

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

20. \$5,000 for One Text

(Preached on the Fifth Friday Night of the Campaign)

I hold in my hand a letter from A. N. Dugger, a leading minister in a denomination known as the Church of God. He is also editor of their official, CHURCH OF GOD ADVOCATE. Mr. Dugger writes me as follows:

Elder J. L. Shuler

Dear Sir:

In regard to the matter of what day we ought to keep holy, I will say that I hereby offer you or anyone else \$5,000.00 if they will produce one text from the New Testament which says that we ought to keep the first day of the week or Sunday as a holy day. The law setting apart the first day of the week or Sunday as a rest day or holy day was made by the Catholic Church long after the Bible was written; hence, said law cannot be found in the Bible. Yours sincerely,

(Signed) A. N. DUGGER, Editor

CHURCH OF GOD ADVOCATE.

He offers to give me, or anyone, \$5,000 if we will produce one text of scripture which says that Christians are to keep the first day of the week. I could use this 5,000 dollars. It would come in very handy. Hence if it is possible to produce such a text, I want

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

to find it. I plan to examine every text in the New Testament that mentions the first day of the week and see if this \$5,000 can be won.

The first day of the week, the day we now call Sunday, is mentioned eight times in the New Testament. I have placed these eight references on the blackboard, so that everyone here may see for himself the eight instances where the New Testament mentions the first day of the week. These are: Mark 16:9, 1, 2; Matthew. 28:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7.

It is evident that if there be any proof for the keeping of the first day of the week, or Sunday, it will be found in connection with the eight places in the New Testament which mentions the first day of the week. This, \$5,000 offer is open to everyone in this audience. You notice he said, "I hereby offer you or anyone else." If you know of any text which says we ought to keep the first day of the week, and I fail to read it, then I want you to place that text on a slip of paper and have an usher bring it to me, and you will receive the \$5,000. At a certain time in my lecture I will pause for the ushers to pass up and down the aisles and collect any such texts.

I turn to Mark 16:9. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week; he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." This text merely states the fact that when Jesus arose, early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. I cannot claim the \$5,000 with this text, because there is not a word in the text to the effect that Christians should keep the first day of the week in honour of the Lord's resurrection.

Next, I turn to Mark 16:1, 2: "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."

You will notice that this text declares that when the Sabbath was past, certain women came to the tomb early on the first day of the week.

Nobody could get the \$5,000 on this text, because there isn't a word there to the effect that Christians should keep the first day of the week. In fact, it shows that Sunday, the first day of the week, cannot be the Sabbath. The text declares that the Sabbath was past when these women came to the tomb at daybreak on the first day of the week. The first day of the week cannot be the Sabbath, because the Sabbath was past when they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun.

The first day of the week cannot be the Sabbath any more than 1945 could be 1946, because 1945 was passed when 1946 began. Since the Sabbath was passed before the first day of the week dawned, that Sabbath must be the day that comes before the first day of the week, which you know is the seventh day, the day we call Saturday. Hence, Mark 16:1, 2 shows that the seventh day or Saturday is the Sabbath of the New Testament.

It is really impossible to keep the Sabbath on Sunday. Why? Because the Sabbath is passed before Sunday dawns. No matter how early you get up on Sunday morning, you couldn't keep the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is already passed before you rise from your bed on Sunday morning. Mark 16:1, 2 says that the Sabbath was passed when they came to that tomb at sunrise.

I turn now to Matthew 28:1. "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." This simply states the fact that these women came to the tomb early in the morning on the first day of the week.

Next, I turn to Luke 24:1. "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." I cannot qualify for the \$5,000 award with this text, because there is not a word there to the effect that Christians are to keep the first day of the week in honour of the resurrection.

Now I turn to John 20:1. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre." This simply states that on the first day of the week when Christ arose, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was yet dark, and she found the stone had been rolled away from the door of the tomb.

I have now read five of the eight texts which mention the first day of the week in the New Testament. So far I have found nothing with which I could claim the \$5,000. I still have three more chances.

I turn next to John 20:19. This is a text that some people believe contains proof that Sunday is the right day for Christians to keep. They tell us that this text shows that Christ's disciples held a special meeting on the very Sunday of Christ's resurrection, to inaugurate the keeping of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's day. If the text says this, I will be \$5,000 better off. I want you to listen carefully as I read the text and see what it says.

"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 said unto them, Peace be unto you."

Does this text say that the disciples had gathered together on the Sunday evening of the day on which Christ arose, to honour His resurrection? No! People have read something into his text that does not belong there. In fact the scriptures show that these disciples had not met to worship in honour of Christ's resurrection. How do I know this? I know it for two reasons from the Bible. Put down Mark 16:9-13.

In this reference you will find that when Jesus arose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. She ran and told the disciples. She said, "The Lord is risen. I've seen Him." They refused to believe it. A little later in the day Jesus appeared unto two of the disciples as they walked out into the country. They ran back and told the others. They said, "The Lord is risen! Jesus is alive." They said, "Not so." They refused to believe it. So you can see that those men could not possibly have gathered in honour of Christ's resurrection when they didn't believe He was risen.

The second point to put down is Mark 16:14. Mark refers to this very same meeting that John describes in John 20:19. He says, "We appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat." In other words, they had gathered in their common abode to eat their

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

evening meal. They had not met to worship in honour of Christ's resurrection. They had simply gathered in their common abode to eat their evening meal.

When Jesus appeared in their midst, they were terrified. He said, "Have you any food?" They had been eating their supper, so they handed Jesus a piece of broiled fish and a piece of honey comb and He ate them. The fact that they had gathered on this Sunday evening to eat their supper proves nothing in favour of Sunday observance.

I should like to have the \$5,000, but I cannot ask for it on the basis of what I find in John 20:19. The text says nothing to the effect that Christians were keeping the first day of the week or ever were to keep the first day of the week. You will notice that this makes six texts that mention the first day of the week in direct connection with the very Sunday on which the Lord Jesus arose, and yet they do not say one word to the effect that Christians are to keep the first day of the week in honour of our Lord's resurrection on that day.

I still have two more chances. The next reference is I Corinthians 16:2. Let us read: "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Some people claim that here is proof that Sunday is the right day for people to keep. They say, "Doesn't Paul give an order for the church to take a collection upon the first day of the week? How could they take up a collection unless they had a meeting?" So the claim is made that Sunday was the regular day for Christians to keep in the days of the apostles.

What does the scripture say? If you read the text carefully, you will see that it has no reference to a collection being taken at church. Does it say, "Upon the first day of the week let everyone drop an offering in the collection basket?" No! "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him."

The money was to be laid aside at home. In fact, the Portuguese version of the Scriptures, the Italian version, the Spanish version, and many other versions of the Scriptures render this text, "Lay by at home." It was a private laying by at home.

Paul was gathering relief funds for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He planned to stop at Corinth on his way to Jerusalem. So he wrote on ahead, and as it were, saying, "Now I am coming through on my way to Jerusalem. I want you to lay aside something on the first day of every week at home so you will have something to turn over to me, that I can take with me to the poor saints at Jerusalem."

I still have one more chance, and that is Acts 20:7. Here we read, "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."

Some people say that here is proof that the first day of the week was the regular meeting day for the Christian people in the days of the apostles. If the text said that, I would have the \$5,000. Notice that the text does not say anything about the Christians meeting every week upon the first day of the week.

Read the context and you will see that this was only an incidental meeting held upon what we call Saturday night. It tells you in the context that Paul was leaving the next morning. They never expected to see him again in this world, and that is why he talked all night long. Of course you know that no church ordinarily holds a meeting all night long. This was simply an extraordinary occasion, a farewell occasion, and that is why Paul preached all night long.

In the Bible, the day of twenty-four hours is measured from sunset to sunset. This all night meeting must have begun on Saturday evening and continued unto day break on Sunday morning. If you will read this twentieth chapter of Acts, you will find that Paul took a nineteen or twenty-mile journey on foot Sunday morning following this all night meeting. In other words, the context gives evidence that Paul didn't keep the first day of the week as a holy day of rest. He regarded Sunday as an ordinary working day, just like Monday, Thursday or Tuesday.

Now I must be frank and tell you that cannot find any text that says that Christians should keep the first day or Sunday. I cannot win this \$5,000. If you know of any text which I did not read which says that Christians should keep the first day of the week, please write it quickly and hand it to an usher, so he can bring it to the front. Attention all ushers: Please arise and pass through the aisles and bring to the front any text that people hand to you on a slip of paper.

According to the Bible, it is no more necessary to keep Sunday to honour Christ's resurrection than to keep Friday every week to celebrate our Saviour's death that took place on Friday. Why do I say this? Here are two references. 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Colossians 2:12. Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, the Communion of bread and wine, to celebrate His crucifixion. Paul says, "As oft as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death till He come."

Even so Jesus Christ instituted Christian baptism to celebrate His resurrection. Paul says in Colossians 2:12, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

Follow me closely. There is a real kernel of truth here. There is no need to keep Friday to celebrate the Lord's crucifixion, because He has ordained the Lord's supper to commemorate His death upon the cross. So there is no need to keep Sunday to honour Christ's resurrection, because He has ordained Christian baptism as the means of celebrating His resurrection, and to show our faith in His resurrection. So there is no more authority for keeping Sunday than there is for keeping Friday.

Ushers, do you have any texts? Nobody seems to want this \$5,000. If a millionaire offered a million dollars for one Bible text that says Christians should keep the first day of the week and gave people fifty years to find it, no one would be able to produce the text.

If you read the Bible through one hundred times, with reference to the Sabbath question, what will you find? You will find ten notable facts.

1. The word "Sunday" never occurs in the Bible.
2. Jesus Christ and His apostles never changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week, or Sunday.
3. Jesus Christ and the apostles never observed the first day of the week for the Sabbath.
4. There is no divine command in the New Testament for keeping the first day of the week, or Sunday.

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

5. There is nothing to indicate that the first day is to be kept for any reason.

6. There isn't anything to indicate that the keeping of the first day of the week, **or Sunday, took the place of the seventh day** of the week during Bible times.

7. The fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments which required the keeping of the seventh day, is still binding upon all men just like the command, "Thou shall not steal."

8. Neither **God, Christ, Angels, nor inspired men** have ever **said one word in favour of Sunday** as a holy day.

9. The seventh, or Saturday, is the only day of the week that Jesus Christ ever sanctified, or set apart for man to keep holy.

10. The seventh day is the only day of weekly observance that the Bible ever directs man to keep.

Have you ever noticed what Christ's followers did upon the day before Sunday? Put down Luke 24:1 and Luke 23:56. Luke 24:1, which I have read, tells how they came to Christ's tomb at sunrise on Sunday morning. The preceding verse or Luke 23:56, tells what they did upon the day before the first day of the week. Listen as I read Luke 23:56, "They returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

Isn't that plain? Christ's followers kept the day before Sunday as the Sabbath according to God's commandment. You know and I know, and everybody else knows, that the day before Sunday is Saturday, or the seventh day of the week. Christ's followers had to keep the day before Sunday in order to obey Christ's commandments.

Friends, think this through. If you and I obey God, what day will we keep? We will keep the seventh day according to the commandment. The fifth book in the New Testament which is the Acts of the Apostles, gives the history of Christ's church for about twenty-eight years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This Book of Acts mentions the Sabbath eight times. Here are the references: Acts 13:14; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:42; Acts 13:44; Acts 15:21; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:1-3; Acts 18:4. You will find that every time, eight times over, the Acts of the Apostles speaks about the Sabbath, it identifies the Sabbath with the Saturday meeting day of the Jews in the days of the Apostles.

Let me ask you a plain question. Do you think anybody who lived after the apostles had the right to change the Sabbath from the seventh-day to the first? What do you say? No! No! Then it is evident that since Saturday was the Sabbath in the days of the apostles, it is bound to be the Sabbath for Christians today. All Christians today should follow the book of Acts and keep the seventh-day or Saturday, which the book of Acts calls the Sabbath in eight different places.

Now the question comes, what does all this mean to you and to me? What shall I do about it? What of it? It means that since there is no Bible authority for keeping Sunday, the only wise course is to turn and henceforth keep the seventh day, or Saturday, which Jesus Christ sanctified and set apart for man and commands us to keep in the Ten Commandments.

Did you ever find yourself on a wrong road in your travels? Yes, I have many times. I have found myself going in the wrong direction, when I honestly thought I was on the right road. What did I do? I turned around and took the right road. That is the only wise thing to do.

Some mischievous boys will turn a road sign around, so that it points in the opposite direction from the way it should. It misleads people. If a man is misled by such a sign all he can do is turn around and get on the right road. Somebody has turned the Sabbath signpost around, so it is leading Christian travellers in the wrong direction -regarding the Sabbath. . Millions are keeping Sunday, honestly believing it is God's holy day according to the Bible, when it is directly contrary to the Bible. At the same time **they are unknowingly working on** the very day God says we should keep holy.

Sunday night you will find out from the Bible who is the guilty party. This jury trial scheduled for Sunday night will discover who changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, how it was changed, and when it was changed.

Some time ago a man at Detroit bought a railroad ticket for Grand Rapids, Michigan. Unknowingly he boarded a limited eastbound flyer. The train had crossed the Detroit river and had proceeded a good way over into Canada before the conductor came through. He handed his ticket to the conductor. The conductor said, "Man, you are on the wrong train. Your ticket says 'Grand Rapids' and here you are going in the wrong direction over into Canada." The man got excited. He wouldn't believe the conductor. He wanted to argue about it. He felt so sure he was right. Finally he said to the conductor, "Well, what shall I do?"

The conductor said, "Get off at the first stop, take the next train back to Detroit, and get on the right train for Grand Rapids." The man had ridden forty miles thinking he was on the right train, when he was going in the wrong direction all the time. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death." You will find this in Proverbs 16:25. The wisest man who ever lived said that.

If a man is on the wrong train, he will never reach the right destination, no matter how sincere he may be, unless he changes and gets on the right train. Don't forget that God's heaven-bound train runs on the Christ-track of the commandments. Put down Revelation 22:14. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Friends, we ought to keep the seventh day, just as we keep the eighth commandment by being honest, and just as we keep the ninth commandment by being truthful, or as we keep the third commandment by being reverent in the use of God's name. I want to be true to Jesus Christ and I am sure you do.

"Keep me true, Lord, keep me true;
Keep me true, Lord, true to you.
May all I say or strive to do,
Prove dear Lord I am true to you."

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

A troubled father once came to Jesus regarding his afflicted son. He said, "Jesus, if you can do anything for him, have mercy on him, and heal him." The poor man put the "if" in the wrong place. See what he said, "If you can do anything for him." There isn't any "if" in regard to the ability or power of Jesus Christ to help troubled souls. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Him.

Jesus replied, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The man put the "if" in the wrong place. He put the "if" on Christ's part. Christ showed him that the "if" was on his part. He fell at the feet of Jesus and cried, "Lord, I do believe, help my unbelief." And the blessed, loving Jesus did for that father what he so much wanted done.

Friends, I think this describes our situation. We believe in Jesus Christ. We want to follow Him all the way. We need more help to follow Him on the Sabbath question. Shall we not fall at His feet and cry, "Lord, I do believe. Give me more faith and more grace to follow Thee all the way!" I believe everyone in this auditorium wants to be remembered in prayer that the Lord will help you to be true to Jesus. How many want to be remembered in this closing prayer, "Lord, help me to follow Jesus all the way?" May I see your hands? Yes, it seems that nearly every hand is raised. (Prayer)

Our blessed Jesus, we thank Thee for this incident that we have just talked about. Lord, like many of us, he put the "if" in the wrong place. He said, "If Thou canst do it." Lord, there is never any "if" as to what Thou canst do. The "if" is on our own part. Thou hast said, "If we can believe, all things are possible." O, God, give us more faith. Lord, we do believe, but we pray Thee to help our unbelief. Jesus, give us more grace, more love, that will help us to follow Thee closely step by step until we come to that great day, when Thou shall come and we will see Thee face to face and be with Thee forever. We ask it in Thy precious name. Amen.

21. Unlocking Truth's Mightiest Secret

A minister was talking one day to a little girl whose first name was Eve. He asked her, "Do you attend Sunday School regularly?"

"Oh, yes, sir," she said.

"And you know your Bible?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Could you tell me something that is in the Bible?"

"I could tell you everything that is in the Bible." "Indeed?" and the minister smiled. "Do tell me, then."

She said, "Sister's beau's photo is in it, and ma's recipe for vanishing cream is in it, and a lock of my hair that was cut off when I was a baby is in it, and the ticket for Pa's watch is in it."⁷²

I am afraid that many people's knowledge of the Bible resembles the knowledge of little Eve. There is not anything more important for you and me to know than the real truth as set forth in the Bible. Why is this? Why is it more important to know the real truth of the Bible than everything else? The main reason is found in Isaiah 26:2. "Open you the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in."

You will notice that it is those who keep the truth who will enter in through the gates to live forever in God's beautiful heavenly home. You cannot keep the truth, until you first know what is truth. On the basis of Isaiah 26:2 it is evident that our very salvation, our eternal happiness depend upon learning and following the truth of God's Word.

Unless we know the real truth of the Bible we are very liable to be deceived and led astray by false teachings. Put down Matthew. 22:29. It is just as Jesus told the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures." If we do not know the real truth of the Bible, then we are liable to be overtaken with error and false ideas. The right meaning of scripture brings truth and salvation. The wrong meaning of the Bible brings error and destruction. Oh, how important it is that we obtain the right meaning of the Bible!

Any man who attempts to explain the Bible according to his own ideas will not find the true meaning of the scriptures. Put down 2 Peter 1:20. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Unfortunately, most people who try to explain the Bible, explain the Bible according to their ideas. Mark this point well. It doesn't matter how wise a person may be; it doesn't matter how many letters he may have after his name, if he attempts to explain the Bible according to his own ideas he will not find the true meaning of the Bible. "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

When people interpret the Bible according to their own ideas, two things usually happen. First, they will try to explain away some of the plainest truths in the Bible, if those truths happen to be contrary to their ideas. Second, they will try to use the Bible to prove a certain doctrine when in reality the Bible teaches just the opposite.

The Bible declares that some people wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. Put down 2 Peter 3:15, 16. It is a serious thing to misinterpret the Bible. When you misinterpret the Bible, your actions will be wrong, because your actions will be in harmony with your misinterpretation.

If we follow a religious teacher in a wrong interpretation of scripture, it may result in our own destruction. I want to give you a striking illustration. This is taken from the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness as recorded in Matthew. 4:5-7. You will recall how Satan attempted to defeat Jesus in the first temptation. Jesus had been fasting for forty days. He was very, very hungry. Satan appeared and said, "If you are the Son of God, make these stones into bread and you will have something to eat to satisfy your intense hunger." Jesus met the issue with the words of scripture. He said, "It is written, man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3.

The devil evidently said to himself, "I'll show you a thing or two. You have quoted scripture to me, I am going to quote scripture to you." He took Christ up on the highest pinnacle of the temple. He said, "Just throw yourself off from here. It won't hurt you. It is written, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways lest thou dash thy foot against a