

help her develop real emotional maturity, clear aim, growing understanding of the challenge of Christian service to-day. There are places of need for these young women to fill in India, Bolivia, and here in Canada. Their preparation must be the best possible.

Those who become supervisors of Missions and Directors of Christian Education in larger churches will be prepared to plan leadership courses to help lay workers toward more effective work in the Church. Not every Church has enough leaders. Not every leader has the opportunity of training. As leadership education—including recruiting, training, guiding leaders—becomes a more vital and regular part of Church life we can indeed widen the Christian sphere. And women have a significant part to play!

LOIS TUPPER.

THE SABBATH

(Genesis ii, 3)

THE history of Sabbath observance, and for practical purposes that includes observance of the Lord's Day, is highly obscure.

It is utterly impossible to settle disputes on the subject by quoting Scripture texts with an air of finality. Few other themes make a similar claim upon open-mindedness, humility, and tolerance.

Rabbinical theology in the time of Christ was accustomed to declare that God created Adam on the afternoon of the sixth day in order that he might begin life with Sabbath observance. It also assumed the Sabbath to be scrupulously observed in heaven itself—except by those angels responsible for the supervision of natural phenomena. But it is quite clear from the study of ancient sources that the institution of a sacred seventh day was not originally fostered by any theory of divine precedent, or by any story of Creation, Biblical or otherwise. The older Hebrew account of Creation (Genesis ii) contains no allusion to the Sabbath or to the seven-day week. Not until the Hebrews became a mature and thoughtful people with a well developed theology did they trace the origin of the world, the Sabbath, and the seven-day week to a common source as in Genesis i. The earliest documentary allusion to the Sabbath in Scripture occurs at Exodus xx, 8, where an original terse injunction to "sanctify the Sabbath" has been supplemented by a later explanatory note citing God's Own example in justification of the demand.

The Hebrew verb *shabbath* means merely "to cease," "to desist"; hence any institution designated by the cognate noun must have involved cessation from labour and business; yet, in its original form the Decalogue specified no action from which to desist and gave no reason for doing so. There is then no basis in etymology for an original notion of rest in the sense

of recuperation as the reason for Sabbath observance, although the later, priestly writer suggests that idea by means of different words (*nuach* and *naphash*) in Exodus xx, 11, and xxxi, 17, respectively. Deuteronomy v, 12ff., appeals to the humanitarian spirit in justification of the observance (Cf. Exodus xxiii, 12; xxxiv, 21); and finally, the priestly stratum traced the institution back to Creation and sought the reason for observance in the example of God Himself. It can also be demonstrated by Biblical evidence that the importance of Sabbath keeping was not stressed by devout Jews until after the Pentateuch was canonised and sabbatarianism became part of "keeping the Law."

Hebrew Sabbath and Christian Lord's Day are both adapted forms of older institutions, which is a way of saying that both have been greatly influenced by the enlightened piety and common sense of devout people. And the demand for devout common sense is still imperative. The ancient Hebrew Sabbath was developed from an earlier Babylonian holy day. The Babylonians were accustomed to regard the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the lunar month as "holy," which is to say, hedged about with taboos. They were "unlucky," it being supposed that days marked by changing phases of the moon were so intimately related to the lunar god as to be dangerous for men. Consequently they were forbidden by Babylonian law to important persons—priests, physicians, and kings—for the performance of official acts. The twenty-eighth, or full moon, was the occasion of a lunar festival called *Shabattu* or *Shapattu*, which meant "cessation," obviously an allusion to termination of the moon's growth. The one valuable feature of this pagan sabbath was its element of reverence for deity, however low the motive therefor.

Being greatly influenced by Babylonian culture in the realms of law, language, religion, and the social amenities, the Hebrews adopted the Babylonian sabbath, along with much else. But they also *adapted*. Just as they purified the Babylonian stories of Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, so did they refine and elevate the idea of the sacred seventh day. That adaptation may be said to have involved these three distinct improvements:—

(1) The Babylonian institution was stripped of its heathen associations and superstitious import by Hebrew disavowal of the divinity of the planets and by reference to the seven-day week rather than to the lunar calendar as such. This paved the way for associating the Sabbath with the story of Creation.

(2) The day was invested with a benign quality by its dedication to the honour of Yahweh and by introduction of the new ideas of worship and rest. Thus was it liberated from fear and taboo and made an occasion of privilege and joy. To what extent a Bedouin people could desist from labour is a question in itself; but they could at least refrain from "business," and they could worship. With farmers and merchants the problem was simpler.

(3) The day was enriched by the introduction of a system of public worship. Little is said in early Old Testament documents about the *form* of this worship, Isaiah i, 13, being probably the earliest documentary reference to the point; yet we do know that Sabbath observance, along with other ritual patterns, underwent a development parallel to Hebrew social life.

In brief, the pious wisdom of the ancient Hebrews transformed what had been a pagan institution into a function of true religion worthy to be memorialised in great Christian music. Only the direct allusions to Christ in our hymns of the Lord's Day would have seemed unnatural to devout Jews in the time of Ezra. But perhaps the most important thought in this connection is that by their adaptation of the Sabbath the ancient Hebrews effected yet another powerful protest against, and improvement upon Babylonian heathenism. As if to say, "Behold, we show you a better way," they declared that every seventh day is indeed sacred to God, but not because of being charged with some sinister, magical influence; on the contrary, the Sabbath calls men to remember and honour God as Creator and Sovereign Lord of the world and of men. The Sabbath embodies God's gift of rest to man; it stands over against His decree that man must work.

The Lord's Day of Christianity represents an adaptation of the Old Testament institution, it being intended to focus attention upon Christ and His resurrection instead of upon Creation and the Mosaic Law. In keeping with the New Testament as a whole, the Christian Sunday proclaims that we live by faith and are emancipated from the yoke of Judaism through Christ. Only the essential spirit and purpose of the older institution have been preserved. Both symbolise reverence; both provide occasion for worship; and both retain the humanitarian aspect of rest. But the distinctive feature of the Christian Sunday is its weekly repetition of the message, "The Lord liveth."

How did the cleavage between Judaism and Christianity in respect of Sabbatarianism come about? Nowhere does the New Testament distinctly repudiate the Jewish Sabbath; nowhere does it expressly enjoy the "sanctification" of the first day of the week. Yet, such meagre evidence as we have indicates that on the very eve of the first Easter (pagan word!) the disciples initiated a custom of assembling on the first day, the day of our Lord's resurrection, and that this weekly assembly soon became a stated occasion for conventicle. According to the book of Acts the disciples continued for a while to observe the revered holy days of Judaism while the first day held its peculiar meaning for all who followed in the "Way." At length controversy over the Messiahship of Jesus wore out the welcome of His followers in the synagogues, and crystallising Christian opinion about the Lord's abrogation of the Law eventually caused the young Church to abandon the Jewish Sabbath altogether, along with circumcision

and most of the distinctive Jewish dietary practices. Paul intimates in 1 Corinthians xvi, 2, and Luke does likewise in Acts xx, 7, that Sunday soon became the customary day of assembly for the Church. Not for three hundred years afterwards did any Christian writer seek to identify and harmonise the Christian Sunday with the old Jewish Sabbath. But sabbatarianism eventually appeared in the Church, and, despite abuses which everyone can cite, it has been more of a blessing than a curse. It has given back the Law in modified form to those unable to walk by the spirit. Spiritual rules are always apt to be too flexible where human minds are dim and human wills are weak. For the many it is good to have something in black and white, like "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

N. H. PARKER.

THE CHRIST OF THE APOCALYPSE

MODERN readers have sometimes criticised "Pilgrim's Progress" on the ground that it presents a selfish and other-worldly view of the Christian life. Instead of running away from the City of Destruction and leaving his wife and children to perish in it, Christian ought to have remained and bent his efforts to improving the city. However, as Gwilym O. Griffith has pointed out, to criticise Bunyan thus is really to pay him a compliment. "It is to show that he has managed his allegory so realistically that his amateur critics have largely forgotten that it is an allegory." The City of Destruction is not a community, in which one can stay with the hope of reforming it, but, rather, a state of mind and spirit that one must leave in order to become a Christian at all.

The Revelation of St. John is another book that has suffered from some of its critics for similar reason. Specially its presentation of Christ has been described as incomplete and even distorted. It is a far cry, we have been told, from the Jesus of Galilee, lover of birds and flowers and children, friend of publicans and sinners, to the resplendent King or warrior—Messiah of the Revelation. Indeed, it has been said that this book gives us the "most uncongenial portrait of Jesus in the New Testament."

Is not this another reading of symbolism as sober fact? Judged by the Gospels, the picture of Christ in the Revelation is different and strange. But who knew that better than the author and his readers? It is almost certain that he and they were familiar with much of the tradition embodied in the Synoptics. His book is not a Gospel and had no need to be; it is an Apocalypse, full of the symbolism and imagery that make up the very genius of all such works, Jewish or Christian. It is an Apocalypse because in that form best of all John could bring his word of warning, summons