

The Keystone Of Fundamentalism

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A report of a most unique sermon on by a Universalist preacher of Los Angeles one who heard his sermon.

There are but three logical and tenable views on the Sabbath question:

1. The Modernist holds that the Bible is only a human document and bears no authority for people of this age. Therefore, its teaching on the Sabbath can be entirely disregarded, and the Modernist can work, play and rest, or worship on any or all days. He can keep any Sabbath or no Sabbath at all just as he pleases. This position is logical if the major premise is granted.
2. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that its head, the pope, has power to alter or to add to the teaching of the Scriptures, since he represents God upon earth. Catholicism, therefore, holds that the church is justified in observing the -first day of the week, Sunday, as the weekly rest day, inasmuch as the pope saw fit to change the Sabbath command from the seventh to the first day of the week. "This position is also logical if the major premise is granted.
3. The Fundamentalist teaches that the Bible is the inspired word of God and that it is the rule of faith, morals, practice, and doctrine for Christians today. The consistent Fundamentalist, therefore, keeps the seventh day of the week-Saturday-as the Sabbath, because that is the only Sabbath taught in the Scriptures. All those who claim to be Fundamentalists and yet observe the first day of the week thereby deny the supremacy of the Bible and set up a human institution in place of God's Sabbath.

If I were a Fundamentalist, I would worship on the seventh day," said Sheldon Shepard, minister of the First Universalist church of Los Angeles, California, at the Sunday morning service, January 19, this year. Such words from a self-confessed Modernist sent a ripple of excitement over the large audience.

The day before, a two-column advertisement of Pastor Shepard's Sunday morning subject had appeared in Los Angeles papers. It bore the following arresting title, in bold type, "Saturday the Sabbath?" Under this heading came the words, "Did you ever hear an argument against it that was both intelligent and honest? Most preachers have to take a certain side of this question: they would lose their pulpits if they didn't. Now, I don't. I really do not care who is right provided I can find and preach the truth. I don't suppose there ever was preached a sermon just like it."

Many present in the church had evidently read the advertisement and were ready for some unusual pronouncement. But to at least one observer it seemed that the preacher said things just a little more unusual than some had expected.

"This Sabbath question," said the speaker "is one of the raging and urging questions of to-day. I used to preach that the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible was simply any day out of seven. Now I know that position to be baseless and without any Scripture foundation at all. The original seventh day, according to the Bible, is the seventh day of the week, commonly called Saturday.

"Some may say the calendar has been changed, but Jesus kept this day. Jesus never gave any hint of any other day; and as far as the Bible record goes, the disciples continued to keep it. There are no hints for a first-day Sabbath in the New Testament except to those who want to see them there. If there is any Bible for the change from the seventh to the first day I cannot find it.

"The Roman Catholic Church claims that she changed it, and in a sense that is true: The Sunday observer has Sunday on his hands and tries to find some authority for it. If I were a Fundamentalist, I would worship on Saturday."

The great climax was reached when the speaker said that there were only three positions held to-day on the Sabbath question. First, the Sabbath is just what the Bible says it is, the seventh day of the week. A memorial of creation with the authority of God in Holy Scripture behind it. This position was logical and Scripture from a Fundamentalist standpoint. But the speaker as a Modernist of course rejected it.

Second position: The church has power to change or modify Bible laws or doctrines. This the church has done in the case of the Sabbath, changing the rest day to Sunday. Such is the position of our Roman Catholic friends, who look not to the Bible but to the church organization as the supreme authority in religious things. As a liberal and Modernist, the speaker of course rejected this too.

The third position: The Bible is authority. But some way, sometime, somehow. Nobody seems to know exactly when, why or by whom, the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day. This position is based on neither Scripture nor church authority, and many thoughtful people are rejecting it.

How people can call themselves Fundamentalists and still reject the seventh-day Sabbath, seemed a mystery to the speaker. In fact, he put it stronger than that.

It was a solemn hour to the writer. Who heard the sermon and afterwards met the speaker. It was solemn because from the mouth of Modernism the Sabbath of the Lord was proclaimed the keystone in the arch of Fundamentalism. Seventh-day Adventists have long foreseen that the Seventh day Sabbath would be increasingly a sign of loyalty to the Bible in all the world.

It teaches creation. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Jesus kept the Sabbath. His example as recorded in the New Testament is our example. (1 Peter 2:21) Jesus made the Sabbath in the beginning (Mark 2:27-28, John 1:1-14, Compare Genesis 1:1, 2:1-3.)

The Sabbath is a memorial of Christ the Creator. The same power that makes a world makes a new man out of a sinner, "There is a new creation." 2 Corinthians 5:17. A. R. V., margin.

Shall I say unto you that "I am a Fundamentalist, and I will honor the Sabbath of the Lord?"

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