texts which mention the first day of the week in the New Testament, and find there no commandment to keep the day, no intimation of a change of the day of the Sabbath, and no grounds for an inference that the day possesses any more sacredness than the five days that follow it.

The Pagans dedicated the first day of the week to the worship of the sun, hence comes the name Sunday. Papists, and Protestants generally, have observed the day in honor of the resurrection of Christ, without any divine authority for so doing, retaining the Pagan name. Hence, Sunday-keeping, instead of

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being of divine origin, is a Pagan, Papal fable.

We will here give a reference to all those texts in the New Testament, which call the seventh day of the week the Sabbath. Matt.xii,1,2,5, twice, 8,10,11,12; xxiv,20; xxviii,1; Mark i,21; ii, 23,24,27, twice, 28; iii,2,4; vi,2; xv,42; xvi,1; Luke iv,16,31; vi, 1,2,5,6,7,9; xiii,10,14, twice, 15,16; xiv,1,3,5; xxiii,54,56; John v, 9,10,16,18; vii,22,23, twice; ix,14,16; xix,31, twice; Acts i,12; xiii, 14,27,42,44; xv,21; xvi,13; xvii,2; xviii,4. Total, 59.

We do not propose to notice all these texts at this time, as many of them contain no other proof to the point, than that the Sabbath is the inspired name of the seventh day of the week in the Christian dispensation. And we might here add, that if the phrase, "Christian Sabbath," be admissible, the seventh day of the week is the Christian Sabbath. We will notice a few of the above texts.

Matt.xxiv,20. "And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day." It is generally believed that this text has reference to the flight of Christians from the city of Jerusalem at the time of its destruction. Then our Lord recognized the existence of the Sabbath A. D. 70, as verily as the seasons of the year. The text also shows that our Lord regarded the Sabbath as being a definite day of the week. Some teach that the Sabbath is not a definite day of the week, but only a "seventh part of the time," or "one day in seven, and no day in particular."

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If this be a proper definition of the Sabbath, we may use the definition for the word in the text defined. Let us try it - But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a seventh part of the time! If such a prayer had been answered so that the poor Christians might not leave on one day in seven, we would like to know when they could have made their flight.

Mark ii,27,28. "And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The Jews supposed that the Sabbath was Jewish - made for them alone. They had the institution buried up with their traditions so that in their narrow-souled bigotry, they charged the Lord of the Sabbath and his followers, with its desecration. Jesus rebuked them. "The Sabbath," said he, "was made for man" - for the entire race. Some hold the limited view of the Sabbath which the Jews held, and cry, "Its Jewish;" but we exult in the fact that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, which we observe and teach.

Luke xxiii,56. "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath-day according to the commandment." This is spoken of Christ's intimate friends who had followed their Lord to the sepulchre. It was probably near the close of sixth-day when Jesus died upon the cross. He was taken down and borne to the sepulchre. The Marys returned and prepared the spices. The Sabbath came, as the sun went down. They rested. How? "According to the commandment."

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This record shows that the Sabbath, and the commandment guarding it, lived after the death of Christ.

Again, Luke, writing as it is supposed, twenty-eight years after the crucifixion, records the observance of the Sabbath according to the commandment by Christians after the death of Christ, as an important fact for the Christian church.

We now come to the book of Acts. Those who would follow apostolic example will come to this book with peculiar interest. But first, we would remark, that apostolic example when in harmony with divine precept is clothed with authority; without precept, it has no real force. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp contention, Acts xv,29, yet no one feels bound to follow their example in this respect. And if it could be shown that the disciples often assembled in the day time of the first day of the week, it would fall far short of proving a change of the Sabbath. But only one text, Acts xx,7, is claimed from the book of Acts for first-day observance, and we

have shown from the facts stated in that chapter that the disciples were in meeting the first part of that day - Saturday night - and journeyed the last part - Sunday. We will now show that apostolic example is on the side of the Sabbath.

Acts xiii,42. "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." The Gentiles had no respect for the Sabbath, but, rather, were opposed to the institutions honored by the

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Jews; yet they invite this Christian minister to preach the same discourse to them the next Sabbath. "And the next Sabbath-day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Chap.xvi,13. "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake to the women which resorted thither." This Sabbath meeting was not held in a Jewish synagogue. Lydia believed, and was baptized, and her household. But was the Sabbath Paul's regular preaching day? Was this his manner? Let chap.xvii,2, answer. "And Paul, as *his manner was*, went in unto them, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."

Chap.xviii,1-11, contains important testimony on this subject. Paul at Corinth abode with Aquila and Priscilla, and worked with them at tent-making. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Verse 4. How long did he remain at Corinth? "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Verse 11. Here is apostolic example for seventy-eight successive Sabbaths. And it will be seen by verses 5-8, that the apostle occupied the synagogue a part of these Sabbaths, until the Jews opposed and blasphemed, then he went into the house of Justus, where he preached the remaining portion to the Gentiles.

Here, dear reader, is apostolic example in harmony with the divine precept spoken under

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circumstances of awful grandeur from Sinai, and written with the finger of God, hence, it has tremendous force. On the other hand, we find no commandment for keeping the first day, and no example of the apostles touching the point, only what bears against it. With these facts before them, honest men will readily decide what is truth, and what is a fable, in regard to the Sabbath question. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word. . . . For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Solemn and responsible indeed is the work of those who under such circumstances preach the word. And awfully fearful is the work of those teachers who labor to sustain popular fables which stand opposed to the word. The battle is coming. The perils of the last days are upon us. May God help the reader to decide for truth, obey the word, taste of the sweets of obedience, stand in the coming contest, and suffer with Christ here, and reign with him in his kingdom forever and forever. Amen.