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ART. 1.—THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

THE importance of the views entertained by the Christian world concerning the obligation to observe the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, is perpetual. But circumstances occasionally give this subject a temporary prominence before the public mind. Such circumstances were found in the recent agitation of the question of Sabbath amusements in Great Britain, and in the British Parliament. The victory gained there by Christianity encourages us to hope that this is a season not unpropitious to recall this great subject before the attention of our readers, in order to review the grounds on which, as Presbyterians, we assert the strict and proper consecration of the first day of the week. We have declined to place, at the head of this article, a list of the leading publications lately issued on this subject in Great Britain, simply referring the reader to such notices of them as have met the eye of all intelligent persons.

There is, perhaps, no subject of Christian practice on which there is, among sincere Christians, more practical diversity and laxity of conscience than the duty of Sabbath observance. We find that, in theory, almost all Protestants now profess the views once peculiar to Presbyterians and other Puritans; but, in actual life, there is, among good people, a complete jumble of usages, from a laxity which would almost have satisfied the party of Archbishop Laud, up to the sacred strictness of the "Sabbatarians" whom he and his adherents reviled and persecuted. It is a curious question: how it has come about that the consciences of devout and sincere persons have allowed them such license of disobedience to a duty acknowledged and important; while on other points of obligation equally undisputed, the Christian world en-

deavours, at least, to maintain the appearance of uniform obedience. The solution is probably to be found, in part, in the historical fact of which many intelligent Christians are not aware—that the communions founded, at the Reformation, were widely and avowedly divided in opinion as to the perpetuity of the Sabbath obligation. A number of the reformation churches, including some of the purest, professed that they saw no obligation in the Scriptures to any peculiar Sabbath observance; and the neglect of every thing except attendance on the public exercises of Christianity, and that cessation of secular labour required by secular statutes was, in them, at least consistent. Now the descendants of these communions, in this mixed country, live dispersed among the descendants of Presbyterians and Puritans; and while they no longer defend the looser theory of their forefathers, they retain the traditional practices and customs in their use of the sacred day. Thus, by example and the general intermingling of religions, a remiss usage is propagated, which is far beneath the present professed theory of Protestant Christendom. And hence, we conceive that it will be interesting and profitable to give a history of opinions on this subject, before we proceed to that full discussion of the whole grounds of our belief and practice which we shall attempt.

I. It may be stated then, in general terms, that since the primitive times of Christianity two diverse opinions have prevailed in the Christian world. The first is that adopted by the Romish, Lutheran, and most of the continental communions in Europe, including, it must be confessed, those founded by Calvin. This theory teaches that the proper sanctification of one day from every seven was a ceremonial, typical, and Jewish custom, established when the Levitical institutions were introduced; and, of course, abrogated by the better dispensation, along with the rest of the typical shadows. The Lord's day is, indeed, worthy of observance as a Christian festival, because it is the weekly memorial of the blessed resurrection, and the example of the primitive Church commends it; not because its obligation is now *jure divino*. The cessation of our worldly labours is a beneficent and commendable civil institution; and while the magistrates enjoin it, is, for this reason, of course to be practised by all good citizens. Public and associated worship is also a duty of Christians; and, in order that it may be associated, it must be upon a stated day and hour; and what day so appropriate as this, already famous for the great event of the new dispensation; and set apart by civil laws from the purposes of business. But this is all. To observe the whole day as a religious rest, under the supposition of a religious obligation, would be to *judaeize*, to remand ourselves to the bondage of the old and darker dispensation.

The second opinion, is that embodied in the Westminster

symbols, and, to the honour of Puritanism be it said, first avowed in modern times, even among Protestants, by the Puritans of England. This is, that the setting apart of some stated portion of our time to the special and exclusive worship of God, is a duty of perpetual and moral obligation, (as distinguished from positive or ceremonial,) and that our Maker has, from the creation, and again on Sinai, appointed for all races and ages, that this portion shall be one day out of seven. But when the ceremonial dispensation of Levi was superadded to this and the other institutions of the original patriarchal religion, the seventh day did, in addition, become a type and a Levitical holy-day; and the theory admits that this feature has passed away with the Jewish ceremonial. After the resurrection of Christ, the perpetual Divine obligation of a religious rest was transferred to the first day of the week, and thence to the end of the world. The Lord's day is the Christian's sabbath, by Divine and apostolic appointment, and is to be observed with the same religious spirit enjoined upon the patriarchs, and the Israelites, abating those features which proceeded from its ceremonial use among the latter, and from their theocratic government.

Among the advocates of the first opinion is to be adduced first the Roman Catholic communion. This statement must, however, be made with qualification; for the "Romish Catechism" of Pope Pius V., embodying the opinions of the Council of Trent, (P. III., Ch. iv.) treats of the Lord's day more scripturally, in some respects, than many Protestants. But this correctness of opinion is grievously marred by the doctrine that the other church holidays are sustained by equal authority with the Lord's day; the authoritative tradition of the church. Bellarmine also argues, that it must be allowable to the true church to make the observance of sacred days of human appointment binding on the conscience; because, otherwise, the church would have no sacred days at all, since none whatever are enjoined in the New Testament. This reasoning obviously proceeds upon the assumption that there is no other sort of obligation for the Lord's day than for a church festival. The well known practice of Romish Christians, prevalent in all Popish countries, and unrebuked by the priesthood, sustains exactly that theory of Sabbath observance which we first described. After the duties of confession and hearing mass are performed in the morning, the rest of the holy-day is unhesitatingly devoted to idleness, amusements, or actual vice.

The Lutheran communion, as ordered by Luther, Melancthon, and their coadjutors, held that it was lawful and proper for church authorities to ordain days and rites, not contrary to the letter or spirit of Scripture, but additional to those appointed therein. It was, indeed, one of the most constant and noble parts of their

testimony against Rome, that it was spiritual tyranny for any church authority, however legitimate, to ordain any thing contrary to the letter or spirit of Scripture, or to enforce any ordinance of human authority, however innocent, as binding on the Christian conscience, or as necessary to acceptance with God. But they taught that the rulers of the church might lawfully institute rites, ordinances, and holy-days, consonant to the Word of God, though additional to those set down in it: and that they might lawfully change such ordinances, from time to time, as convenience and propriety required. But they could only invite, they could not compel the compliance of their brethren; and this compliance was to be rendered, not of necessity, but from considerations of Christian comity, peace, and convenience. When days or ordinances additional to Scripture were thus enjoined, and thus observed, it was held proper, lawful and praiseworthy, in both rulers and ruled. And the Lutheran symbols expressly assert that it was by this kind of church authority, and not *jure divino*, that the observance of the Lord's day obtained among Christians; and that it could not be scripturally made binding on the conscience of Christians any more than the observance of Easter or Christmas, or of any other day newly instituted by a church court, in accordance with Christian convenience and edification. They also teach that the Sabbath, with its strict and enforced observances, was purely a Levitical institution. Before proceeding to substantiate this statement from their symbols, it may be remarked in passing, that we have here an explanation of the fact that Neander and other German antiquaries so heedlessly surrender the apostolic authority of certain church usages, which they, in common with the Luthern church, yet retain. The historian just mentioned says, for instance, that he finds no evidence that the baptism of infants was ever practised by the apostles. But this admission does not, to him, carry the consequences which it would involve with an Immersionist, Independent, or Presbyterian. He can still defend and practise the rite, as seemly and lawful, because he holds that church authority is a sufficient warrant for the observance of a rite so consonant to the spirit of the apostles. It is a pity that Immersionists do not tell this part of the story also, when they ignorantly quote his opinions concerning baptism.

But to return. In the 28th article of the Augsburg Confession, which treats of "the power of the bishops or clergy, we find the following: [We will take the liberty of *italicising* those phrases which we wish to be particularly weighed.] "What, then, should be held concerning *Sunday and other similar church ordinances* and ceremonies? To this our party make the following reply: That the bishops or pastors may make regulations, in order that things may be carried on orderly in the church, not in order to obtain the grace of God, nor yet in order to atone for sins, or to

bind the consciences of men with them, to hold them as necessary services of God, and to regard them as if they commit sin, if they break them without offence to others. Thus St. Paul, in the Corinthians, ordains that the women in the congregation should cover their heads; 1 Cor. 11 : 5. \* \* \* \* \*

"*In like manner is the regulation concerning Sunday, concerning Easter, concerning Pentecost, and the like holy-days and rites.* Those, then, who are of opinion that the regulation of Sunday instead of the Sabbath, was established as a thing necessary, err very much. For the *Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath*, and it teaches that all ceremonies of the old law, since the revelation of the Gospel, may be discontinued. And yet, as it was of need to ordain a certain day, so that the people might know when they should assemble, *the Christian church ordained Sunday* for that very purpose, and possessed rather more inclination and willingness for this alteration, in order that the people might have an example of Christian liberty, that they might know that neither the observance of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is indispensable." Melancthon, in the 8th article of his "apology," (*"Of human ordinances in the church,"*) briefly asserts the same view. "Further, the most ancient ordinances however in the church, *as the three chief festivals, Sundays, and the like*, which were established for the sake of order, union and tranquility, we observe with willingness. And with regard to these, our teachers preach to the people in the most commendatory manner; in the meantime, however, holding forth the view, that they do not justify before God." In Luther's *Shorter Catechism*, (which, singularly enough, follows the common Popish arrangement of merging the second commandment under the first, so that the fourth becomes the third,) is the following :

## THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt sanctify the Sabbath-day.

*What does this imply?*

*Ans.* "That we should fear and love God, so that we may not despise the preaching of the Gospel, and his word; but keep it holy; willingly hear and learn it." Here there is a marked generality of language, and evasion of every thing like the injunction of a Christian Sabbath. And, in Luther's *Larger Catechism*, under the third commandment, it is said expressly: "This commandment, therefore, with respect to its outward and literal sense, does not concern us Christians; for it is wholly an external thing, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, confined to certain conditions, persons, times, and places, which are now all abrogated through Christ. But, in order that we may draw up for the uninformed, a Christian sense of what God requires of us in this commandment, it is necessary to observe that we keep the Sabbath

day, not for the sake of intelligent and learned Christians—for these have no need of it—but, in the first place, on account of physical reasons and necessities, which nature teaches and requires for the common mass of people, men-servants, and maid-servants, who attend during the whole week to their labour and employments, so that they may also have a day set apart for rest and recreation; in the second, mostly for the purpose of enabling us to embrace time and opportunity on these Sabbath-days, (since we cannot otherwise embrace them,) to attend to Divine service, so that we may assemble ourselves to hear and treat of the Word of God, and afterwards to praise him in singing and prayer.”

Luther, however, adds that no one should deceive himself by supposing that the duty of associated rest and worship is fulfilled by simply leaving off labour, and presenting their bodies in the church, while, like the Papists, they indulge a stupid inattention to the service.

Such then, is the theory of the great Lutheran community, distinctly and intelligently avowed! Nor is there any reason to suppose that it is not as explicitly held at this day by many of their divines, perhaps by the bulk of them; while the almost universal laxity of Sabbath observance in Protestant Europe (continental) shows that the theory bears it legitimate fruit in practice. It was related a few years ago by an eminent American, that when visiting the pious Neander, he took the opportunity to enquire of him whether the rumour were true, which had been spread concerning Gesenius, the great Hebraist; that he was accustomed to come down from Halle to Berlin at the end of the week, in order to enjoy the Sunday night's theatricals in the Capital; which were more brilliant that night than any other of the week. Neander answered that it was true; but the offence would not strike German christians as it would Americans. For himself, he said, he would not go to theatricals on any day, because he considered them unfriendly to spirituality; but he should not scruple to do on the Lord's day, any thing which it was right for a Christian to do on any other day. And in accordance, he did actually secure the attendance of his American visitor (unawares on his part) at a sober convivial entertainment the very next Sunday afternoon!

The evangelical Christians of Germany seem now to apprehend the prime necessity of a stricter Sabbath-observance for the interests of piety; and have recently combined to promote it. But it will be vain for them to attempt to engraft such a reform on this doctrinal theory of Lutheranism. No plausible tinkering with a doctrine so fundamentally erroneous will suffice. The connection between a false theory and a vicious practice is too inevitable. If the reform is to be established successfully, its foundation must be laid in the retraction of these opinions, and

the explicit adoption of the Puritan and Presbyterian theory of the Lord's day.

It may here be added, that the Mennonite church, both in Europe and America, holds substantially the Lutheran ideas of the Sabbath, and that their practice is influenced by them in a similar way. When this communion, led by Menno Simonist, set about ridding themselves of the reproach of fanatical Anabaptism, they were careful to assume so much of the prevalent religion as they could, consistently, with their essential peculiarities, in order to substantiate their plea that they were no longer a radical political sect, but a proper, evangelical denomination. The prevalent Protestantism of those countries was Lutheran; and hence the theology of the Mennonites, and their ideas of Sabbath observance are largely Lutheran. The articles of their most current confession, are silent concerning the observance of the Lord's day.

Next in order, should be mentioned the opinions of the Socinian sect. The Racovian Catechism, the recognized Confession of this body, in the 16th century, states their erroneous belief with unmistakable precision and brevity. Under the fourth commandment are the following questions and answers:

“What is the fourth commandment?”

“Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.”

“What dost thou believe concerning this commandment?”

“I believe that it is removed under the new covenant, in the way in which other ceremonies, as they are called, are taken away.”

“Why, then, was it inserted in the decalogue?”

“Thus, that it might be manifest the most absolute part of the Mosaic law was not perfect, and that some indication might exist of this fact, that a law was to succeed the Mosaic law, by far more perfect, the law, namely, of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Did, or did not, Christ ordain that we should observe the day which they call *Lord's day*, in place of the Sabbath?”

“Not at all; since the religion of Christ entirely removes the distinction of days, just as it does the other ceremonies, as they are called; as the Apostle clearly writes in Coloss. 2: 16. But since we see that the Lord's day has been celebrated from of old time by Christians, we permit the same liberty to all Christians.”

A day of religious rest, then, according to Socinians is utterly abolished by Christ, just as the other Levitical ceremonies. There is no obligation whatever. But, in order to avoid the odium of unnecessarily disturbing venerated customs, such Socinians as choose, are *permitted to observe* the Lord's day. It will be a harmless peculiarity! To understand the second and third answers, it should be remembered that the Socinians wholly deny

that Christ did any vicarious or atoning work. Having denied this, they are of course pressed with the question: "How, then, is he more than any other eminent prophet; and why are such peculiar names and honours given him by Scripture? Why is an importance so entirely peculiar attached by it to his mission. To find a plausible answer to this hard query; to invent a *nodus vindice dignus*, they say that one peculiarity of his mission was to reveal a code of morality greatly more pure and complete than that of Moses and the prophets. And thus they have a constant polemical interest in depreciating and misrepresenting the moral code of Moses. So, forsooth, the All-wise placed this supererogatory precept, which was of only temporary authority, in the summary of his eternal, moral law, in order to give people a standing hint of the fact that this code was far from being complete! Since the coming of Christ, men need no such hint, according to the Socinians; for one great part of Christ's mission was to tell us clearly this very thing. And before the coming of Christ, this precept could not serve that purpose; because the Old Testament contained no indication whatever, that this was not as good and *bona fide* a commandment as all the rest. One feels strongly tempted to characterize this nonsensical position, with the unsavoury phrase, which Calvin usually applied to the grosser absurdities of his opponents, as *a putidum commentum*."

As to the ground held by the Anglican church, concerning the authority of the Lord's day, its standards are indecisive. It holds the same opinion with the Augsburg Confession, concerning the power of the church to ordain rites, ceremonies, and holy-days, additional, but not contrary to the Scriptures; but it has not observed the scriptural modesty of the Lutherans, in enforcing the uniform observance of these human appointments. While its theory on this point is not greatly more exaggerated in words than that of the Augsburg Confession, its practice has been unspeakably more tyrannical. The twentieth of the "Thirty-nine Articles," ("Of the authority of the Church,") says: "The church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, &c." The thirty-fourth says: "Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that other may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the church, and hurteth the authority of the magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren." The articles contain no nearer reference to the Lord's day. Our purpose in quoting these words



will be seen in connexion with the following from the thirteenth of the ecclesiastical canons and constitutions :

*“Dus celebration of Sundays and holy-days.”*

“All manner of persons within the church of England, shall from henceforth celebrate and keep the Lord’s day, commonly called Sunday, and other holy days, according to God’s holy will and pleasure, and the orders of the church of England prescribed in that behalf,” &c.

The church of England, then, is not, by her standards, definitely committed to that loose theory which we have unfolded; but the association of Sundays and holy-days, as equal in their claims, and the nature of their authority, is significant. The church, according to these articles, has power to ordain days, additional to those appointed in Scripture, provided they are not condemned in Scripture; and to enforce their observance by censures. And it is plainly implied that the obligation to keep a Sunday is only of the same character with the obligation to keep an Epiphany or Good Friday. Both are alike according to God’s holy will; but it is God’s will, not pronounced in Scripture, but through the authoritative decree of the church. It was the primitive church which introduced the festivals of Epiphany and others; and it was the same authority which introduced Sunday. As the thirty-fourth article claims that the same church authority which made, can unmake or alter these appointments, it would seem that even the Lord’s day might be liable to change by human authority. It is not easy to see how a Protestant, who believes that the traditions and ordinances of the church are not divinely infallible, and who yet places the Lord’s day and the church holy-days on the same basis of authority, can consistently esteem the obligations of the Sabbath, as sacredly as, in our judgment, they require. Yet we doubt not that many devout and evangelical Episcopalians, both in this country and in England, do regard them as highly as the best Christians in the world. The opposite practices and feelings of many of the “high church,” are well known. Their worst exemplar is to be seen in Laud and his “Declaration of Sports.” The Episcopalians of his party, in that day, were the most bitter enemies of those holy men, who first restored to the Protestant world the blessed doctrine that the church of God still possessed its Sabbath by Divine authority; branding them with the names of Judaizers and Sabbatarians.

We proceed now to state the opinions of Calvin, and some of the reformed churches. By consulting Calvin’s Institutes, (B. II., chap. 8.,) it will be seen that his views of Sabbath-observance are substantially those of Luther. He states that, among the Israelites, there were three grounds for the observance of the seventh day; first, that it might be a type of that cessation of the works

of self-righteousness which true believers practise; second, that there might be a stated day for public worship; and third, that domestic animals and servants might enjoy a merciful rest from bodily labour. Only the last two of these grounds exist, according to Calvin, under the New Testament. Hence he says: (Ch. 8., Sec. 33.) "We celebrate it not with scrupulous rigour, as a ceremony which we conceive to be a figure of some spiritual mystery, but only use it as a remedy necessary to the preservation of order in the church." In the previous section he says: "*Though the Sabbath is abrogated*, yet it is still customary among us to assemble on stated days, for hearing the Word, for breaking the mystic bread, and for public prayers; and also to allow servants and labourers a remission from their labour." And in section 34: "Thus vanish all the dreams of false prophets, who in past ages have infected the people with a Jewish notion, affirming that nothing but the ceremonial part of this commandment, which, according to them, is the appointment of the seventh day, has been abrogated; but that the moral part of it, that is, the observance of one day in seven, still remains. But this is only changing the day in contempt of the Jews, while they retain the same opinion of the holiness of a day; for, on this principle, the same mysterious signification would be attributed to particular days, which formerly obtained among the Jews." And in the same tenour, he remarks upon Coloss. ii: 16. ("Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days.") "Such a distinction (of days) suited the Jews, to observe sacredly the appointed days, by separating them from other days. *Among Christians, such a distinction hath ceased*. But, somebody will say that we still retain some observance of days. I answer, that we by no means observe them, as if there were any religion in holy-days, or as if it were not right to labour then; but the regard is paid to polity and good order, not to the days." In the Genevan Catechism, written by Calvin for the church of Geneva, and dedicated to the ministers of East Frisia in the Netherlands, the statements already quoted from the Institutes are so exactly reproduced, that they need not be repeated. In the Heidelberg Catechism, the symbol of the German Reformed Church in the Palatinate, the opinions of Calvin are adopted, though stated with such brevity, that we learn them in part by inference. The one hundred and third question and answer are:

"What doth God enjoy in the fourth commandment?"

"First: That the ministry of the Gospel, and the schools be preserved; and that I, with others, diligently frequent the Divine assemblies, industriously hear the Word of God, make use of the sacraments, join my prayers also to the public prayers, and bestow something on the poor according to my ability. Second: That in

all my life I shall abstain from wicked actions, permitting the Lord to do his work in me through his Holy Spirit, and thus shall begin that everlasting Sabbath in this life." The ideas of Calvin are here so evidently involved, and there is so studious an avoidance in the generality of the terms, of all reference to the consecration of a given day, by Divine authority, under the New Testament, that we cannot be mistaken in our surmises.

To those who are aware of the close relationship between Socinianism and Arminianism, it will not be surprising that the latter sect, at its birth, adopted an idea of the Lord's day only less relaxed than that of the former. It is unnecessary to multiply citations; a single passage from Limborch, one of the distinguished heads of their seminary in Amsterdam, in his commentary on Romans xiv: 5, will be both sufficiently distinct and authoritative:

Romans xiv: 5. "Another esteemeth every day alike," viz: (explains Limborch) "The converts to Christ from among the Gentiles, on whom the burden of the ritual law was never imposed, did not recognize this distinction of days, but esteemed all days equal, and one no more noble than another. It is true, indeed, that the apostles and primitive church were already accustomed to assemble in sacred meetings the first day of the week; but not because they believed that day more eminent than any other, nor because they believed the rest of that day to be a part of Divine worship, as the rest of the seventh day had been under the law; nor that it must be observed with rigour, as formerly, under the law. By no means: but because it was convenient to designate some time for sacred exercises; and that a man might the better be at leisure for them, rest also from daily labour was required. The first day of the week, on which the Lord rose from the dead, (which is thus called the Lord's day, Rev. i: 10,) seemed most meet to be destined to these services; but not because it was judged more holy, or because a rigid rest and cessation of all work in observing that day was a part of Divine worship. For thus, *it would have been not a taking off of the yoke, but a shifting of it.*"

On the whole, it may be said that the Protestant churches of continental Europe have all occupied this ground, concerning the sanctification of the Lord's day. These churches, properly speaking, have never had the Sabbath; for it has only been to them a holy-day, ranking no higher than Christmas or Easter, or a season set apart by civil enactment, or a convenient arrangement for concert in public worship; and not a sacred day of Divine appointment. The manner in which it is desecrated, commonly, throughout the Protestant States of the continent is shocking to the feelings and usages of strict, American Protestants; and seems to them to approximate only too much to the license of

Popery. But we have now seen that this desecration is not an accidental irregularity: it is the natural and proper result of the theory in which these churches have been educated since the reformation. That the greatest and best of the reformers should have failed to embrace the truth concerning the Lord's day, is indeed no subject of surprise. That men emerging at a bound from the meridian darkness of Popery into Gospel light should see all things correctly at first, was not to be expected. That they saw so many things "eye to eye," and erred in so few, is a wonder, only to be explained by the presence of the Spirit of all truth. It is wholesome to become acquainted with their few errors, and to explode them; for it will tend to correct that overweening spirit of party which ever prompts Christians to call themselves by the name of men, like those who said: "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas." But it may well be inquired also, whether a part of the spiritual decline which has almost extinguished the true light in the ancient seats of Luther, Calvin, Witsius and De Moor, is not due to this misconception of Sabbath obligation, and its consequent neglect. The sacred observance of one day in seven is God's appointed means for the cultivation of piety: when piety vanishes, orthodoxy necessarily follows it in due time.

As has been already indicated, the first successful attempt to establish the theory of a *Christian Sabbath*, since the reformation, was made among the English Puritans. About the year 1595, a dissenting minister of Suffolk, Dr. Nicholas Bound, published a book entitled "*Sabbatum Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, or, The True Doctrine of the Sabbath," in which he advocated the view afterwards adopted by the Westminster Assembly. This treatise had great currency among the devout dissenters, and evangelical churchmen, and was the beginning of a discussion which continued, under repeated attempts for its suppression by high church authorities, until the doctrines of the Puritans became those of the bulk of sincere Christians throughout Great Britain and the American colonies. Archbishop Whitgift condemned Dr. Bound's book to suppression. James I. published his Declaration of Sports, encouraging the people to dancing, trials of archery, erecting May-poles, and other amusements, at any hours of the Lord's day not occupied by public worship. The flood of immoralities introduced by this measure became so odious, that the secular magistrates, at the urgent instance of the people themselves, suppressed the Sunday sports. Under Charles I., Laud invoked the aid of his clergy to reestablish them; and the strange spectacle was seen, of the laity petitioning against the profane desecration of the sacred day, and their spiritual guides compelling them to perpetrate it! (Neal. Hist. of the Puritans, Vol. I., Ch. 8.; Vol. II., Ch. 2-5.)

The first great Synod which ever propounded, in modern ages, the true doctrine of the Lord's day, was the Westminster Assembly. Their confession of faith, which is now the standard of the Scotch, Irish and American Presbyterian, and of many independent churches, states the truth so luminously, (Ch. xxi., Sec. 7-8,) that we shall repeat their words here, though familiar, as the best statement of the proposition and text of our subsequent discussion.

Sec. 7. "As it is of the law of nature that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God ; so in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him ; which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week ; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath."

Sec. 8. "This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employments and recreations ; but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy."

As the doctrinal articles of the Westminster Assembly were generally adopted by the Calvinistic dissenters of England and America, they also embraced these views of the Sabbath. The Immersionist denominations of these countries, which arrogate to themselves the title of Baptists, came from a mixed origin. The first idea and nucleus of the sect in England were from the Anabaptism of the Netherlands and lower Germany. That continental sect was at first every where persecuted, and in the long and terrible oppression of Protestantism, in the Netherlands, under Charles V., and his son, Philip of Spain, they in common with Lutherans and Reformed, emigrated in vast numbers to every accessible place of refuge. The commercial and religious affinities of England and the low countries were then very close ; so that thousands of the Protestant middle classes of that wretched land were soon found settled in London, Norwich and other towns. It was thus especially, that Anabaptism took root on English soil. The Baptist churches afterwards formed, received their other element from the churches of the Calvinistic Independents, in which, for a considerable time, immersion and pædobaptism were both practised by compromise. This independent element was Calvinistic and Sabbatarian ; the Anabaptist material was Arminian in doctrine, and practised the loose views of

Luther concerning the Sabbath. Hence, the Baptist churches of England and those of this country, which are their counterparts, differed among themselves, and presented mixture and diversity of usage on both these points. The new American sect, self-styled Reformers, popularly known as Campbellite, has adopted the boldest view propounded by the Socinians; presenting here another evidence of its Socinian tendencies.

Wesleyanism is an offshoot of the Anglican church, with the mystical Arminianism of the Moravians, and of Holland, superinduced upon it. The Lutheranism of this country claims to be a reproduction of that of Germany, only stripped of its Erastianism and doctrine of religious establishments. It takes pride in republishing the symbols of Melancthon and Luther. The Episcopacy of America strives to be a counterpart of that of England. The reader will now easily comprehend, from this historical review, what would naturally be the views of these several denominations concerning Sabbath-observance, and what is the legitimate source of that diversity, vagueness and license, which are exhibited in this country, in our Sabbath usages. To particularize further would be unnecessary, and might be supposed invidious.

II. We proceed now to the attempt to give a full but summary statement of the grounds upon which Presbyterians assert the doctrine of a Christian Sabbath as it is set forth in their confession. And *first*: it is most obvious that if the Sabbath law contained in the decalogue is "a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages," and not ceremonial and positive, like the Jewish laws of meats, new moons and sacrifices, it cannot have passed away along with the other temporary shadows of Judaism. If it was not introduced by the Levitical economy for the first time, but was in force before, and if it was binding not on Jews only, but on all men, then the abrogation of that economy cannot have abrogated that which it did not institute. The apostle Paul justifies us here, by using an argument exactly parallel in a similiar case. "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul." Gal. iii: 17. Upon the question whether the fourth commandment was of Mosaic origin, or earlier, the fathers were divided; and this fact is another among the many proofs of their slender acquaintance with the Hebrew literature and antiquities.

That it is a positive, moral, and perpetual command, we argue from the facts that there is a reason in the nature of things, making such an institution necessary to man's religious interests; and that this necessity is substantially the same in all ages and nations. That it is man's duty to worship God, none will dispute. Nor will it be denied that this worship should be in part social; because man is a being of social affections, and subject to social

obligations; and because one of the great ends of worship is the display of the Divine glory before our fellow-creatures. Social worship cannot be conducted without the appointment of a stated day; and what more reasonable than that the Divine authority, who is the object of this worship, should meet this necessity, by himself fixing the day for all mankind? And even for the cultivation of our individual devotion, a periodical season is absolutely necessary to creatures of habit and of finite capacities, like us. What is not regularly done will soon be omitted; for periodical recurrence is the very foundation of habit. Unless these spiritual thoughts and exercises were attached to some certain season, they would inevitably be pushed out of the minds of carnal and sensuous beings like man, by the cares of this world. Now, when it is our duty to perform a certain work, it is also our duty to employ all the necessary means for it. The question, whether the Sabbath command is *moral* or positive, seems, therefore, to admit of a very simple solution. Whether one day in six, or one in eight, might not have seemed to the Divine wisdom admissible for this purpose; or which day of the seven, the first or last, should be consecrated to it, or what should be the particular external ceremonies for its observance; all these things, we freely admit, are of merely positive institution, and may be changed by the Divine Legislator. But that man shall observe some stated, recurring period of religious worship, is as much a dictate of the natural reason and conscience, as immediate a result of the natural relations of man to God, as that man shall worship his God at all. And no reason can be shown why this original moral obligation was more or less stringent upon the Israelites of the Mosaic period, than on men before or since them. If the ground of the Sabbath institution, in the moral relations existing by nature, is universal and perpetual, is it not reasonable to expect the precept to be so also?

We argue further, that the enactment of the Sabbath-law does not date from Moses, but was coeval with the human race. It is one of the two first institutions of paradise. The sanctification of the seventh day took place from the very end of the week of creation. (Gen. ii : 3.) For whose observance was the day, then, consecrated or set apart, if not for man's? Not for God's; because the glorious paradox is forever true of him, that his ineffable quiet is as perpetual as his ever-active providence. Not surely for the angels? but for Adam's. Doubtless, Eden witnessed the sacred rest of him and his consort from

"The toil  
Of their sweet gardening labour, which sufficed  
To recommend cool zephyr, and made ease  
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite  
More grateful."

And from that time downward, we have indications, brief indeed, but as numerous as we should expect in the brief record of Genesis and Exodus, and sufficient to show that the Sabbath continued to be an institution of the patriarchal religion. A slight probable evidence of this may even be found in the fact, that seven has ever been a sacred and symbolical number, among Patriarchs, Israelites, and Pagans. In Genesis we read of the "seven clean beasts," the "seven well-favoured," and "seven lean kine," the "seven ears of corn, rank and good." Now there is no natural phenomenon to suggest the number; for no noted heavenly body, or natural element, revolves precisely in seven hours, days, weeks, or months. Whence the peculiar idea everywhere attached to the number, if not from the institution of a week for our first parents? But to proceed to more solid facts: It is at least probable that the "end of days," (Gen. iv: 3,) rendered in our version, "process of time," at which Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, was the end of the week, the seventh, or Sabbath-day. In Gen. vii: 10, we find God himself observing the weekly interval in the preparations for the flood. We find another clear hint of the observance of the weekly division of time by Noah and his family in their floating prison. (Gen. viii: 10-12.) The patriarch twice waited a period of seven days to send out his dove. From Gen. xxix: 27, we learn that it was customary among the patriarchs of Mesopotamia, in the days of Laban, to continue a wedding festival a week; and the very term of service rendered by Jacob for his two wives, shows the use made of the number seven as the customary duration of a contract for domestic servitude. Gen. l: 10, shows us that at the time of Jacob's death, a week was also the length of the most honourable funeral exercises. In Exod. xii: 3-20, we find the first institution of the passover, when as yet there was no Mosaic institutions. This feast was also appointed to last a week. In Exod. xvi: 22-30, where we read the first account of the manna, we find the Sabbath institution already in force; and no candid mind will say that this is the history of its first enactment. It is spoken of as a rest with which the people ought to have been familiar. But the people had not yet come to Sinai, and none of its institutions had been given. Here, then, we have the Sabbath's rest enforced on Israel, before the ceremonial law was set up, and two weekly variations wrought in the standing miracle of the manna, in order to facilitate it. And when at length we come to the formal command of the decalogue, it is expressed in terms which clearly indicate that the Sabbath was an institution already known, of which the obligation was now only re-affirmed.

The very fact that this precept found a place in the awful "ten words," is of itself strong evidence that it is not a positive and ceremonial, but a moral and perpetual statute. Confessedly, there



is nothing else ceremonial here. An eminent distinction was given to the subjects of these ten commands, by the mode in which God delivered them. They were given first of all. They were spoken in the hearing of all the people, by God's own voice of thunder, which moulded its tremendous sounds into syllables so loud that the whole multitude around the distant base of the mount heard them break articulate from the cloud upon its peak. "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; *and he added no more.*" (Deut. v: 22.) No other words shared the same distinction. And then they were engraven, by God's own agency, on two stone tables, whose durability was to represent the perpetual obligation of all which was written upon it. How can it be believed that this one ceremonial precept has been thrust in here, where all else is of obligation as old, and as universal as the race? This is strengthened also by the reflection that the ground first assigned in Genesis, and here repeated for its enactment, is in no sense Jewish or national. God's work of creation in six days, and his rest the seventh, have just as much relation to one tribe of Adam's descendants as to another. Note the contrast: that, in many cases, when ceremonial and Jewish commands are given, like the passover, a national or Jewish event is assigned as its ground, like the exodus from Egypt.

The assertion that the Sabbath was coeval with the human race, and was intended for the observation of all, receives collateral confirmation also from the early traditions concerning it, which pervade the first Pagan literature. It can hardly be supposed that Homer and Hesiod borrowed from the books of Moses, sabbatical allusions, which would have been to their hearers unintelligible. They must be the remnants of those primeval traditions of patriarchal religion, which had been transferred by the descendants of Japheth, to the isles of Chittim. The early allusions to a sacred seventh day may be sufficiently exhibited by citing a collection of them from Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*, (L. xiii., Sec. 13,) which he quotes from the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria. The latter father is represented as saying: "That the seventh day is sacred, not the Hebrews only, but the Gentiles also acknowledge, according to which the whole universe of animals and vegetables revolves." Hesiod, for instance, thus says concerning it:

"The first, the fourth also, and the seventh is a sacred day." (*ἰσρον ἡμῶν.*) *Dierum*, line 6.

And again: "The seventh day once more, the splendid dawn of the sun."

And Homer: "The seventh then arrived, the sacred day."

Again: "The seventh was sacred."

“The seventh dawn was at hand, and with this all the series is completed.”

And once more: “On the seventh day, we left the stream of Acheron.”

And thus also writes Callimachus the poet: “It was now the Sabbath day: and with this all was accomplished.”

Again: “The seventh day is among the fortunate; yea, the seven is the parent-day.”

Again: “The seventh day is first, and the seventh day is the complement.”

And: “All things in the starry sky are found in sevens; and shine in their ordained cycles.”

“And this day, the elegies of Solon also proclaim as more sacred, in a wonderful mode.”

Thus far Clement and Eusebius. Josephus, in his last book against Apion, affirms that “there could be found no city, either of the Grecians or Barbarians, who owned not a seventh day’s rest from labour.” This of course is exaggerated. Philo, cotemporary with Josephus, calls the Sabbath εορτή κανόνημος.

We argue once more, that the Sabbath never was a Levitical institution, because God commanded its observance both by Jews and Gentiles, in the very laws of Moses. “In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, *nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*” To see the force of the argument from this fact, the reader must contrast the jealous care with which “the stranger,” the pagan foreigner residing in an Israelitish community, was prohibited from all share in their ritual services. No foreigner could partake of the passover—it was sacrilege. He was not even permitted to enter the court of the temple where the sacrifices were offered, at the peril of his life. Now, when the foreigner is commanded to share the Sabbath rest, along with the Israelite, does not this prove that rest to be no ceremonial, no type, like the passover and the altar, but a universal moral institution, designed for Jew and Gentile alike?

We have thus established this assertion on an impregnable basis, because the argument from it is direct and conclusive. If the Sabbath command was in full force before Moses, the passing away of Moses’ law does not remove it. If it always was binding, on grounds as general as the human race, on all tribes of mankind, the dissolution of God’s special covenant with the family of Jacob did not repeal it. If its nature is moral and practical, the substitution of the substance for the types does not supplant it. The reason that the ceremonial laws were temporary was that the necessity for them was temporary. They were abrogated because they were no longer needed. But the practical need for a Sabbath is the same in all ages. When it is made to appear that this day is the bulwark of practical religion in the world, that its proper

observance every where goes hand in hand with piety and the true worship of God ; that where there is no Sabbath there is no Christianity, it becomes an impossible supposition that God would make the institution temporary. The necessity for the Sabbath has not ceased, therefore it is not abrogated. In its nature, as well as its necessity, it is a permanent, moral command. All such laws are as incapable of change as the God in whose character they are founded. Unlike mere positive or ceremonial ordinances, the authority of which ceases as soon as God sees fit to repeal the command for them, moral precepts can never be repealed ; because the purpose to repeal them would imply a change in the unchangeable, and a depravation in the perfect character of God.

2. We will now proceed, in the second place, to consider the passages of the New Testament from which the abrogation of the Sabbath obligations has been argued, together with some considerations growing out of them. In attempting to refute the exposition and arguments of those who advocate the repeal of those obligations, we shall not pause to attribute each gloss which we reject to its especial author, or load our page with citations of learned names. It may be remarked once for all in the outset, that the erroneous expositions of Calvin are far the least objectionable, and, at the same time, the most subtle and acute ; and that those of Neander are in full contrast with his in both these respects.

The first passage is that contained, with some variation, in Matt. xii : 1-8, Mark ii : 23-28, Luke vi : 1-5. The reader, on examining these places in connexion, and supplying from the second or third evangelist what is omitted by the first, will find that our Lord advances five ideas distinguishable from each other. His hungry and wearied disciples, passing with him through the fields of ripe corn, had availed themselves of the permission of Deut. xxiii : 25, to pluck, rub out, and eat some grains of wheat, as a slight refreshment. The pharisees sieze the occasion to cavil that He had thus permitted them to break the Sabbath law, by engaging in the preparation of their food in sacred time ; objecting thus against the trivial task of rubbing out, and winnowing from the chaff a few heads of wheat as they walked along. Our Saviour defends them and himself by saying, in the first place, that the necessity created by their hunger justified the departure from the letter of the law, as did David's necessity, when fleeing for his life he employed the shew-bread (and innocently) to relieve his hunger ; second, that the example of the priests, who performed necessary manual labour without blame about the temple on the Sabbath, justified what his disciples had done ; third, that God preferred the compliance with the spirit of his law, which enjoins humanity and mercy, over a mere compliance with its outward rites ; for, in the fourth place, God's design in instituting the

Sabbath had been purely a humane one, seeing He had intended it, not as a burdensome ceremonial to gall the necks of men to no benevolent purpose, but as a means of promoting the true welfare of the human race; and last, that He himself, as the Messiah, was the Divine and Supreme authority in maintaining the Sabbath law, as well as all others—so that it was enough for Him to pronounce that his disciples had made no infraction of it.

The first general view presented hereupon by the anti-Sabbatarians is, that Christ here, for the first time, introduces the freer, more lenient law of the new dispensation, by his Messianic authority, as a substitute for the stricter Mosaic law. The simple and short answer is, that it is the Sabbath *as it ought to be observed by Jews*, under the Mosaic laws, which our Saviour is here expounding. The new dispensation had not yet come; and was not to begin till Pentecost. After all this discussion, Christ complied with all the requisitions of the Levitical institutions up to his death. If, then, any thing is relaxed, it is the Mosaic Sabbath, as Jews should keep it, which is the subject of the alteration. But we wish the reader to bear in mind, as a point important here and hereafter, that our Saviour does not claim any relaxation at all for his disciples. The whole drift of his argument is to show that when the Mosaic law of the Sabbath is properly understood, (as Jews should practise it,) his disciples have not broken it at all. They have complied with it; and need no lowering of its sense in order to escape its condemnation. Bearing this in mind, we proceed to the second erroneous inference. This is, that our Saviour illustrates and expounds the Sabbath law by two cases of other laws merely ceremonial, the disposition of the old shew-bread and the Sabbath sacrifices. Hence the inference, that the Sabbath also is but a ceremonial law. But to those who will notice how entirely the Jewish Scriptures ignore, in their practical recitals and discussions of religious duties, the distinction which we make between the "moral" and the "positive," this inference will be seen to be utterly worthless. The Jewish mind never paused to express the distinction, in its practical views of duty. See how Moses jumbles together in Exodus, prohibitions against idolatry, or hewing the stones of which the altar was made: against eating flesh torn of beasts in the field, and bearing false witness. See how Ezekial (ch. xviii.) conjoins eating upon the mountains and taking usury on a loan, with idolatry and oppression, in his descriptions of the sins of his cotemporaries. But again: It has been admitted that the external and formal details of Sabbath observance may be of only positive obligation, while the obligation to keep religiously a stated season is moral. It does not, then, at all imply that the substantial observance of such a stated day is not of moral and perpetual obligation, because any of those details concerning the labours of necessity or mercy which are wholly compatible with such observ-

ance, are illustrated by comparison with other ceremonial precepts. It is argued again, that "our Saviour, in his third point, implies that Sabbath observance is but ceremonial, while the duty of mercy is of moral obligation, when he indicates that, if the two clash, the Sabbath observance is to give way. The positive gives way to the moral." The force of this is entirely removed by recalling the fact that it is not a failure of Sabbath observance, which he excuses by the argument that the positive should give place to the moral; but it is an incidental labour of necessity wholly compatible with Sabbath observance. There had been no failure. Nor is it true that when we are commanded to let one given duty give place to the higher demands of another, the former is therefore only positive, while the latter is moral. There is a natural, moral, and perpetual obligation to worship God; and yet it might be our duty to suspend any act of worship, time and again, to almost any number, in order to meet the demands of urgent cases of necessity calling for our compassion. The wise man expresses precisely the sense of our Saviour's argument when he says: "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." (Prov. xxi: 3.) And the meaning is, that the formal acts of religious worship, though in general demanded by nature and reason, are less important in God's eyes than the direct acts which express the true spirit of holiness in which religion consists. "Sacrifice," both here, and in our Saviour's citation from Samuel, represents the whole general idea of outward religious worship. It is not because "sacrifice" is merely ceremonial, that it is postponed in importance, to mercy and justice, but because it is external, and may be merely formal. Religious worship, here intended by the more special term "sacrifice," is surely not a duty merely ceremonial and positive in its obligation, though external. Our Saviour, then, does not imply that the Sabbath is an institution merely ceremonial, by comparing it to sacrifice.

The perverted gloss of the fourth idea: "The Sabbath is made for man," is almost too shallow to need exposure. It has been used as though it sanctioned the notion, that man was not intended to be cramped by the Sabbath, but, on the contrary, it was intended to yield to his convenience and gratification. But since the object of the Sabbath is here stated to be a humane one, namely: the promotion of man's true welfare; it must be settled what that true welfare is, and how it may be best promoted, before we are authorized to conclude that we may do what we please with the holy-day. If it should appear that man's true welfare imperatively demands a Sabbath-day, strictly observed and fenced in with Divine authority, the humanity of the Divine motive in giving a Sabbath would argue any thing else than the license inferred from it.

The concluding words of the passage, in Matthew, have suggested an argument which is at least more plausible. Calvin

paraphrases them thus: "The Son of man, agreeably to his authority, is able to relax the Sabbath-day just as the other legal ceremonies." And just before: "Here he saith that power is given to him to release his people from the necessity of observing the Sabbath." The inference is obvious, that if this is His scope in these words, then the Sabbath must be admitted by us to be only a ceremonial institution; for we have ourselves argued that moral laws are founded on the unchangeable nature of God himself, and will never be changed, because God cannot change. But this is clearly a mistaken exposition. It may be noted that the conjunction which is rendered by Calvin and the English version: "The Son of Man is Lord *even* (or also) of the Sabbath-day," is unanimously rejected by modern editors of the text. Calvin, of course, makes this conjunction regard the ceremonials just mentioned: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also," (as well as of matters of shew-bread and sacrifice.) But we should almost certainly read the clause without the conjunction: "If ye had known what this means, 'I prefer mercy rather than sacrifice,' ye would not have condemned the innocent. *For* the Son of Man is *Lord* of the Sabbath." What force shall we assign to the illative 'for,' wholly neglected by Calvin? There is no reasonable explanation of it, but that which makes it introduce the ground on which the innocence of the disciples is asserted. "These men, blamed by you, are innocent; it is enough that I defend them: *for* I am Lord of the Sabbath. This law is my law. Mine is the authority which enacts it, and if I am satisfied, that itself is innocence in my subjects." But this is comparatively unimportant. The evident reason which shows Calvin's paraphrase to be entirely a misconception, is this: As we have said, the whole drift of our Saviour's argument is not to excuse his disciples, but to defend them. He does not claim that the Sabbath law, as enacted for Jews, must needs be relaxed, in order to admit the conduct of the disciples; but that this law justified their conduct. He concludes his defence by telling their accusers: "you have condemned *the innocent*." Now to represent him as shielding them by asserting a right in himself to relax the Sabbath law for them, makes him adopt in the end a ground of defence contradictory to the former. The last argument would stullify all the previous one. The logical absurdity would be exactly of the same kind with that contained in the trite story of the school-boy, who, when charged with striking his school-mate, answered: "I did not strike him at all; but if I did, he struck me first." And, as a question of fact, is it true that Christ did, at this time, exercise his Divine authority to relax any Mosaic institution in favour of his disciples? Is it not notorious, on the contrary, that he taught them to give an exemplary compliance in every respect, until the time was fully come after his resurrection?

But to conclude. It is most obvious that, whatever is our exposition of the particular parts, our Saviour's drift is to unfold the true nature of the *Mosaic Sabbath*, as then obligatory on Jews still obedient to the ceremonial law, as he admitted himself and his disciples to be; and not the nature of the Christian Sabbath. The latter was not to be introduced until many months after, as our opponents themselves admit. And this short view is a sufficient refutation in itself.

It may be as well to notice here a supposed difficulty attending our argument. It is said: "If you deny that Christ promises any relaxation of the stringency of the Levitical Sabbath, as of a ceremonial yoke, then you ought in consistency to exact of Christians now as punctilious an observance as was demanded of the old Jews, in every respect. You should refuse to make a fire in your dwellings on the Sabbath. You should seek to re-enact the terrible law of Numb. xvi, which punished a wretch with death for gathering a few sticks."

This is only skillful sophistry. We have not asserted that all the details of the Sabbath laws, in the books of Moses, were of perpetual moral obligation. We have not denied that some of them were ceremonial. The two instances mentioned, which are the only plausible ones which can be presented against us, are not taken from the decalogue, but from subsequent parts of the ceremonial books. We expressly contrasted the Sabbath precept as it stands in the "ten words" with all the rest, with reference to its perpetual, moral nature. The precept there contains only two points—rest from secular labour, and the sanctification of the day, which means in our view its appropriation to sacred services. The matter which is of perpetual moral obligation in the Sabbath law, is only this, that a finite, sensuous, and social being like man, shall have some periodical season stately consecrated to religious services, (such season as God shall see fit to appoint.) And all matters of detail and form which do not clash with this great end, are matters of mere positive enactment, which may be changed or repealed by Him who enacted them. But we can present several very consistent and sufficient reasons why the ceremonial details added to the great moral law of the decalogue, by the subsequent and ritual part of the Levitical legislation, should be more stringent, and enforced by heavier penalties than among us. First: the Sabbath became to the Israelite not only a religious institution of moral obligation, but a type. It took rank with his new-moon, and his passover. Of this, more hereafter. But the very nature and design of a symbolical ritual demand that it shall be observed with technical accuracy. Next, the government was a theocracy, and no line whatever separated the secular and sacred statutes from each other. Hence it is natural that offences should deserve very different penalties under such a government, and

especially an offence aimed so especially against the Divine Chief Magistrate, as Sabbath labour. Third : The Hebrews' houses had no hearths, nor chimneys, except for cooking ; so that in that warm climate a prohibition to light fire on the Sabbath is exactly equivalent to a prohibition to cook on the holy-day. Even if this prohibition were a part of the decalogue, it would be a ridiculous sacrifice of its spirit to its letter, to compel us in our wintry climate, to forego the fire which is hourly necessary to health and comfort. But as the prohibition signifies in its spirit, we freely admit that with us, as with the Jews, all culinary labours should be intermitted, except such as are demanded by necessity and mercy, or by the different nature of a part of the food on which civilized nations now subsist. For us to allow ourselves further license would be to palter with that which we have so carefully pointed out as the essential and perpetual substance of the Sabbath law ; the cessation of labour, and the appropriation to religious pursuits of one day (not one fragment of a day) in seven. When the confession of faith says that we are commanded to rest "all the day" from our own employments and amusements, and to "take up the whole time" in religious exercises, it only assumes that "a day" means, in the decalogue, a day.

The second group of passages which are used against our theory of Sabbath obligation are : Rom. xiv : 5-6, Gal. iv : 9-11, Col. ii : 16-17. To save the reader trouble, we will copy them :

"One man esteemeth one day above another : another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord : and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days : Which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ."

The facts in which all are agreed, which explain the Apostle's meaning in these passages, are these : After the establishment of the new dispensation, the Christians converted from among the Jews had generally combined the practice of Judaism with the forms of Christianity. They observed the Lord's day, baptism, and the Lord's supper ; but they also continued to keep the seventh day, the passover, and circumcision. At first it was proposed by them to enforce this double system on all Gentile Christians ; but this project was rebuked by the meeting of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, recorded in Acts xv. A large part, how-



ever, of the Jewish Christians, out of whom ultimately grew the Ebionite sect, continued to observe the forms of both dispensations; and restless spirits among the mixed churches of Jewish and Gentile converts planted by Paul, continued to attempt their enforcement on Gentiles also; some of them conjoining with this Ebionite theory the graver heresy of a justification by ritual observances. Thus, at this day, this spectacle was exhibited. In the mixed churches of Asia Minor and the West, some brethren went to the synagogue on Saturday, and to the church-meeting on Sunday, keeping both days religiously; while some kept only Sunday. Some felt bound to keep all the Jewish festivals and fasts, while others paid them no regard. And those who had not Christian light to apprehend these Jewish observances as non-essentials, found their consciences grievously burdened or offended by the diversity. It was to quiet this trouble that the apostle wrote these passages. Thus far we agree.

We however further assert, that by the beggarly elements of "days," "months," "times," "years," "holy-days," "new-moons," "Sabbath-days," the apostle means Jewish festivals, and those alone. The Christians' festival, Sunday, is not here in question; because about the observance of this, there was no dispute nor diversity in the Christian churches. Jewish and Gentile Christians alike consented universally in its sanctification. When Paul asserts that the regarding of a day, or the not regarding it, is a non-essential, like the eating or not eating of meats, the natural and fair interpretation is, that he means those days which were in debate, and no others. When he implies that some innocently "regarded every day alike," we should understand: *every one of those days which were subjects of diversity*: not the Christians' Sunday, about which there was no dispute.

But the other party give to Paul's words a far more sweeping sense. They suppose him to assert 'that the new dispensation has detached the service of God from all connexion with stated seasons whatever; so that in its view, all days, Sabbath or Sunday, passover or easter, should be alike to the Christian spirit. He who ceased to observe the Jewish days, in order to transfer his sabbatical observances, his stated devotions and special religious rest to the Christian days, was still in substance a Judaizer. He was retaining the Jewish bondage of spirit under a new form. The true liberty which Paul would teach was this: To regard no day whatever as more related to the Christian consciousness than any other day, and to make every day a rest from sin, pervading all with a sacred spirit by performing all its labours to the glory of God. This is the true, thorough, and high ground, which the apostle called them to occupy with him. But opposition to Judaism, and reverence for Christ in his resurrection had led the Christians to hold their public meetings on Sunday instead of

Saturday ; and some little allowance of set days (including Easter and Whitsuntide) had been granted to the weakness of the Christian life, which, in the common average of Christians, had not yet risen to that level which would enable them, like Paul, to make every day equally a Lord's day. This concession had been possibly established with Paul's connivance, certainly very early in the history of the church ; and, on the whole, was a very convenient and useful human appointment.' See this view in Neander. Hist. Vol. I., Sec. 3. Sec. II. 3, and Planting and Training. Vol. I., B. 3., Ch. v., Sec. 2. The chief argument by which he supports his view, is a perversion of the figurative and glowing language found in the few and not very perspicuous writings of the Christians immediately next to the apostles, where they speak affectionately of the Christian's whole life as belonging to God by the purchase of redemption, and of the duties of every day as an oblation to His honour. The thankful spirit of the new dispensation, urges Neander, unlike the Jewish, felt itself constrained by gratitude for redemption to consecrate its whole life to God. Whatever the Christian's occupation, whether secular or religious, all was alike done to the glory of God. Hence all was consecrated ; every day was a holy-day ; for the whole life was holy ; every Christian was a perpetual priest. Hence there was no room for the idea of a Sabbath at all. Strange that the learned and amiable antiquary should have forgotten that all this was just as true of pious Hebrews before, as of Christians after Christ, of Isaiah as of Paul. Isaiah, if redeemed at all, was redeemed by the same blood with Paul, owed substantially the same debt of gratitude, and would feel, as a true saint, the same self-consecration. The spirit of the precept, "Do all to the glory of God," actuates the pious Israelite exactly as it did the pious Christian. Let the reader compare Deut. vi : 4-5, with Matt. xxii : 37, so that the refined argument of the learned German proves that there ought to be no room for a sabbatical distinction of days under the old dispensation, just as under the new. Unluckily, the explicit language of the books of Moses is rather damaging to the validity of the inference.

Let us also notice, just here, the consequences of the ground on which Neander places those festival observances of the early Christians on stated days, of which he could not dispute the occurrence. He represents that Paul invited and exhorted them to ascend at once to his high, spiritual ground, discarding all reference to stated days whatever, and making the whole life a Sabbath. But the average standard of spirituality was not yet high enough to make this practicable for all ; and so the partial observance of stated days, Sundays, Easter and Whitsuntide, was allowed by a sort of ecclesiastical precedent. Now we remark, first, that this represents the Spirit of Inspiration as setting up an impracticable

standard. If the average of spirituality was not high enough in the days of inspiration to make it practicable actually to discard all relation of the acts of Christian devotion to stated days, may we rationally expect that it will ever be high enough while Christians are in the flesh? In other words: Is there not an implied admission here, that there is an innate necessity in the character of human beings that they should have a sabbatical institution of some sort? The assertion of such an universal necessity is one of the corner-stones of our argument. Second: The idea reveals an unworthy and false conception of Paul's inspiration. Paul, forsooth, proposes a certain mode and standard of Christian devotion, but it is found necessary in practice to correct it by the wiser guidance of church-precedent, almost under Paul's nose! This representation of the whole matter could never have proceeded from any other than the transcendental theory of inspiration; which regards it as merely a higher mode of the natural and normal exercise of the man's own consciousness, at a more exalted level than that attained by other men. Let those American Christians who indulge their prurient literary vanity by bespattering Neander with their unintelligent praise, remember that this is the conception of inspiration to which they commit themselves in commending him.

In our remaining discussion of the passages cited from the epistles, we may confine our remarks to Col. iii: 16-17. For it contains all the apparent difficulties for the sabbatarian, and all the supposed arguments for his opponent, in the strongest form. The point made by Calvin upon the words, "Sabbath-days, . . . are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," is far the most plausible, and indeed the only one of serious difficulty. It is in substance this: That if it be admitted that the Lord's day was never included by the earlier Christians in the term *σαββατα*—and the apostle is here condemning the Jewish holy-days only—still the fact will remain, that the Jewish Sabbath was a shadow. That is: It was a typical, and not a perpetual moral institution; so that it must go by the board along with all the other types, after the substance comes, unless some positive New Testament precept re-enact it. But there is no such precept. To this we answer, that the Sabbath was to the Jews both a perpetual, moral institution, and a type. That it was the former, we have proved in the first general branch of our discussion. It was as old as the race of man, was given to all the race, was given upon an assigned motive of universal application, and to satisfy a necessity common to the whole race was founded on man's natural relations to his Maker, was observed before the typical dispensation came among all tribes, was re-enacted in the decalogue where all the precepts are perpetual, and was enjoined on foreigners as well as Jews in the Holy Land: while from all types foreigners were expressly

excluded. That it was to the Jews also a type, we admit. Like the new-moons, it was marked by an additional number of sacrifices. It was to the Israelites a memorial of their exodus from Egypt, and their covenant of obedience to God. Deut. v : 15, Exod. xxxi : 13, Ezek. xx : 12. It was for a time, at least, a foreshadowing of the rest of Canaan. Hebr. iv : 4-11. It was to them, as it is to us, a shadow of the rest in heaven. Hebr. iv : 9. Calvin adds (Bk. II. Institutes, Ch. 8., Sec. 29) that its most important typical use was to represent the cessation of the efforts of self-righteousness in us, that we may repose in the justifying and sanctifying grace of Christ. For this his proofs seem to us very slender. When the Epistle to the Colossians says that sabbaths, along with holy-days and new-moons, are a shadow, it seems to us much the most simple explanation to say that it is the sacrificial aspect of those days, or (to employ other words) their use as especial days of sacrifice, in which they together constituted a shadow. They were a shadow in this: that the sacrifices, which constituted so prominent a part of their Levitical observance, pointed to Christ the body. This is exactly accordant with the whole tenour of the Epistles.

The seventh day had been, then, to the Jews, both a moral institution and a ritual type. In its latter use, the coming of Christ had of course abrogated it. In its former use, its whole duties and obligations had lately been transferred to the Lord's day. So that *the seventh day*, as distinguished from *Sunday*, along with the new-moons, was now nothing but a type, and that an effete one. In this aspect, the apostle might well argue that its observance then indicated a Judaizing tendency.

We fortify our position farther by re-asserting that the fair exposition of all these passages should lead us to understand by the phrases, "days," "times," "holy-days," only those days or times which were then subjects of diversity among the Christians to whom the apostle was writing. When he implies that some innocently "regarded every day alike," we ought in fairness to understand by "every day," each of those days which were then in dispute. But we know historically that there was no diversity among these Christians concerning the observance of the Lord's day. All practised it. If we uncritically persist in taking the phrase "every day" in a sense absolutely universal, we shall place the teachings and usages of the apostle in a self-contradictory light. We make him tell his converts that *the Lord's day* may be regarded as just like any other day; when we know that, in fact, neither the apostle nor any of his converts regarded it so. They all observed it as a religious festival, and as we shall show with the clear sanction of inspired example. Again: it must be distinctly remembered that the word Sabbath was never applied, in New Testament language, to the Lord's day, but was always

used for the seventh day, and other Jewish festivals, as distinguished from the Christian's Sunday. We have the authority of Suidas, Theophylact and Cæsarius, and Levit. xxiii: 24, that the "Jews called any of their stated religious festivals, σαββατον." We might then argue, perhaps, that there is no evidence that the seventh day is intended in this place of Colossians at all; but only the Jewish feasts. But we waive this, as too near to special pleading. With far more confidence we argue, that since all parties have claimed the parallelism of three passages in Romans, Galatians and Colossians, as to their occasion and doctrine, we are entitled to assume that the passage in Colossians, the most explicit of the three, is to be taken as explicative of the other two. And we assert that, according to well known usage of the word σαββατα at that time, the Sundays were *definitely excluded* from the apostle's assertion. When he says here, "holy-days, new-moons, and Sabbath-days," he explicitly excludes the Lord's days. We are entitled to assume, therefore, that they are excluded when he says in the parallel passage of Romans, "every day," and in Galatians, "days, and months, and times, and years." That the Lord's days were sacred was not in debate; this is set aside as a matter known to all, consented unto by all. It is the Jewish holy-days, from the observance of which, the Christian conscience is exempted.

Let us recur to that view of the necessity of a sabbatical institution in some form. It is not a temporary or ceremonial need, but one founded on man's very nature, and relations to his God. If there is no stated sacred day, there will be no religion. Now shall we so interpret the apostle's words as to leave the New Testament church no Sabbath at all in any shape? After the experience of all ages had shown that a Sabbath rest was the natural and necessary means essential to religious welfare, was the New Testament church stripped more bare, left more poor than all preceding dispensations? Paradise had enjoyed its Sabbath, though needing it less. The patriarchal saints enjoyed it. Abraham enjoyed it. Israel, under the burdensome tutelage of the law, enjoyed it. But now that the last, the fullest, the most gracious and blessed dispensation of all has come, this one of the two institutions of Eden is taken away! We cannot accept such an exposition of the apostle's meaning. We must conclude that when he seems to release his converts from all obligations of days, the Lord's day is tacitly understood as reserved, as not here in question; because about this all parties had been agreed.

Let us notice here how inconsistent and un-protestant is Neander's position. He asserts that it is inconsistent with the free and spiritual nature of Christianity that God should give any stated day, by his express ordinance, a closer relation to the Christian consciousness than any other day. Is it not equally inconsistent

that He should give any particular place, and forms of worship a peculiar relation to the Christian consciousness? But, under the New Testament, he has done this very thing; commanding us to worship in concert at the place or building appropriated by our brethren for this purpose, and to do so with prayers, hymns, and the sacraments. It is admitted again, that after all the church has found that practically there is a necessity, founded in man's universal nature and relations to God, which compels us to take some stated day into a peculiar relation to the Christian consciousness, to some extent at least. Sunday *is* a Christian festival, and a memorial of the resurrection—says the Lutheran—made so with sufficient validity, by a church precedent. But is it not far more consistent with Protestantism, which teaches that nothing but God's revealed will is its religion, to find this validity, if it finds it at all, in his law, rather than a church tradition? We seek an express precept for the mode of our worship, the number and forms of our sacraments; and teach that any element of service which is not thus enjoined, is will-worship. Should we not find a Divine precept for the season of our worship also? And if we find none, does not Protestant consistency require us to say that Sunday, not being enjoined by express Divine command, is literally no more to Christians than any other day, which they agree, for conscience' sake, to appoint for a week-day, prayer-meeting, or Bible Society address, and may be changed with as little scruple? As to the motive that it is commemorative of Christ's resurrection, why will not one Sunday a year answer just as well for this, as one Good Friday a year does to commemorate the passover of our Lord? The Lutheran or Episcopalian, in enforcing a partial observance of Sunday, is indeed consistent with himself; for he believes that ecclesiastical authority is sufficient to do this, if not contrary to the Scriptures; but he is not consistent with the Word of God, which teaches, as we understand it, that nothing is to be enjoined as a stated part of His worship, except what he has expressly enjoined. "The Bible alone is the religion of Protestants."

3. We shall now, in the third branch of our discussion, attempt to show the ground on which we assert that the Sabbath, "from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath." This proof is chiefly historical, and divides itself into two branches; first, that drawn from the inspired history of the New Testament; and second, that found in the authentic but uninspired testimony of primitive Christians. The latter, which might have been thought to demand a place in our review of the history of Sabbath opinions has been reserved for this place, because it forms an interesting part of our ground of argument. But let us here say,

once for all, that we invoke this patriotic testimony, in no popish or prelatist spirit of dependence on it. In our view, all the uninspired church testimony in the world, however venerable, would never make it our duty to keep Sunday as a Sabbath. We use these fathers simply as historical witnesses; and their evidence derives its whole value in our eyes from its relevancy to this point; *whether or not the apostles left a custom of observing Sunday, instead of the sabbaths established by their example in the churches.* When the fathers say: "We as fathers, as bishops, as church rulers, tell you to observe Sunday;" we reject the warrant as nothing worth. But if they are able to say: "We, as honest and well informed witnesses, tell you that *the apostolic age left us the example and warrant* for observing Sunday," we accept the testimony as of some value. Prelatists are fond of shutting their eyes to this plain distinction, in order to claim that we must either surrender all the early historic light of uninspired literature, or else adopt their semi-popish theory of tradition. We trust the distinction is so stated here, once for all, that all will see it, (except those who do not wish to see it,) and will bear it in mind.

Our first, or preliminary argument for the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath, is that implied in the second Scripture reference subjoined by our Confession to the sentence we have just quoted from it. If we have been successful in proving that the Sabbath is a perpetual institution, the evidence will appear perfect. The perpetual law of the decalogue has commanded all men, in all time, to keep a Sabbath-day; and "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law of God, till all be fulfilled." The Apostle, in Col. ii: 16-17, clearly tells us that the seventh day is no longer our Sabbath. What day, then, is it? Some day must have been substituted; and what one so likely to be the true substitute as the Lord's day? The law is not repealed—it cannot be. But Paul has shown that it is changed. To what day is the Sabbath changed, if not to the first? No other day in the week has a shadow of claim. It must be this, or none; but it cannot be none; therefore it must be this.

The other main argument consists in the fact that disciples, inspired apostles, and their Christian associates, did observe the Lord's day as a religious festival. And this fact must be viewed, to see its full force, in connexion with the first argument. When we find them at once beginning, and uniformly continuing the observance of the Lord's day, while they avow that they are no longer bound to observe the seventh day, and when we couple with this the knowledge of the truth that they, like all the rest of the world, were still commanded by God to keep his Sabbath, we see that the inference is overwhelming, that the authority by which they observed the Lord's day was from God, although they do not say so. That which is inferred from Scripture, "by good

and necessary consequence," is valid ; as well as that which is set down expressly in it." Examination shows us, then, that the disciples commenced the observance of the Lord's day by social worship the very next week after the resurrection. From John xx: 19, we learn that the very day of the resurrection, at evening, the disciples were assembled with closed doors, with the exception of Thomas Didymus. Can we doubt that they had met for worship? In chap. v: 26, we learn: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." None will doubt but that this was also a meeting for worship, and the phraseology implies that it was their second meeting. In Jewish language, and estimates of time, the days at which the counts begin and end are always included in the counts; so that "after eight days," here indisputably means just a full week. Let the reader compare, for instance, Leviticus xiii: 4, with xiv: 10. "The priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days." "And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish," &c. So the new-born child must be circumcised the eighth; but it is well known that the number eight is made up by counting the day of the birth and the day of the circumcision. A full week from the disciples' first meeting brings us again to the first day of the week. Until Pentecost we are left uninformed whether they continued to observe the first day, but the presumption is wholly that they did.

By consulting Leviticus xxiii: 15-16, Deut. xvi: 9, the reader will see that the day of Pentecost was fixed in this way. On the morrow after that Sabbath (seventh day) which was included within the passover week, a sheaf of the earliest ripe corn was cut, brought fresh into the sanctuary, and presented as a thank-offering to God. The day of this ceremonial was always the first day of the week, or our Sunday, which was, to the Israelites, a working day. From this day they were to count seven weeks complete, and the fiftieth day was Pentecost day, or the feast of ingathering. Let the reader remember that the Israelites always included in their count the day from which, and the day to which they counted; and taking his almanac he will find on actual experiment, that the fiftieth day will bring him to Sunday again, the first day of the week. The gospels tell us most explicitly that the year Christ died and rose again, the passover feast began Thursday evening; the day of unleavened bread (in the afternoon of which the Saviour died) was our Friday, the day his body lay in the grave, was our Saturday, or the Jewish Sabbath, and the day he rose was the first day, our Sunday. This last was also the day when the Jews offered their first sheaf. So that Pentecost day must also fall (as indeed it did every year) on a Sunday. Thus we reach the interesting fact that the day selected by God



for the pentecostal outpouring, and the inauguration of the Gospel dispensation, was the Lord's day—a significant and splendid testimony to the importance and honour it was intended to have in the Christian world. But we read in Acts i: 14, and ii: 1, that this day also was observed by the disciples as a day for social worship. Thus the first day of the week received a second, sacred and august witness, as the weekly solemnity of our religion, not only in its observance by the whole body of the new church, but by the baptism of fire, and the Holy Ghost—a witness only second to that of Christ's victory over death and hell. Then the first public proclamation of the Gospel under the new dispensation began; and surely, when every step, every act of the Divine Providence was formative and fundamental, it was not without meaning that God selected the first day of the week as the chosen day.

It is most evident from the New Testament history, that the Apostles and early church uniformly celebrated their worship on the first day of the week. The hints are not numerous; but they are sufficiently distinct. The next clear instance is in Acts xx: 7. The Apostle was now returning from his famous mission to Macedonia and Achaia, in full prospect of captivity at Jerusalem. He stops at the little church of Troas, to spend a season with his converts there: "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." Here we have a double evidence of our point. First, Paul preached unto the disciples on this day, while we see from the sixth verse, that he was a whole week in Troas, including the Jewish Sabbath. Why does he wait nearly a whole week to give these his more solemn and public instructions, unless there had been some usage? Again: the words, "when the disciples came together to break bread," clearly indicate that the first day of the week was their habitual day for celebrating the Lord's supper. So that it is clear, this church of Troas planted and trained by Paul, was in the habit of consecrating the first day of the week to public worship; and the inspired man here concurs in the habit. Neander does, indeed, suggest an evasion, in order to substantiate his assertion that there is no evidence the Lord's day was specially sanctified during the life-time of Paul. He says that it is so, very probable this day was selected by the brethren, because Paul could not wait any longer, ("ready to depart on the morrow,") that no safe inference can be drawn for a habitual observance of the day by them or Paul! But chap. v: 6, tells us that Paul had been already waiting a whole week, and might have had choice of all the days of the week for his meeting! No other word is needed to explode this suggestion.

The next clear instance is in 1 Cor. xvi: 1-2. "Now concern-

ing the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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." The points here indicated are two—that the weekly oblation of alms-giving was fixed for the Lord's day—and that this rule was enacted for the church of Corinth, and all those of Galatia. The inference is overwhelming, that the apostle made the usage ultimately uniform in all the churches of his training. Neander again attempts to destroy this evidence for the sanctification of Sunday, by saying that this does not prove there was any church meeting, or public worship on this day. The sum of alms was, most probably, simply laid aside at home, in an individual, private manner; and this is made more probable by the apostle's own words: "let every one of you lay by him in store." But suppose this understanding of the passage is granted, against the uniform custom and tradition of the earliest Christians, which testifies with one voice, that the weekly alms-giving took place in the church meeting; Neander's point is not yet gained. Still *this alms-giving was*, in the New Testament meaning, *an act of worship*. See Phil. iv: 18. And the early tradition unanimously represents the first Christians as so regarding it. Hence, whether this alms-giving were in public or private, we have here an indisputable instance, that an act of worship was appointed, by apostolic authority, to be stately performed on the Lord's day, throughout the churches. This is evidence enough that the first day of the week was the day already known and selected for those forms of worship which were rather weekly than diurnal. The reader will, perhaps, be disposed to exclaim, in view of two successive cases of sophistry so shallow, and admitting of so facile exposure, "Very great men are not always wise." It will be a profitable exclamation for him not only to make, but to ponder; and we confess that one motive with us in giving prominence to the statement and refutation of Neander's views, has been to illustrate the small trust-worthiness of his learning and logic. We should learn from so eminent an instance, two things. One is, that the literary and religious atmosphere of Germany has recently been so unwholesome, that there is *always* danger in accepting the religious opinions of German scholars. The infection of their psychology, and theory of inspiration and interpretation, is universal. The German mind breathes it with its vital breath, from its infant years. None can escape. Even Hengstenberg, with all his hardy, Saxon sense, and his devout reverence for Scripture and the Reformation, has belied the trust encouraged by his earlier works. The second edition of his *Christology* expunges from his first edition many of the things for which we valued it, replacing them with views unsatisfactory to an American, orthodox mind; and he condemns his earlier work, to us so

greatly preferable, as a crude and juvenile effort. Even Neander, with all his industry, knowledge, and Christian devotion, (a devotion which the most of us might profitably imitate,) betrays many of the dearest and most fundamental interests of the Christian cause. We have seen what is his testimony to the Christian's Sabbath. He denies that the apostolic church ever had a true gift of tongues, as all the believing world has understood it; asserting that nothing more is meant than that the disciples were enabled occasionally to speak with an elevation and energy beyond themselves. He indicates, after all his reverence for spiritual religion, a defective theory of inspiration. He attempts to weave all the history of the church, filling his five large volumes, into a generalization to support his pet theory, which is: that there has been a development and increase perpetually progressive, of the power of true Christianity in the human race, ever since the Christian era; that Christianity was developing, namely, and not receding, in the growing corruptions of the Christian Roman empire, in the devastations of the northern barbarians; in the gathering gloom of the dark ages! He gravely argues, from a few hyperboles of Justin and Tertullian, about the universal royalty and priesthood of believers, that the primitive church was a stranger to the idea of *ministry and laity*. He flatly denies that there is any evidence that infant baptism was of apostolic origin or authority! This is the writer so generally bepraised, ever since his ponderous tomes have reached our shores!

The other thing illustrated, is the true ignorance and flunkeyism of our day. When Neander announced these brand-new results of his antiquarian labours, and especially his conclusions concerning the subject and mode of baptism; how they were received? Our immersionist brethren, of course, hailed them with immense satisfaction, as "clinchers;" and were almost ready to cry: "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." This was not surprising. But exen Pædobaptists in many places seemed to feel that the cause must be given up; now that this high Dutch oracle had come forth from the bowels of his patristic quarries, twirled his broken quill, and pronounced his decision against it. Even the North British Review, professed Coryphæus of the literature of Scotch Presbyterianism, puts on a look of superior wisdom, and says with calm conceit, that since Neander has taught us, nobody must venture to assert that infant baptism is of apostolic origin, under the penalty of being behind the times. No; we must defend our Pædobaptist usages in some other way!

Now, did these people ever hear that there have been other antiquaries before Neander? Did they know enough about literature to be aware that the materials which the great German had to use, were just the same, and neither more nor less than the previous antiquaries had. Were they aware that the field of

*early* patristic literature is a field of limited and definite extent, fenced in by absolute metes and bounds, outside of which all is utter and absolute darkness; that every thing which possibly can be done for the illustration of this narrow field has been done generations ago, and that more, or more complete editions of the early fathers never have been, or will be published, than were produced by the Benedictines a hundred and fifty years before our day; that this narrow field had been surveyed, *ransacked*, by industrious antiquaries before Neander was born, and every treasure-trove of available information, down to the least broken bits, had been picked up, yea, inventoried and labeled, and put on the shelf for the use of scholars? And now, when an antiquary comes forward at this late day, and claims that he has just begun to find out things in this little, limited field, it is simply preposterous. And as for these gentlemen who bow to Neander's infallibility concerning the primitive view of baptism; have they compared his researches with the previous ones which they reject for him? There, for instance, is old "Wall on Infant Baptism," who professed to have gleaned all the early patristic information on this point, and methodized it. There are Bingham's "Origines Sacrae," which explore the profoundest depths of early Christian lore, and present us with their buried stores ready arranged. There are a score of enlightened, laborious scholars, who have applied to this one subject all the keenness of minds thoroughly educated and sharpened by polemic zeal. Has a comparison been made between them and Neander? Have the overweening admirers of the latter examined whether he gathers any wider induction of facts; or whether he reasons on them better than the others did? Had this comparison been made; it would have been found that Neander's induction was far more narrow and scanty as a mere specimen of learned lore; and that his reasoning on it was of a piece with that which we have seen applied to the Sabbath-question. The only imaginable advantage he possesses over his more learned and able predecessors, who have concluded the opposite to him, is, that he happens to be fashionable just now. And the thing illustrated by these instances of misapplied praise, is this: that our generation has indolently suffered so much of the solid learning accumulated for us by our forefathers to be forgotten, that there is actually not enough left to teach us how ignorant we are, or to prune our conceit.

But we return from this digression to the New Testament allusions to the observance of the Lord's day. Only one other remains to be cited: that in Rev. i: 10. John the apostle introduces the visions of Patmos, by saying, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." This is the only instance of the application of this title to the first day of the week in the sacred writings. But all expositors, ancient and modern, say unhesitatingly that Sunday is designated by it. On this point the church has had but one

understanding, from the first century down. The apostle evidently means to inform us that on Sunday he was engaged in a spiritual frame of mind and feelings. The application of the name, Lord's day, to Sunday, by inspired authority, of itself contains almost enough of significance to establish its claims to sanctification, without another text or example. What fair sense can it bear, except that it is a day consecrated to the Lord? Compare Isaiah lviii: 13, when God calls the Sabbath, "my holy-day." If the Sabbath is *God's day*, the *Lord's day* should mean a Christian Sabbath. And the occupation of the apostle this day, with peculiar spiritual exercises, gives additional probability to the belief that it was observed by the New Testament Christians as a day of devotion.

We come now to the second branch of the historical argument—the testimony of the early, but uninspired Christian writers. The earliest of all cannot be called Christian. In the celebrated letter of inquiry written by Pliny the younger to the Emperor Trajan, for advice on the treatment of persons accused of Christianity, this pagan governor says, that it was the custom of these Christians, "to meet, *stato die*, before light, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and bind each other in an oath (not to some crime) but to refrain from theft, robbery and adultery, not to break faith, and not to betray trusts." This letter was written a few years after the death of the apostle John. We cannot doubt that this *stated day*, discovered by Pliny, was the Lord's day. Ignatius, the celebrated martyr-bishop of Antioch, says, in his epistle to the Magnesians, written about A. D. 107 or 116, that this is "the Lord's day, the day consecrated to the resurrection, the queen and chief of all the days."

Justin Martyr, who died about A. D. 160, says that the Christians "neither celebrated the Jewish festivals, nor observed their sabbaths, nor practised circumcision. (Dialogue with Trypho, p. 34.) In another place, he says that "they, both those who lived in the city and those who lived in the country, were all accustomed to meet on the day which is denominated Sunday, for the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation and communion. The assembly met on Sunday, because this is the first day on which God having changed the darkness and the elements, created the world; and because Jesus our Lord on this day rose from the dead."

The Epistle attributed to Barnabas, though not written by this apostolic man, is undoubtedly of early origin. This unknown writer introduces the Lord, as saying: "The sabbaths which you now keep are not acceptable to me: but those which I have made when resting from all things, I shall begin the eighth day, that is the beginning of the other world." "For which cause, we (Christians) observe the eighth day with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead," &c. Eph. ch. xv.

Tertullian, at the close of the second century, says: "We celebrate Sunday as a joyful day. On the Lord's day we think it wrong to *fast*, or to *kneel* in prayer."

Clement of Alexandria, cotemporary with Tertullian, says: "A true Christian, according to the commands of the Gospel, observes the Lord's day by casting out all bad thoughts, and cherishing all goodness, honouring the resurrection of the Lord, which took place on that day."

But, perhaps, the most important, because the most learned, and, at the same time, the most explicit witness, is Eusebius, the celebrated bishop of Caesarea, who was in his literary prime about the era of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. In his Commentary on the xcii Psalm, which the reader will remember, is entitled "a psalm or song for the Sabbath-day," he says: "The Word, (Christ,) by the new covenant, translated and transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the morning light, and gave us the symbol of true rest, the saving Lord's day, the first (day) of light, in which the Saviour gained the victory over death, &c. On this day, which is the first of the Light, and the true Sun, we assemble after the interval of six days, and celebrate holy and spiritual Sabbath; even all nations redeemed by Him throughout the world assemble, and do those things according to the spiritual law, which were decreed for the priests to do on the Sabbath. All things which it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has the precedence, and is first in rank, and more honourable than the Jewish Sabbath. It is delivered to us (*παράδοται*) that we should meet together on this day, and it is evidence that we should do these things announced in this psalm."

The first church council which formally enjoined cessation of labour upon the Lord's day, was the provincial synod of Laodicea, held a little after the middle of the fourth century. The twenty-ninth canon of this body commanded that none but necessary secular labours should be carried on upon Sunday. But Constantine the Great, when he adopted the Christian as the religion of the State, had already enacted that all the labours of courts of justice, civil and military functionaries, and handicraft trades should be suspended on the Lord's day, and that it should be devoted to prayer and public worship. This suspension of labour was not however extended to agriculturists, because it was supposed that they must needs avail themselves of the propitious season to gather their harvests, or sow their seed without regard to sacred days. But the Emperor Leo (who came to the throne, A. D. 457,) ultimately extended the law to all classes of persons.

The Christians did not for several hundred years, apply the word *Sabbath* to the first day of the week, but always used it distinctly to indicate the Jewish seventh day. Their own sacred day, the first day, was called by them the Lord's day, (*ἡμέρα κυριακή*)

as they said, because it was dedicated to the honour of Christ, and because it was the head, crown, and chief of all the days. They also called it *Sunday*, (*Dies solis*, a phrase frequently found among the Latin Christians,) because, according to their interpretation of Genesis i: 3, the sun was created on the first day of the week, but still more, because on that day the brighter *Sun of Righteousness* arose from the dead, with healing in his beams. The objection often made by persons over puritanical, that it smacks of Pagan or Scandinavian profanity to say *Sunday*, because the word indicates a heathenish consecration of the day to the sun, is therefore more Quakerish than sensible. We are willing to confess that we always loved the good old name Sunday—name worthy of that day which should ever seem the brightest in the Christian's conceptions, of all the week, when the glorious works of the natural creation first began to display the honours of the great Creator, and when that new and more divine creation of redeeming grace was perfected by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, in the application of the phrase "Christian Sabbath," to the first day, the Westminster Assembly had a definite and truthful design, although the early church had not given it this name. It was their intention to express thus that vital head of their theory; that the Old Testament institute called Sabbath, which was coeval with man, and was destined to co-exist with all dispensations, was not abrogated; that it still existed substantially, and that Christians were now to find it in the Lord's day. *To the Christian the Lord's day is the Sabbath.* (Such is the significance of the name) possessing the Divine authority, and demanding in the main the sanctification which were formerly attached to the seventh day.

4. Another most interesting and practical head of the Sabbath argument remains; from its practical necessity, as a means of securing man's corporeal and mental health, his morality, his temporal success in life, and his religious interests. This is the department of the discussion which has been more particularly unfolded in the "Permanent Sabbath Documents," published under the auspices of Dr. Justin Edwards, and more recently in the remarkable essays on the Sabbath, produced by workmen in Great Britain. It is now by so much the best understood part of the Sabbath-discussion, that we should not have introduced it at all, except that it was one of the stones in the arch of our attempted demonstration, that there is a natural necessity in man for a Sabbath rest. The Creator, who appointed the Sabbath, formed man's frame; and all intelligent observers are now agreed that the latter was adapted to the former. Either body or mind can do more work by resting one day in seven, than by labouring all the seven days. And neither mind nor body can enjoy health and continued activity, without its appointed rest. Even the structure of the brutes exhibits the same law. Again: as a

moral and social institution, a weekly rest is invaluable. It is a quiet domestic reunion for the bustling sons of toil. It ensures the necessary vacation in those earthly and turbulent anxieties and affections, which would otherwise become inordinate and morbid. It brings around a season of periodical neatness and decency, when the soil of weekly labour is laid aside, and men meet each other amidst the decencies of the sanctuary, and renew their social affections. But above all, a Sabbath is necessary for man's moral and religious interests. Even in paradise, and in man's state of innocence, it was true that a stated season, resolutely appropriated to religious exercises, was necessary to his welfare as a religious being. A creature subject to the law of habit, of finite faculties, and required by the conditions of his existence to distribute his attention and labours between things secular and things sacred, cannot successfully accomplish this destiny, without a regular distribution of his time between the two great departments. This is literally a physical necessity. And when we add the consideration that man is now a being of depraved, earthly affections, prone to avert his eyes from heaven to the earth, the necessity is still more obvious. Man does nothing regularly, for which he has not a regular time. The absolute necessity of the Sabbath, as a season for the public preaching of religion and morality, as a leisure time for the domestic religious instruction of the young, as a time for private self-examination and devotion, is most clear to all who admit the importance of these duties. And now, it is most obvious to practical good sense, that if such a stated season is necessary, then it is proper that it should be ordained and marked off by Divine authority, and not by a sort of convention on man's part. To neglect the stated observance of a religious rest, is to neglect religion. And when there is so much of mundane and carnal affection, so much of craving, eager worldly bustle, to entice us to an infringement of this sacred rest, it is certain that it will be neglected, unless it be defended by the highest sanction of God's own authority. Nay, do we not see that this sanction is insufficient, even among some who admit its validity? Again, if such a stated rest is necessary, then it is also necessary that its metes and bounds be defined by the same authority which enjoins the rest itself. Otherwise, the license which men will allow themselves in interpreting the duration of the season, and in deciding how much constitutes the observance of it, or how little, will effectually abrogate the rest itself. If, then, the necessities of human nature require a Sabbath, it does not appear how God could ordain less than we suppose he has done, in requiring the whole of a definite length of time to be faithfully devoted to religious exercises, and in making this command explicit and absolute.