

# THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## I.

### THE SECOND ADVENT NOT PREMILLENNIAL.

THE Church has always expected a Second Coming of Christ to the earth, ever since He ascended to heaven. Many Comings of the Saviour are spoken of in the New Testament. But a literal, personal advent is the great Coming to which Christians have been looking forward for more than eighteen hundred years. In our day a few scholarly men have maintained that there is no personal Coming to be expected—that only spiritual and providential Comings were promised, and that the *parousia* of the New Testament is nothing but the presence of Christ with His people which He pledged to His disciples before He left the world. This view, however, is clearly contradicted by the undeniable fact that the apostles in their writings often spoke of the *parousia* as an event still future, long after the promise of the Redeemer's spiritual presence with His Church had begun to be fulfilled; and Paul expressly cautions the Thessalonians against the belief that the *parousia* was just at hand.

But while almost all Christians are agreed in regard to a future personal advent of Christ, there is a wide difference of opinion in the Church respecting a future millennium, or reign of righteousness on the earth during a long period of at least a thousand years. Multitudes have believed and still believe that the predicted millennium is either wholly past or has long since begun. This view, it seems to us, has gained currency in consequence of a reaction from the extreme doctrines of the early Chiliasts, some of whom entertained grossly carnal ideas in regard to the millennium, or from other errors associated with the faith of those who have expected a future triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. It has long been deemed the only alternative either to expect a literal reign of Christ in person on the earth,

## II.

### THE HOLY SABBATH.

And on the seventh day God ended the week which He had made : and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made : and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

THE institution of the Sabbath, as here represented in the Mosaic record of the creation, has given rise to many questions of great and permanent interest, some of which hardly admit of answers that can be regarded as altogether satisfactory. One very serious difficulty is involved in the reason here given for the sanctification of the seventh day, namely, that in it God rested after His six days' work of creation, which seems to imply that these six days were similar in kind and length to the seventh. For otherwise how could the seven days be enumerated together without a violation of the necessary laws of analytic thought? Yet no person of intelligence now believes that the world was actually created in six literal days. Here, then, we have natural objects, which the sacred writers always represented in forms of expression current in their times, so interlinked with moral and spiritual truth that it seems almost impossible to separate them—the truth itself seems to depend upon antiquated conceptions of such objects—the institution and sanctification of the Sabbath upon the creation of the world in six literal days. Nor does this difficulty arise from any peculiar views of the relations between revelation and science, but it is one which all alike must face and deal with as best they can, except such as can still believe that God created all things in six days each of twenty-four hours' length; which, to those who are at all acquainted with the evidence on the subject, is about as easy as it is to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, or that the earth itself rests on the back of the great Hindoo tortoise.

But passing this difficulty and leaving every one to deal with it in his own way, if now we undertake to draw from these statements of Moses the moral and spiritual truth which they contain, we shall find that it can hardly be less and may be more than that God blessed and sanctified one day in seven on the ground of something in Him-

self which is here characterized as His resting after His work of creation. Whatsoever of truth more than this may be contained in the record, we leave to be evolved by others who have a deeper spiritual insight, for in this one we shall find more than we can satisfactorily elucidate.

Here, then, it seems to be clearly revealed that the Sabbath is not an institution of a positive, limited, or temporary character, but that it rests upon or embodies a moral law; that is, a law of universal and immutable obligation. In confirmation of this view, we submit the following considerations:

The first of these is that which stands out on the record itself, namely, that the Sabbath was instituted at the creation of the world, and thus established in the life of the first human beings from whom all mankind were to descend. For we cannot rationally conceive of God's blessing and sanctifying a particular day as something which He kept secret at the time—which He did not communicate to those for whom this blessing and sanctification were intended; nor can we understand the words, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," otherwise than that He commanded it to be kept holy that it might be a blessing. Accordingly we have abundant evidence that the division of time into weeks of seven days extensively prevailed in the earlier ages—that it was known, not only among the Hebrews and other Arabic or Semitic nations, but also among the Egyptians, Greeks, Africans, and Peruvians, and almost, or quite, all primitive peoples. The Greeks ascribed its origin, as also that of many other traditional customs for which they could not otherwise account, to the Egyptians. Periods of seven days are mentioned in connection with the Noachian deluge, both in the Bible and in the Assyrian and Babylonian arrowhead inscriptions, which last inform us of several interesting particulars on this subject which do not appear in the Mosaic record, such as that the rain ceased and the ark rested on the summit of the mountain both on seventh days. Also, they afford unequivocal evidence that the Sabbath itself was known and revered by the ancient Babylonians, and that they regarded it as having been established by God at the creation of the world.\* This

\* On the fifth tablet of the Chaldean Account of the Creation we find the words:

"On the seventh day He [the Creator] appointed a holy day,  
And to cease from all business He commanded."

Also, in the Babylonian Calendar the seventh day is designated as the "Sabbath"—the word literally signifying "a day on which it is unlawful to work"; and, among other prescribed observances, it appears that the King was not allowed to drive in his chariot, nor to exercise either his legislative or military functions on that day (see "Records of the Past," published under the sanction of the Society of Biblical Archaeology [British], vol. vii., p. 164; vol. ix., p. 118).

division of time was certainly known to the patriarchs of Abraham's family, for it is recognized in the account of Jacob's marriage with Leah and Rachel as something well understood, and needing no explanation. In a similar manner also it is alluded to in the book of Job, to which an Arabian origin and a date anterior to Moses have been probably assigned. Moreover, that the Sabbath itself was fully recognized as a Divine institution among the Israelites before the Decalogue was promulgated, is evident from the account which is given of the manna. For they were supplied with this "angels' food" whilst they were yet in "the wilderness of Sin," some time before they came to Mount Sinai; and it did not fall on the seventh day, but they were commanded to gather a double portion of it on the sixth, the reason for which Moses gives in the words: "This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath"; and on the morrow He said, "To-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field." Notwithstanding some of them went out to look for it on that day, and were severely rebuked for their unbelief and disobedience: "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the Sabbath day." Also, that the Sabbath was previously known among the children of Israel may be fairly inferred from the words with which the fourth commandment begins: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." For this expression is in nowise appropriate to the promulgation of a new law, nor to the setting up of an absolutely new institution.

Again, the universal and immutable obligation of the Sabbath is revealed and enforced by the reason here assigned for its sanctification, which is more fully expressed in the command of the Decalogue: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: 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: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." And this reason is still further unfolded and emphasized in the words: "On the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Here, indeed, we are brought face to face with a Divine mystery—something in God which is quite incomprehensible to us.

But none the less, perhaps all the more, is it a reason for the institution and observance of the Sabbath which can never lose its force and is of universal application. For it is not anything in man, nor in the times, nor countries in which his lot may be cast, nor in any other circumstances, in all which he is mutable; but it is something in God Himself, of which "His resting and being refreshed" is the anthropomorphic yet true expression, and which must remain unchangeably the same for all men in all times, countries, and other circumstances. Here, then, we have it revealed to our faith that there is something, however mysterious, in the nature or attributes of God upon which the Sabbath is founded, to which it corresponds, and which it manifests to us. Hence, whatever force or validity this reason had for the people of Israel in the time of Moses, it must have had from the creation of man upon the earth, and ever since, and must continue to have in all future times for all mankind. Until that shall cease to be true which is signified by God's resting after He had finished His work of creation, the obligation to keep holy the day which He has appointed to commemorate His rest, which is founded on and arises out of it, can never cease—not even in heaven, where, as we are expressly informed in the New Testament, "there remaineth [with whatsoever modifications from different circumstances] a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God."

A third consideration which we cannot pass lightly over is, that the ordinance of the Sabbath is one of the ten great commandments which were spoken by the voice of God Himself out of the midst of cloud and flame on the summit of Mount Sinai, and which He wrote with His own finger on tables of stone for a perpetual memorial. We must now endeavor to elucidate the significance of these facts.

For what reason, then, are we to understand that these commandments were distinguished in such a remarkable manner from all the rest of the Mosaic law? The necessary and obvious answer is, for their superior importance. They were not communicated through the intervention or mediation of any created being, howsoever plenary inspired he might have been, but were spoken by the mouth of God Himself in thunder-words to the many thousands of Israel assembled at the foot of the mountain, to signify their paramount importance, as being a transcription from and an immediate expression of the nature and character of God, in whose image or likeness man had been created, and consequently as being of universal and immutable obligation, in order that by keeping them he might be conformed to the character of his Maker. And still further to symbolize, represent, express, and enforce the truth, that their obligation

could never cease, that they could never be superseded by any future revelation or higher law; they were written by the finger of God on tablets of stone, the most imperishable and unchangeable of all material which could be employed for this purpose. The other portions of the Mosaic law were not so delivered, but were communicated through the mediation of Moses, and were recorded on perishable materials, such as papyrus, the leaf of a plant, which was the paper then in use, to signify that they were not of equal importance—were not of immutable and universal obligation, but were binding on the people of Israel alone, and on them only for a time—that they were destined to be superseded and done away by a subsequent and more complete revelation. Such is the plain and obvious significance of this distinction between the Decalogue and the rest of the law, in the mode of their delivery, and in the material on which they were recorded.

This view of the duties enjoined in the Decalogue is illustrated and confirmed when we consider them in particular. For in them God prohibits the worship of false gods, idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, profane swearing, false witness-bearing, dishonoring of parents, adultery, murder, theft, and covetousness, and enjoins the opposites of these as duties which we owe to Him and to each other. Now all these, unless the Sabbath be an exception, are undeniably matters of universal and immutable obligation, and essential to human welfare alike in all times, places, and circumstances. There has never been any dispute upon this point, but they have been universally regarded as embodying the unchangeable principles of morality—principles which do not even depend upon the will of God, except as His will is the expression of His all-perfect moral character and holy nature, which is the ultimate standard of eternal righteousness. With all reverence be it said, God himself cannot make it right for His moral creatures to violate any of these laws, unless that of the Sabbath be an exception, for this would require Him to deny His own nature from which they are transcribed. Can He make it right for any one to dishonor and abuse his own parents? Can He make adultery or murder right? No one in his senses can believe it—and so of all the rest.

Now, since all the other commandments of the Decalogue are thus demonstrably of immutable obligation, the question arises, if that of the Sabbath be of a totally different character, for what conceivable reason was it placed among them, spoken with them by the voice of God from the summit of Mount Sinai, and inscribed by His own hand upon tables of stone? If it was to be obligatory upon none but the children of Israel, and on them only for a time, why was it not

communicated to them through the mediation of their human legislator along with the other precepts of that law which was destined to be superseded and abolished by a subsequent and more perfect revelation? It may be safely affirmed that no rational answer ever has been, or ever can be, given to this question; and the inevitable conclusion is, that the law of the Sabbath was regarded by Him who delivered it as of the same character with the rest of the ten commandments, as transcribed from His own immutable nature, as of permanent and universal obligation, and as equally with them essential to the well-being and happiness of mankind. He who thinks otherwise is bound in reason to give a satisfactory answer to the question which has just been asked, as, also, it has been well observed, to do three other things: "1. To show where the same authority by which the fourth commandment was enjoined and engraved on the stone tablet has abrogated or revoked it; 2. To show that no other of the ten, or if any other which, or why this one alone, has been annulled and erased; 3. To reform his own and the language of Christendom which has prevailed for two thousand years, so that we shall no more speak of the Decalogue, or ten commandments, since, upon this supposition, there are only nine." Nor is it any objection to this conclusion that the Sabbath is frequently spoken of as a sign between God and His peculiar people by which they were placed under special obligations to serve Him; for, in a precisely similar manner, their deliverance from Egyptian bondage is given as a reason why they should keep all His commandments, but it does not follow from this that other people are under no similar obligation.

We are now prepared to consider our Lord's deliverances on this subject, and to appreciate their true significance. For it has been maintained—and it seems to be a common opinion—that He by His Divine authority greatly relaxed its rigor, if He did not virtually abrogate the law of the Sabbath. But this notion has arisen from the want of close attention to what He actually says on the subject in its connections, and is a possible one only to those who fail to appreciate what has just been stated with respect to the unchangeable morality of the Decalogue.

On several occasions, then, our Saviour was accused, mostly by those who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, of breaking the Sabbath Himself, and of allowing His disciples to break it. How does He answer them? Certainly, not by denying its immutable obligation, but by convicting His accusers of having misunderstood and perverted it, and of gross inconsistency in their manner of observing it. Thus, when His hungry disciples on the Sabbath had plucked

the ears of corn out of the fields to eat, "the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day." But He justified them by showing that such things as were demanded by human necessity were lawful on that day, and that the Pharisees had perverted it from its original object. He referred them to the example of David, one of their most eminent saints and greatest national heroes, who, with his followers, had eaten the shewbread from the tabernacle, and were justified by their necessity, although, apart from such necessity, it was lawful for the priests only to eat that bread. Then He called their attention to the work which had to be done by the priests in the temple service, which the Pharisees themselves held to be lawful on the Sabbath. Thus He laid open their inconsistency, and themselves to the rebuke: "If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." Also, on the occasion of His healing a man with a withered hand, the Pharisees asked Him: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? that they might accuse Him. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and, if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will not lay hold on it and pull it out? How much, then, is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well [to do good] on the Sabbath-days." On a similar occasion: "Behold, there was a man before him which had the dropsy, and Jesus answering spoke unto the lawyers [interpreters of the law] and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? And they held their peace. And he took him and healed him and let him go, and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath-day? And they could not answer him again to these things." In fine, when He was accused of breaking the Sabbath because He had healed "a woman which had a spirit of infirmity," He replied to His accuser: "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day? And when he had said these things all his adversaries were ashamed." And well they might be! Now, in all this He corrects the erroneous notions which prevailed in His time with respect to the manner in which the Sabbath ought to be sanctified; He shows that works of necessity and mercy and such as pertained to the worship of God were lawful on that day; but He does not even allude to the abrogation nor to any relaxation of its immutable obligation as enjoined in the Decalogue.

On the contrary, implicitly at least, He re-affirms it by the declaration made in connection with one of the previous questions: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." For this declaration was given in rebuke of the Pharisees because they had perverted the Sabbath by teaching the people that works of necessity and mercy were unlawful on that day; which interpretation of the manner in which it was to be observed evidently proceeded on the absurd and immoral principle that man was made for the Sabbath: whereas the right understanding of all moral law is, that its observance must necessarily be promotive of human well-being, and that no conflict is possible between our duties and our highest interests. And here it is to be observed, that the Lord does not only say that man was not made for the Sabbath, but also, that "the Sabbath was made for man:" that is, not for Jews only, nor for the people of any particular age or country, but for man as such, in all times, places, and circumstances. For, although it is possible to understand the words otherwise, yet is it undeniable that they naturally bear this sense, and that it is in perfect harmony with all the other Scriptures. This, therefore, is a fair interpretation, and so understood this declaration affirms the universal obligation of the Sabbath as essential to the welfare and happiness of mankind. Certainly a greater perversion of the words is not conceivable than to draw from them the sense that the Lord abrogated, or in anywise relaxed, the obligation to keep holy the Sabbath-day as enjoined in the fourth commandment.

But, it may be asked, if He did not actually do anything of this kind, did He not claim for Himself the power to do it, in the words also spoken in connection with a previous quotation: "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath"? It must be acknowledged that at first sight this would appear to be their meaning, but in scrutinizing them more closely, we must bear in mind two things: 1. That the law of the Sabbath is an integral part of the Decalogue, which sets forth the eternal principles of morality, which are founded in the nature of God, and which He himself cannot set aside; 2. That the object which the Lord evidently kept in view in all these arguments with the Pharisees, and the only thing which He undertook to do, was to correct their perversions and abuses of the Sabbath, and to declare on His own authority how it should be sanctified. Now, the sense of these words ought not to be pressed beyond this object, and they cannot be without denying the immutable nature of the morality of the Decalogue. Neither is it reasonable to suppose that our Lord would assert in such an implicit manner a power to erase and annul one of the ten commandments and to reduce their number to nine,

especially when we remember His solemn declaration: "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." It is much more reasonable to understand that in this assertion of His lordship over the Sabbath He claims no more than an absolute authority to declare and teach how it ought to be sanctified. With this understanding of His words, they may be fairly paraphrased as follows: I, the Son of Man, by the same Divine authority which instituted the Sabbath at the creation of the world, and which promulgated the law of its observance from the summit of Mount Sinai, do now and in this way correct your misunderstanding and perversions of it, and show you how you are to keep it holy; for in that sense in which it can be said that God is Lord of the moral law, "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

Having thus seen that our blessed Lord did not abrogate nor at all relax the obligation of the Sabbath, we can hardly anticipate that His apostles would claim authority to do anything of the kind. Hence we are enabled consistently to understand the only remaining passage in the New Testament which presents any difficulty. This occurs in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, where in our English Bible he is made to say, "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, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Now, it is conceded on all hands that this is a very poor, and, in some respects, an incorrect translation. For in the expression "Sabbath days," the latter word is not in the original, but has been supplied by the translators; and the words "a holy day," is a palpable mistranslation of a single word in the Greek which properly signifies a feast, and is so rendered in every other place where it occurs, twenty-seven in all. Literally translated the passage reads as follows: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of a new moon, or of Sabbaths; which things are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ." Its general reference, beyond a question, is to the various typical feasts established by Moses, which the Jewish converts were still inclined to observe, whilst the Gentiles neglected them, and with respect to which every one was left free to do as he pleased; for they were all a shadow of which "the body," or substance, was the Gospel "of Christ." And as to the meaning of the word "Sabbaths," we may ask why it is here in the plural, when all the other specifications—meat, drink, a feast, a new moon—are in the singular? The proper answer, no doubt, is, that there were several kinds of Sabbaths instituted by

Moses, such as that of the seventh month and that of the Sabbatical year; and it is to such observances as these that the apostle chiefly refers, classing them where they properly belong with distinctions in meat and drink, new moons, and other ceremonial feasts, all which were "a shadow of the things to come"; and this conclusion is rendered the more probable by the well-known fact that the Jews were accustomed to call all their festivals Sabbaths, because in observing them they rested from secular labor. But in so far as he may have had any reference to the Sabbath of the Decalogue, it must have been to the observance of the seventh day along with the first, which was extensively practiced by Judaizing Christians. For that here there can be no allusion whatever to the first day of the week, which had now taken the place of the seventh, is conclusively proved by the fact, that it was not called the Sabbath, but "the Lord's Day," by the apostles and primitive Christians. If St. Paul had referred to it, he must have written: Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of a new moon, or of the Lord's Day.

From the preceding considerations, then, we may safely conclude that there are still ten commandments, instead of nine only, which all alike are of eternal and immutable obligation. But other matters remain to be disposed of, the chief of which is the change just alluded to, from the seventh to the first day of the week, which took place at the incoming of the new dispensation. But the difficulty of this has been greatly magnified, and we may expect it almost or quite to disappear upon a little close attention to the subject.

Let us observe, then, that our Lord Himself, previous to His crucifixion, undoubtedly observed what was then called the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath; and for a long time afterward more or less sacredness was very naturally attached to that day by His followers. But from the time of His resurrection, the day of the week on which it occurred, and which, according to the reckoning then received was the first, began to be observed by His disciples as the day of assemblies for public worship, the celebration of the sacraments, Christian communion, and other sacred purposes. We have abundant evidence of this in the New Testament. Now the fact that it was so observed could not fail to give it the character and identify it with the Sabbath on which such assemblies had previously been held. But, inasmuch as there was no command for the observance of two Sabbaths, that of the seventh day gradually fell into disuse, and in time was entirely superseded. It is true, indeed, that Christians did not call the first day the Sabbath, for that name had become insepa-

rably attached to the seventh; but its observance as such was altogether inevitable from the fact of its being universally recognized as the day for their worshipping assemblies and all other sacred purposes, and because it was impossible for them to believe that the Decalogue was, or could be, abrogated. They called it "the Lord's Day." For, although this expression occurs but once in the New Testament, where the Apostle John tells us that he "was in the Spirit" on that day, nor does he tell us that he meant by it the first day of the week, yet we know that such was the fact, because this day was universally so called by the Christians of primitive times, as, indeed, it has been ever since. Evidently the apostle introduced the expression as one which would be perfectly understood by all for whom he was writing, and needed no explanation.

The influences which brought about this change may be further elucidated as follows: Our Lord rose from the dead on what was then called the first day of the week, and on that day, or its recurrence, invariably afterward He met with and showed Himself to His disciples. This took place on at least five different occasions, and we have no evidence that He ever appeared on any other day. This naturally led them to expect Him to meet with and manifest Himself to them in their worshipping assemblies on that day in preference to all others. In this way it seems to have become appropriated to such assemblies, and to have been observed as the Christian Sabbath. Moreover, it was when they were so assembled on the first day of the week that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place, by which they were replenished and endowed with all spiritual gifts and graces for their great work of evangelizing the world. Now the influence of this ever-memorable event in fixing their minds immovably on that day as the one above all others which was appropriate for their worshipping assemblies, the preaching of the Gospel, the celebration of the sacraments, the taking up of charitable collections or offerings, Christian communion, and all the other sacred purposes of the Sabbath, can hardly be overestimated.

Accordingly we find that ever afterward it was so observed. Thus, when Paul, on one of his missionary tours, came to Troas, he "abode seven days; and upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread [for the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper], Paul preached unto them." With like significance he wrote to the Church at Corinth which he had founded: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches in Galatia, 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."

In like manner, we find that in the earliest and subsequent Christian authors whose writings have come down to us, the first day of the week is accepted, and never called in question, as "the Lord's Day," and as devoted to religious purposes, being observed substantially as the seventh day had been under the former dispensation. This was so striking a characteristic of the early Christians that it attracted the attention of heathen writers. For Pliny the younger, proconsul of Bithynia, in the latter part of the first century, alludes to it in his famous report to the emperor Trajan, where he states that the Christians of his province, whom he represents as already immensely numerous, were accustomed to meet for the worship of Christ "on a stated day." Now we know that this "stated day" could not have been the seventh, and consequently that it was, no doubt, the first of the week, or "the Lord's Day." The first Christian author who gives us any information on the subject is Justin Martyr, as he is called, who lived in the close of the first, and the early part of the second century, and who tells us that the Christians did not celebrate the Jewish festivals, nor observe their Sabbaths, but that they were accustomed to assemble on the day which the heathen called Sunday, for the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation, and communion. In the epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas, which was generally accepted as genuine at the close of the second century, and which consequently must have been extant in the first, the Lord is introduced addressing the Jews as follows: "The Sabbaths which ye now keep are not acceptable unto 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"—a somewhat obscure declaration, but made plain upon the point for which it is here adduced by the following continuation: "For which cause, we [Christians] observe the eighth day with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and, having manifested Himself to His disciples, ascended to heaven." Tertullian, also, at the close of the second century, states that "Christians put off even their business on the Lord's Day that they may not give place to the devil," and adds, "We celebrate Sunday as a joyful day." Clement of Alexandria, about the same date, says: "A true Christian, according to the commands of the Gospel, observes the Lord's Day by casting out all evil thoughts and cherishing all goodness, honoring the resurrection of the Lord which took place on that day." And, in the latter part of the third, or the commencement of the fourth century, Eusebius, the Church historian, gives us the following explicit and decisive testimony: "The Word, 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 of light, in which the Saviour obtained the victory over death. . . . On this day, which is the first of the Light and of the true Son, we assemble, after an interval of six days, and celebrate a holy and spiritual Sabbath: even all nations redeemed by Him throughout the whole 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 honorable than the Jewish Sabbath. It has been handed down to us [from the beginning, or from the apostles] that we should . . . do these things."

It seems hardly possible that more conclusive evidence should be given that the primitive Church observed the first day of the week as the Sabbath of the new dispensation by doing "all those things which were decreed for the priests to do," and "which it was duty to do, on the Sabbath" . . . "according to the spiritual law." But if such evidence be possible, we find it in the Sabbath laws of the first Christian emperor and his successors. In order to appreciate this, however, we must bear in mind that the conversion of Constantine, who came to the throne of the Roman empire in the commencement of the fourth century, has been much disputed, whether it was sincere, or merely the result of his political sagacity. But however this may have been, one thing is quite certain, that in his time the Christian religion had made such progress throughout the empire that it was an eminently wise political movement on the part of that great monarch to profess and call himself a Christian, and to enact Christian laws. Hence it follows that his Sabbath law, as far as it goes, at least, must be taken as the embodiment and expression of the views which generally prevailed among Christians on the subject, and, if it had not been, it certainly would have proved but a dead letter. As soon, therefore, as he found himself well settled on the throne, he began to bestow special care on the observance of the Lord's Day. He is known to have required his armies, when not actually engaged, to spend the day in devotional exercises. He prohibited the holding of courts of judicature, and the prosecution of trials and suits at law, and the exercise of all trades and arts in the cities. But the necessary works of agriculture he permitted to go on, and all works of mercy, such as the emancipation of slaves, were held to be lawful. The precise letter of the law which has come down to us is as follows: "Let all judges, inhabitants of cities, and artificers, rest on the

venerable [or sacred] Sunday. But in the country, husbandmen may freely and lawfully apply to the business of agriculture, since it often happens that the sowing of corn and planting of vines cannot be so advantageously performed on any other day, lest by neglecting the opportunity they should lose the benefits which the Divine bounty bestows upon us." From this legal permission, however, we cannot infer that all such labors were regarded as lawful by the Church, for, in this first attempt to embody Christian duties in the laws of the empire, especially when it represented such an immense change from all that had previously existed, such enactments could not be expected to go so far as the views which prevailed among Christians. Accordingly, subsequent emperors confirmed and extended this rescript by prohibiting all public shows, theatrical exhibitions, dancing, and other amusements; and the councils of the Church, as soon as they became free to make their authority felt, decreed the strict observance of the Lord's Day by abstinence from all secular labors, amusements, and recreations, and by a faithful attendance upon Divine service.

Now, if we try to comprehend all these things in one view, and consider how impossible it is to account for them on any other supposition, they seem to leave no room for doubt but that the holy apostles, either so instructed by the Lord whilst He remained on earth after His resurrection, or inspired by His Holy Spirit, did teach and enjoin that the first day of the week, in place of the seventh, should be the Christian Sabbath, which should be kept holy to God by abstinence from all things prohibited on the Sabbath of the former dispensation, and by devoting it exclusively to spiritual purposes. In fact, the very name of "the Lord's Day," which it is certain they gave it, necessarily implies that it was to be regarded as altogether sacred and devoted to religious observances, for how otherwise could this name have had any propriety or significance?

But here the question arises, How could the apostles, or even the Lord himself, make this change when the original command was, that the seventh day should be the Sabbath, and since, as we have seen, the Sabbath law is one of eternal and immutable obligation? Now, the answer to this question, which we regard as perfectly satisfactory, is, that what is meant by "the seventh day" in the commandment is, one day in seven. For this sense of the words is quite as natural and good as any other; and if more than this had been intended, insuperable difficulties would have arisen from the variation to which any more closely specified time is subject with every degree of longitude and latitude, and which is such that within the polar circles the days

and nights are months in length. That the apostles so understood it is certain from their having made this change, which evidently they could not have done if in their view what was then called the seventh day had been unchangeably appointed and ordained for the Sabbath. Nay, this is almost the necessary interpretation of the command itself as in the words: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." For here there is no specification given to Moses or his people as to the particular one on which they should commence to reckon these six days. For aught that appears, they were left free to begin this reckoning any day on which they might agree, or which might be designated by their lawgiver. The command itself certainly includes no more than that the seventh day from that on which their reckoning commenced should be their Sabbath. Neither have we any reason to think that they were informed, or that Moses himself or any one else knew, which was numerically a recurrence of the seventh day from the creation of the world, or how many sevens had since elapsed. Nor do we know what determined in their minds the day on which they actually commenced this reckoning. All that we know is, that they did commence on a certain day, which we, for that reason alone, call the first day of the week, and that the seventh from it became their Sabbath. But we do know what controlled the minds of the apostles in making this change—it was the resurrection of the Lord. On the day after that great event occurred they commenced to reckon these six days of labor, and this was the only change they made. For the seventh from that day, according to the commandment, became the Christian Sabbath, precisely as the seventh from another day had been the Jewish Sabbath. Hence it is evident that one is just as much the seventh day as the other, and might, with equal propriety, have been so called. Probably the reason why it was not was the fact, that the Lord rose from the dead on that day, which, as the beginning of a new spiritual creation, made it eminently fit and proper that it should continue to be the first day of the week. But in neither case have we any evidence, either that the Jewish Sabbath was any recurrence of the seventh day from the creation of the world, or that the Christian Sabbath is any recurrence of the day on which the creation commenced.

So slight was the change made by the holy apostles; and so all-controlling were the reasons for it, that it seems almost to have taken place of itself, without criticism or comment, and as a matter of course. For no one at the time, so far as we know, objected to it—no one called attention to it. It passed into the life of the Church as the

light of the sun, in crossing the equator, passes into the life of the new regions which he comes to vivify with his all-quickening beams. And, in order that the faith of the Lord's resurrection might thus enter into and new-mould the life of the world, it was eminently fit and proper that it should be commemorated by an institution the constant observance of which should keep it in everlasting remembrance. For it was the crown and seal which God placed upon His whole redemptive work, which, without it, would have been utterly in vain—a dead Christ could not have given life to the world. It was God's seal to convince mankind that He was all He claimed to be—He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead.” By its Divine efficacy His people are raised up from death in trespasses and sins to the new life of the Gospel, for which object it is no less efficacious than is the sacrificial death of the Lord to expiate their guilt and reconcile them to God: “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. . . . That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should [be raised up from death in sin and] walk in newness of life.” And it is the pledge or earnest which God has graciously given us that we shall be raised up in the resurrection at the last day unto immortality and eternal glory; for “now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept. . . . If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” It is in this sense that the resurrection of the Lord is the foundation of all our hopes, and thus we are enabled to say with the holy apostle in his burst of jubilation: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.”

Hence it was that, as the Jewish Sabbath had been instituted in commemoration of the rest of God after the creation of the world, so the Christian Sabbath was established to commemorate the finished work of Christ in the new-creation of the spiritual world. As in the former creation God had said, “Let there be light and there was light,” so the resurrection of the Lord was His omnipotent word, saying, Let there be light in the spiritual world, and there was light: “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. . . . Who hath abolished death

and brought life and immortality to light." As at the original creation order and beauty arose out of the primeval chaos, so at the resurrection of Christ the chaos which had previously reigned in the spiritual world began to give place to the order of moral law and to the beauty of holiness. As God rested from His work of creation when it was finished, so our Lord Jesus Christ, when He had finished His work from which the new creation was to spring, passed into the rest of His eternal glory and reward. And as God, when He looked upon all that He had made, pronounced it very good, so our blessed Lord, as He surveys the fruits and consequences of His work in mankind, pronounces them all very good; and thus the prophecy is fulfilled: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Indeed, it may be truly said that this new spiritual creation is a greater and nobler work of Divine power than was the creation of the natural world. There were, therefore, the best of reasons why the day on which it was crowned should be forever distinguished from all others as, in a peculiar sense, "the Lord's Day," and why it should be sanctified in place of that which had previously commemorated what now should hardly be remembered by reason of the glory which so much excelled it.

If, now, the preceding argument be sound and conclusive, it follows by inevitable necessity, that the instructions given in the Old Testament for the observance of the Sabbath are, in their spiritual import, equally valid for the Sabbath of the new dispensation; and these have been so lucidly and admirably exhibited by the Westminster divines that we can hardly do better than to present them here in their words, as follows:

"The Sabbath or Lord's Day is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and [by] making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship; and to that end we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of the day. . . . The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omission of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful, and by needless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly employments and recreations." To this is added, also, among other things: "The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families and other superiors because they are bound, not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge, and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own."

Now all these obligations are founded on clear statements in the word of God, some of which are exceedingly instructive as illustrat-

ing the nature and extent of that observance of the Sabbath which He requires. One of these is contained in the account which is given us of the manna in the wilderness. For, since a universal and pressing temptation to violate this Divine law would necessarily arise in connection with the provision and preparation of man's daily food, special pains had to be taken to guard this point. Accordingly, even before the law had been re-affirmed from Mount Sinai, an example of its violation occurred which is carefully recorded, and which, no doubt, was permitted for the instruction of all succeeding generations of mankind. For the manna, as we have seen, did not fall on the seventh day, and the people were strictly prohibited from going out to look for it on that day; a double portion fell on the sixth day, and they were commanded to gather twice as much on that day, and to prepare what was left over to serve them on the Sabbath. Thus it was said to them: "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place—let no man go out of his place on the Sabbath-day. . . . To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe, and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." And on the morrow it was said to them: "Eat that to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. . . . And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none." Also, if they gathered more than was necessary on any other day, it corrupted and bred worms, but that which they prepared on the sixth day for the Sabbath did not corrupt, "neither was there any worm therein." Now, if there be in all this any instruction for us, it cannot surely be less than that we are prohibited from all unnecessary provision and preparation of food on the Sabbath-day. Here it is enjoined that our food for that day is to be cooked on the day preceding. We are taught, moreover, that by such abstinence we shall lose nothing; that God's blessing on our industry will enable us by six days' labor to provide for the seventh; and that all unnecessary labor on that day will prove unprofitable. Indeed, if men would take pains to make suitable observations on this point, we have reason to believe that nothing could be found more uniform and remarkable than the utter unprofitableness of Sunday work.

Similar instructions also are given us by the prophet Nehemiah after the return from the captivity in Babylon, where the people seem to have fallen into great laxity in the observance of the Sabbath. Some of these are as follows: "In those days, I saw in Judah

some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, as also, wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day : and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." The interest of this passage, however, lies not so much in its prohibition of secular employments connected with the selling and buying of victuals, but more especially in the fact that it brings distinctly into view the duties of governors and rulers, as such, to protect all men in the observance of the Sabbath by such exercise of their authority and such laws as shall in no wise favor, but discourage and suppress its open and public violation. For, inasmuch as it involves one of the great moral principles of the Decalogue, laws for the protection and promotion of its observance, with penalties for its violation, rest on the same foundation, are of the same character, and are no less necessary to the well-being of mankind than legal prohibitions of theft, adultery, and murder. To enact and execute such laws is a duty which nations and rulers owe to God on their own responsibility ; and it has no more connection with questions of union between Church and State than any other enactments founded on Christian morality (in distinction from Pagan and Mohammedan) which is the Common law of all Christian countries.

Moreover, the Sabbath is not only to be observed by abstinence from all unnecessary labors, but it is to be kept holy with the mind and heart. This is necessarily implied in its New Testament name of "the Lord's Day," as also, in the words, "the holy Sabbath unto the Lord, . . . the Sabbath of the Lord thy God"; and it is clearly brought out in many passages, such as the following: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And the opposite violations of the Sabbath with the mind and heart are thus

stigmatized: "Hear ye this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances of deceit?" Now, here we are prohibited from doing our own works; from speaking our own words; from thinking our own thoughts; and from seeking in any way our own pleasure; that is, from all actions, thoughts, and affections concerning our secular employments and recreations, and from that impatience and weariness which are inseparable from the restraints of Sabbath-keeping where the heart is not in it; and all such things are properly associated where they belong, with dishonesty and oppression of the poor to which they often lead. These prohibitions enjoin, of course, the opposite duties, which also are mostly expressed, namely, that we think the thoughts of God, seek the pleasure of God, speak the words of God, and do the works of God; that we count this holy day of the Lord honorable and a delight—that we take delight in its holy exercises and devotions. And to such observance of it all temporal and spiritual blessings are promised on the faith of God: "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

In conclusion, the motives which we have for the faithful observance of the Sabbath are, when rightly appreciated, of all-controlling efficacy. In general, they are all that have force and weight to incline our hearts to keep any other of God's commandments. In particular, they are such as the following:

1. We have our Lord's declaration that "the Sabbath was made for man," the force of which is, that its proper observance is necessary to the well-being and happiness of mankind—that there is a blessing from God in it—and this is abundantly confirmed by all experience. For if such experience can make anything certain, it is that rest from labor and worldly cares one day in seven is indispensable to health of body and mind. Uninterrupted secular employments exhaust the life, induce softening of the brain, paralytic affections, epilepsies, consumptions, and many other acute and fatal maladies. The employment of the Sabbath in the worship and service of God and in unselfish endeavors to do good to others, brings with it a change in the currents of thought and other mental exercises and in the bodily activities which is refreshing, reinvigorating, and healthful—it inspires new life and energy after the secular toil of the week. This change is most necessary for laboring people, who receive as much compensation for six days' work as they would for seven, and who accomplish thereby as much, no doubt, for their employers. The plea that such

people need to spend the day in worldly recreation and pleasure-seeking, and are justified in so doing, has nothing in it but deceitful plausibility; for where it is thus perverted into a mere secular holiday, it soon becomes, through the exactions of employers and the pressure of want on the employed, a day of labor like the others. Of all people the poor have the greatest need to stand by the religious observance of the Sabbath; for it is their strongest protection against that oppression from their task-masters which is so closely connected, as we have seen, with the violation and relaxed observance of God's holy day.

2. The Sabbath is indispensable to the proper influence and success of the Christian religion in the world. For it affords the only suitable and practicable time and opportunity for the people to assemble themselves together for public worship, the preaching of the Gospel, the celebration of the sacraments, Christian communion, and Sabbath-school teaching; and without these, with the exception of the last, which is not therefore to be regarded as of small importance, there can be no Christianity. If they should fall into desuetude, not only could it make no progress, but it would soon die out of the world. Its power in different countries may even now be measured by the manner in which the Sabbath is observed. For where it has ceased to be regarded as a holy day, and has become for the most part a secular holiday, there we find a very sparse attendance on church services in the morning, and the afternoon and evening are given up to pleasure-seeking, in consequence of which drunkenness, immorality, and crime abound, and there is more of these than on any other day. It is well understood that to close up the places where intoxicating liquors are sold on the Sabbath would ruin most of them. On the other hand, where the day is the most strictly and generally observed, there religion has the greatest power for the salvation of men—there we uniformly find the least immorality, drunkenness, pauperism, and crime. We make no show of evidence here because these things are undeniable; whence it is evident that the enemies of the Sabbath are the enemies of the Christian religion.

3. Sabbath-breaking brings upon men some of the heaviest judgments of God. There is hardly anything more insisted on in the Word than this; and it is equally true of individuals, communities, and nations. Thus the captivity in Babylon is represented in many places as a judgment upon Israel for this sin; the following is a single example: "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon where they were servants. . . . To fulfil the

word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths ; for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath to fulfil three-score and ten years." Also, in many other places, the banishment of the Jews from Palestine, the desolation of their cities and country, and their dispersion throughout the world, as we see them now, are ascribed to their sin of Sabbath-breaking, of all which the following is a single example : " And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land ; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her Sabbaths." In fact, a great many of God's judgments upon men are in His word connected directly or indirectly with the violation of the fourth commandment ; and this, for the best of reasons, as we can see, namely, that this sin is often the beginning and root of many others ; whilst strict morality in this particular is a mighty defence against temptation in all circumstances.

4. But the only effectual motive to Sabbath-keeping, we are persuaded, must be drawn from the reason which God Himself has given us, in that " He rested and was refreshed " after His work of creation ; in other words, that there is something in God which the Sabbath represents, and to which it corresponds. Where this motive is not enforced, we may expect " the holy of the Lord " to be, as now it is, imperfectly sanctified by the best, and generally violated without remorse or compunction. Its restoration to its true place in the Church, we have reason to anticipate, could hardly fail to be accompanied and followed by a mighty increase of her spiritual light and of her spiritual power for the salvation of mankind.

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