

THE
METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

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ARTICLE I.—REV. JAMES DIXON, D. D.*

THE visit of the Rev. Dr. Dixon to the United States, as the accredited messenger of the Wesleyan Church of Great Britain to the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, has left a very agreeable impression, not only upon the members of the General Conference, but upon all who met him in personal intercourse. In expressing this opinion, we apprehend that we echo the universal sentiment of the church he was deputed to visit. Certainly we have heard nothing to the contrary. Although thoroughly Anglican in his feelings, a right loyal subject of the British crown, and a sincere and ardent admirer of the British constitution, as he was always prompt to avow; there was yet so much of urbanity and kindness, of candour and liberality, of Christian courtesy and meekness, in his brief intercourse with his American brethren, and such cordial, unaffected sympathy with their religious sentiments and feelings, that national peculiarities were mutually forgotten, and he sojourned among them only as a friend and "brother beloved," a member of the same household of faith, a partaker of the common salvation, and a co-inheritor of the same blessed promises.

Individually, we scarcely anticipated so perfect and cordial a unity between Dr. Dixon and his cis-Atlantic brethren. Our knowledge of him, as has been elsewhere said, was slight, and came rather in the form of observation than of personal acquaintance; but we were not alone in the almost apprehensions we entertained upon the subject. Unanimous as was the British Conference in the selection of him as

* The writer of this article published some time since, among other sketches, one of the Rev. Dr. Dixon. It was very brief and imperfect, and was in consequence omitted from his volume of "Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers." Much additional information, and a more correct estimate of his subject, have, the writer conceives, been wrought into the present "sketch."

ART. II.—THE LORD'S DAY, THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

1. *The True Sabbath Embraced and Observed.* By Elder SAMUEL DAVIDSON, many years a regular Baptist Minister; now Pastor of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Shiloh, New-Jersey. New-York: published by the American Sabbath Tract Society. No. 10.
2. *Religious Liberty Endangered by Legislative Enactments. An Appeal to the Friends of Equal Rights and Religious Freedom in the United States, from the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference.* New-York: published by the American Sabbath Tract Society. No. 11.
3. *The Sabbath Manual.* Nos. 1, 2, and 3. By Rev. JUSTIN EDWARDS, D. D. Published by the American Tract Society, 150 Nassau-street, New-York.
4. *Tracts of the Lord's-day Society.* Nos. 1-31. London.
5. "*Tracts of the Times*" on the Sabbath. No. 1-5. Glasgow.
6. *Statement of the Proceedings of the Sabbath Alliance.* By R. K. GREVILLE, LL. D.

WE have placed the titles of these works, selected from many on the same subject, at the head of this article, to indicate a prominent fact in the consciousness of the Christian and anti-Christian world of the present age. The fact to which we refer, is a profound conviction of the vital relation existing between the Christian Sabbath and the Christian religion. Infidelity begins to perceive clearly that this broad outwork of the Church must fall before the citadel can be reached; and that if a clear breach be made here, the remaining work of desolation will be easy and brief. Hence, in the conventions, anniversaries, and periodicals by which it is aping the outward organization and agencies of the Church, the Sabbath is one of the great grievances complained of, and one of the great "abuses" attacked. The tyranny of allowing man and beast one day in seven to rest from the toils of life, and the injustice of laws that prevent the daring fanatic and the unscrupulous employer from invading the peaceful enjoyment of this privilege, are proclaimed with a rueful length of visage, and a dolorous tone of complaint, that are supremely ludicrous. The farce in this case, however, is rather broad, even for "a discerning public." The complaint, that laws protecting the Christian community in the enjoyment of a quiet Sabbath are tyrannical—coming not from those who regard these laws and feel their operation, but from those who disregard and disobey them; and from those who in the next breath will not obscurely hint that they feel the same tyranny in the laws that protect you in the enjoyment of your own farm, your own homestead, and your own wife; and that the freedom they claim in the one case is but a step toward the freedom they desire in the other—has something in it so utterly and ridiculously preposterous, that we marvel the father of lies should

have ever fallen upon an expedient so barefaced, so insolent, and so clumsy. It sounds too much like the conscientious objections we might conceive wolves making to sheep-folds, and burglars to patent locks and salamander safes.

Despairing of success in this mode of attack, Infidelity has adopted another more ingenious, if not more effectual. Discovering that the religious feeling of the American people lies too deep to allow any institution that is rooted in it to be overturned, it has determined to assail the Sabbath through the very feeling that forms its strongest support. Accordingly it has exchanged the hoof and horns for the sheep's clothing, and in the wig and gown of criticism undertakes to show that there is no Divine warrant for keeping holy the first day of the week. Books and pamphlets advocating this view, with some show of argument, have been circulated extensively through the country; and in some instances laid in large numbers, by the hands of avowed infidels, on the desks of our legislative halls, for the purpose of procuring the obliteration of every recognition of the Lord's day that now appears on the statute-books of our States.

On the other hand, Christians, both in England and America, manifest with equal clearness a growing sense of the importance of the Sabbath, and their determination to cling to it as at once the hope, the privilege, and the right of the Christian world. Hence alliances and unions have been formed, conventions held, tracts written, premiums offered for dissertations on particular aspects of the subject, and a wide and active interest excited in the mind of the Church in favour of a better observance of the Sabbath.

It is not to be concealed, however, that in spite of the awakened intelligence of Christians to this subject, there is still much indistinctness of conception as to the real strength of the warrant on which we observe the first day of the week as the day of rest. With many, who are intelligent readers of the Bible, it is received as a matter of authority rather than a matter of argument; and they are unable to assign the same clear and satisfactory reason for their practice in this case, that they can in others.

We propose, therefore, to present some of the grounds on which we base the right and duty of observing the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, as the Christian Sabbath.

In order that the ground of discussion may be narrowed as much as possible, we premise that we do not intend to argue at length the moral nature and perpetual obligation of the law of the Sabbath. If it be true that our physical and moral powers demand its hallowed repose, as imperiously as they demand any other institution that God has given us—if without it those powers dete-

riorate and suffer, and if this necessity is so great that "the Sabbath was *made* for man"—it were a most surprising thing if a benevolent Creator had left man without a Sabbath in any age of the Church. And so strong is this presumption, that we would demand clear assurance of so cruel and fatal a neglect. But if, instead of such assurance, we see its hallowed light resting in quiet beauty on the sinless scenes of Paradise; if we see it stand side by side with the marriage relation, a relic of Eden's purity and Eden's peace; if we see its traces, like gleams of sunshine, appear along the dim line of patriarchal history in the stated seasons of worship, and the hebdomadal division of time which appears repeatedly after the flood, in both sacred and profane records; if we find its observance restored from the universal prostration of ordinances and institutions in Egypt, *before* the giving of either the Decalogue or the Ceremonial Law; if we find it restored and appearing in the Sinaitic Law, in terms that evidently point back to a previous knowledge and observance of it; if we find it standing among nine other enactments in that sacred statute-book, whose enduring tablets were graven by the finger of the Eternal, and one jot or tittle of whose demands shall never pass away; if we find it afterward kept distinct from all ceremonial usages, and appearing in high and royal authority above every other institution, in the earnestness and frequency of its inculcation, in the variety of reasons urged for its reverent observance, in the garland of song wreathed around it in the Psalms, and in the girdling wall of menace and warning, promise and blessing, with which it is fenced in the prophecies; if when Christ came he recognized its obligation both by precept and example, vindicated it from Pharisaical superstitions, rescued it from an overlying mass of traditional bigotry, placed it on a higher basis of dignity and authority than before, and gave it submissive reverence in more than half a score of distinctly recorded instances in his ministry—if all these facts cluster around the history and law of the Sabbath, we are forced to regard it as an institution always existing, and always binding on the Church. Hence we assume this point without any farther argument.

We also concede that no merely human power can alter the law of the Sabbath in any particular; and that, if altered at all, it must be by the same authority on which it was originally instituted. The only question then that remains is, *Has God made a transfer of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week?*

The evidence on which we are warranted to receive this transfer must be similar to that on which we receive other articles of our faith. God has declared his will by various modes of manifestation. Sometimes he has announced it in the most explicit terms;

at other times he has left it to be gathered by inference from several particulars. Thus, before the utterance of the fourth commandment, the Sabbath was binding on the patriarchs; but this obligation was with many of them not a matter of direct revelation, but an inference that such was the primitive revelation.

There are many things likewise in New Testament times, concerning which we are left to infer the will of God from different facts, rather than informed of it by a formal statement. Thus, we infer the passing away of many Jewish rites and ceremonies; the right of women to the Lord's Supper; the duty of social and family prayer; and the discipline and worship of the house of God. It is thus, also, with the canonical authority of much of the Scriptures. Let the man who demands the will of God, *in ipsissimus verbis*, that the Sabbath shall be transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, furnish similar proof of the canonical authority of the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, or the Revelation, and we will comply with his demand. If, however, he receives these books as canonical, mainly, if not exclusively, because they were so received by the primitive Church during the continuance of inspired men, he could not fairly object if we furnished him with no other evidence than this in regard to the Lord's day. If, however, we can furnish him not only the same kind of proof in a stronger degree, but also independent evidence of this transfer, he surely cannot demur to the Divine authority of the Lord's day as the Christian Sabbath. Such evidence we think will be afforded by establishing a few propositions.

I. The change in question could be made without destroying the institution of the Sabbath.

The slightest inspection of the Sabbatic law will show us that it includes two things essentially distinct:—first, the Sabbath or rest itself; and, secondly, the day on which that Sabbath is placed. It is declared in the fourth commandment, that in six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh; wherefore the Lord blessed, not *the seventh day*, as such, but the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. If, as is alleged in this controversy, the seventh day and the Sabbath are identical and therefore interchangeable terms, we reduce the fourth commandment to an absurdity. Let us make the substitution, and see the result: "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the seventh day of the Lord thy God," &c. This substitution converts the command into sheer nonsense, and proves unanswerably that the Sabbath is distinct from the day on which it is placed, and could originally, or at any subsequent time, have been placed on a different day without destroying the institution

The same thing appears from a fact in the Jewish history. We are told (2 Chron. xxxvi, 20, 21,) that the Jews were carried into captivity "to fulfil the word of the Lord by Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years." Here, then, is a specific instance of the transfer of the Sabbaths neglected by the Jews, to the days and years of their captivity in Babylon. Such a transfer, however, would be impossible, unless the Sabbath or rest were distinct from the period on which it was placed.

The same principle is recognized by men in similar observances. When our national Independence is celebrated on the third or fifth of July, in consequence of the fourth falling on the Sabbath, no one dreams that the celebration is vitiated, for the observance is distinct from the day.

An examination of the fourth commandment more narrowly will confirm this view. What is its main object? Plainly not to render sacred any particular day, because of its position in a numerical series, but to sanctify the Sabbath, and to state that one-seventh of our time shall constitute that Sabbath. It does not determine any order of enumeration, but commands simply that after labouring six days we shall rest on the seventh. Hence those who keep the Lord's day, obey the letter of the command; for they labour six days and rest on the seventh, in precise obedience to the law. It may be said, however, that we know that this enumeration began on a certain day. We grant it; but the fixing of this enumeration is something extraneous to the commandment itself, which does not contain within itself any particular series, but is adapted to whatever date it may please God to affix as the period of the weekly Sabbath.

But, more than this, it would be impossible for the command to prescribe any such definite time as the seventh-day theory demands, without involving an inextricable difficulty. If a particular set of hours is made sacred, and not one-seventh of our time, according to the common reckoning, those who are on opposite sides of the earth from the place where the command was first promulgated, will be involved in great embarrassment. It has been said, in extenuation of this difficulty, that as there was a first day in Eden, so there was a first day to its antipodes; and that the seventh day from that would be holy. But this does not reach the difficulty. It arises from the fact that in circumnavigating the globe a day is always lost or gained, according to the direction in which the voyager sails; so that two parties sailing in opposite directions and meeting on the other side of the globe, will find a day's difference in their reckoning. Nor is this an imaginary difficulty. When the English sailors

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first visited Pitcairn's Island they arrived on Saturday, according to their reckoning, but found the natives, with John Adams at their head, keeping the Sabbath, because they had reached the island from the opposite direction. This must occur with every band of missionaries or emigrants sailing in opposite directions. If, then, it be a particular set of hours, and not every seventh day that is made holy, whose reckoning must be adopted? This fact presents the very curious case of a theological dispute which would be completely destroyed by a voyage round the globe. If our brethren who keep Saturday were to sail to the Sandwich Islands by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and we who keep the Lord's day should sail thither by way of Cape Horn, on reaching the Sandwich Islands our dispute would be annihilated; for we should both be found keeping the same day. A principle which leads to such confusion and difficulty, cannot be embodied in a law of God. The difficulty does not press on the view we have taken of the commandment; for, according to that view, it only requires the setting apart of one-seventh of our time to holy purposes, according to the common reckoning.

For these reasons, we allege that the Sabbath is entirely distinct from the day on which it is placed; that it can be placed on any day, according to any series that God may determine, without affecting a letter of the fourth command; and that, should God see fit to place the hebdomadal season of rest on the eighth instead of the seventh day in the Jewish reckoning, it could be done not only without destroying the Sabbatic institution, but without affecting in the slightest degree the terms of the Sabbatic law; for still we should obey the law that says, "*Six* days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the *seventh* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." This point, which is rightly made a vital one in the argument by the Sabbatarian, being clearly established, we are prepared for the next step in the proof.

II. There are strong reasons for such a change of the day, leading us to expect that it would be made.

The first reason is drawn from the nature of the Sabbath. The grand object of the Sabbatic institution is to afford a season of holy rest. In order that motives and recollections suitable for this purpose may be furnished, a day is selected which brings to our memory some of the wonderful works of God. During the Patriarchal dispensation, the work of Creation was selected, as the greatest with which the Church was then acquainted, and made the basis of Sabbath memories and meditations. But if any greater work than this should be wrought by God for his people, whether it was greater absolutely in itself, or relatively to the conceptions of the Church, it

would seem proper that this work should also be commemorated by the Church in her Sabbath observances. Accordingly, when the Mosaic Dispensation was set up, we find it ushered in by the stupendous scenes of the Exodus, in which God revealed himself more gloriously and wonderfully to his chosen people than he had done in the work of creation. When, therefore, we come to examine the record of the restoration of Sabbath observance, we find not only that it is associated with the magnificent scenes of the Exodus, but that it was probably placed on the day when this deliverance was completed. That this day was the seventh in an astronomical series stretching from the creation, is a fact that does not appear on the record, and ought not to be assumed without proof. Having then been placed on a day in the Patriarchal Dispensation to commemorate its greatest benefit, and being in like manner placed on a day, as it would seem, in the Mosaic Dispensation to commemorate its greatest benefit; if, in the Christian Dispensation, there shall be a still greater benefit, we should naturally expect it to be commemorated in like manner. It must, however, be granted, that the work of redemption is a still grander display of God than either of the others; for it is the deliverance of souls, for the loss of one of which we are assured, by One who knew well their worth, the whole world would be a wretched compensation. Now, as if in express allusion to this point, the work of redemption is called in Scripture, "the new creation," "the making all things new," "the regeneration of all things," "the creation of a new heavens and a new earth;" it will therefore follow, not only that it is a greater work than any that preceded it, but that the same reasons that required *their* commemoration on the Sabbath day, will, *a fortiori*, require *it* to be commemorated in like manner.

We find some of these reasons also in the prophetic Scriptures. The intimations here must of course be conveyed with some obscurity; but they are too clear to be omitted in the argument. There appears to be a reference to it in Isa. lxxv, 17, 18: "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, neither shall it come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever, in that I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Whatever meaning we may attach to the phrase, "new heavens and a new earth," it is plain that they refer to some development of the plan of redemption, which is explained more fully in the 18th verse. The passage then seems distinctly to assert, first, that this new creation is more important than the old; and, secondly, that it shall supplant the old in the commemorations of the Church. Now if the institution designed originally to commemorate the first crea-

tion, has been put forward to a day which commemorates the second, we have a clear and striking fulfilment of the prophecy; if not, the whole passage is wrapped in obscurity.

Psalm cxviii seems also to intimate this fact with still greater distinctness. This Psalm is referred to our Saviour frequently throughout the New Testament. He himself declares, (Matt. xxiv, 39,) that the Jews should see him no more until they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having thus applied it to himself, and sanctioned that application by others, he has fixed its Messianic character beyond dispute. In Matthew xxi, 42, and Acts iv, 11, we find Christ and his apostles appropriating verse 22 specifically to the Messiah, and declaring that he was the stone which the builders refused. But when did he become the head-stone of the corner? Not during his life, for he was still labouring at the great work; not at his death, for the universe was still uncertain whether that death would be accepted; but at his resurrection, when he burst the bars of death, and crowned his redeeming work with this act of completion. It is then added in verse 24, "This is *the day* the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it." It is not said in general terms, "this is a day," but "this is *the day*;" יוֹם הַזֶּה, an emphatic definite in the Hebrew, referring necessarily to some particular day. What day, then, is this? It can be no other than the day of Christ's resurrection, and it declares that this day shall be one of rejoicing and one of worship; for it is added that on this day the gates of righteousness should be opened,—the righteous should enter into them and bless the name of the Lord. This passage, then, we conceive to furnish strong presumption beforehand that such a change as that asserted would take place in the Sabbath law.

Another very remarkable passage occurs in Ezek. xliii, 27: "And when these days are expired, it shall be that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord." The meaning of this verse depends on the interpretation given to the whole context, which is obscure. But whether we regard this as a symbolical description of gospel times, or a literal statement of what shall be done by the Jews, on their conversion to Christianity, it seems to declare, in express terms, that the former hallowing of the seventh day shall be supplanted in the observance of those to whom it refers—either the whole Christian Church or the converted Jews—by a religious observance of the day succeeding, whether we term that day the eighth or the first; both of which designations we find in the New Testament. We should also expect it from the gene-

ral principles on which God proceeded in taking down the Old, and setting up the New Dispensation.

The Mosaic Dispensation was adapted to the Jews, situated as they were, until the coming of Christ; but was wholly unfit to be a universal religion. Hence, when the economy of religion designed for all nations was established, it became necessary to lay aside the forms of the Mosaic system, for others more enlarged and catholic in their structure. This change became the more necessary, because the Jews had perverted these useful forms from their original intention, into instruments of bigotry and superstition. Hence, even where these Mosaic forms were adapted to more general use, they were laid aside because of this fatal tendency to formality, with which they were inseparably connected in the mind of the Jew. Both of these reasons would lead us to expect some change in the law of the Sabbath.

It would seem that the day on which the Israelites came up from the Red Sea in safety, was the Sabbath. Hence, in the recapitulation of the ten commandments in Deut. v, we find in verses 12-15 another reason assigned for keeping the fourth commandment, which is given here, perhaps, because this recapitulation of the law was intended specially for the Jews. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm; *therefore* the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." The attaching of this reason to the fourth command does not, of course, affect the moral and perpetual nature of the law, any more than the connexion of a similar national blessing with the fifth commandment, affects the moral nature of the law that prescribes duties existing between parent and child. But because the Sabbath had become linked in the mind of the Church with Jewish facts, some change of its accessories was necessary. The deliverance from Egypt was, in a sense, typical of the deliverance of the Church from the bondage of sin; and hence it was most natural to expect that this partial, national, and typical redemption should give place, in the day of its commemoration, to the great, universal, anti-typical redemption of the world by the blood of Christ. The same reasons that required a change of the sacraments of the Church from circumcision and the passover, to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, required a corresponding change in the law of the Sabbath.

But the second reason operated as strongly in reference to the Sabbath, as it did in reference to any part of the Mosaic law. There was no part of the Old Testament institutes to which the Jews had made larger superstitions and traditional appendages than the Sab-

bath. Now, as the fourth command of the Decalogue could not be repealed, or the Sabbath destroyed, there remained no more effectual mode of breaking up this association of austere bigotry and servile superstition with the Sabbatic law, than by removing it from that day which was deemed so mysteriously sacred by the Jew, and placing it on one that suggested no facts or ideas peculiar to the Jewish Dispensation, but the great, enlarged, and universal facts of the New Dispensation. The strong and obstinate tendency of the Primitive Church to a Judaizing spirit, proves that this consideration is one of by no means a minor importance.

For these reasons, then, we should naturally expect that some change would be made in the law of the Sabbath in the New Dispensation, in accordance with these intimations. We grant, however, that these considerations would not have warranted the Church to make such a change, except on the same express authority that made the other changes in the economy of redemption. We must have the same warrant in the one case that we have in all others for laying aside the perishing forms of the Church's pupilage. But as there exists far more anterior ground for expecting such a change in regard to the Sabbath, than in regard to many other temporary forms, we are prepared to examine the evidence for such a change with some peculiar advantages.

III. There is satisfactory evidence, from the records of the New Testament and the writings of the primitive Christians, that such a change actually was made, by the same authority that ordained the form and features of the New Testament Church.

The first question that meets us here is, In what way should we naturally expect this change to be made and indicated? We answer, Precisely as many other changes were made and indicated at the same time. The line of transition between the old and new economies was not drawn sharply except in a few leading particulars. The dispensations overlapped each other, so that, as to many matters, it is next to impossible to say when the one ended and the other began. Gradual development, during the existence of inspired men, was the law of the New Dispensation. Hence, its features were continually unfolding themselves with increasing clearness until the death of the last apostle. Who can say precisely when the Old Testament form of worship ceased, and the New Testament form was set up? Who can say precisely when the Scriptures of the Old Testament ceased to be the only rule of faith and practice, and the revelations of the New Testament began to be binding on the Church? It is impossible to determine the precise chronology of many of the changes that were made, for the apostles wisely did not

give prominence to any of the features of the New Dispensation that were not absolutely essential. The violence of Jewish prejudices occasioned most of the difficulties and disputes in the Apostolic Church, and in every possible particular these prejudices were spared. To propitiate them, Paul went even so far as to circumcise Timothy. Hence, as to a matter like the one in dispute, which was not vital to Christianity, we should not expect to find the apostles giving it any especial prominence, lest the Jews should be prejudiced against more important truths. Just, then, as we determine the canonical authority of any particular book in the New Testament; as we make out the right to use any particular kind of psalmody or unwritten prayers in public worship; as we determine many of the details of ecclesiastical discipline and government; so must we determine this question. As in these cases, however, we demand not direct, explicit, and formal statements, but are content with incidental facts and intimations, rendered more clear and intelligible, by carefully attending to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church, so, *a fortiori*, in a case where the ancient law remained unchanged, and the only change was in the Mosaic day and the Mosaic observance, must we be satisfied with similar evidence. That this change did occur by the same authority that made all other changes in the New Testament Church, we think will be evident from several particulars.

1. The whole Mosaic Dispensation was altered, and we should infer the same thing of the Sabbath.

It would be natural that when there were a new church, a new gospel, a new Mediator, new sacraments, new forms of worship, and new commandments; in a word, when, in the language of the Messiah, "all things" were "made new," the same rule should be extended to the Sabbath. But as the essential character of the Sabbath could not be altered, since it was of immutable morality; and as the proportion of time could not be altered, since this was a part of the original institution, and wisely adapted to the physical constitution of man, there remained nothing to alter but the day of its observance. The patriarchal Sabbath having been so placed as to commemorate the creation; the Mosaic, the Exodus; we should naturally infer that the Christian Sabbath would be so altered, with every other feature of the dispensation, as to commemorate the great fact of redemption.

2. Our Saviour, although bound to keep the whole law, and, therefore, the law of the Sabbath, lay in the grave during the Jewish Sabbath, and thus virtually abolished it.

There are two declarations of the Lord Jesus that establish this

proposition. The first is his memorable assertion, when defending his disciples from the charge of Sabbath-breaking, (Luke vi, 5,) "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Why make this assertion, unless he meant to make some change in the law of the Sabbath? It was a triumphant defence of the disciples to refer to the great principle of necessity and mercy involved in the case of David; why, then, advance a claim to the power of changing the law of the Sabbath, unless he had determined to use this power? Unless we regard this as an implied prediction of an exercise of his sovereignty over the Sabbath, it appears irrelevant, weakening to the argument, and at variance with the uniform habit of the Saviour.

The second declaration is that contained in Matt. ix, 15, that when the bridegroom was taken away, then would the children of the bridechamber mourn. He was taken away, however, during the Jewish Sabbath. The Sabbath being, in its very nature, a festival, and a time of rejoicing, this act of the Head of the Church made it impossible for the Church to keep it according to its nature. It was to "the little flock" a day of gloom, defeat, and mourning; and not until the light of the first day of the week revealed to their sight the Lord of the Sabbath, were they able to enjoy its quiet rest. In, therefore, so ordering his death, that it should prevent the possibility of keeping the Sabbath; in causing the whole of the mighty machinery of the plan of redemption to stand still, and the ancient order of things to cease on this day, as to its typical efficacy, he did virtually abolish the Jewish, and establish the Christian Sabbath.

3. The Redeemer rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and by his resurrection completed the work of redemption; and thus consecrated this day to rest by the mightiest work the world ever saw.

It is marvellous that even prejudice should have induced men, in this discussion, to deny either of these premised facts. In regard to the first, it will be sufficient to refer to the account of the resurrection, and especially to Mark xvi, 9—"Now when Jesus had risen early, *the first day of the week*, he appeared to Mary Magdalene"—for the most positive assertion of the fact. The second fact, that the resurrection was the completion of the work of redemption in its purchase, appears from the reasonings of Paul in 1 Cor. xv, 17, 18: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep are perished." This averment can be true only on the ground that the resurrection was the crowning act of the work of redemption: the fact which, if

it be established, Christianity is safe; if it be overthrown, Christianity is destroyed.

This, then, being the completion of the new creation, which, by the afore-cited prophecy of Isaiah, was to supplant the old in the commemorations of the Church; and this being the mightiest benefit ever bestowed upon the world, it *ipso facto* consecrated the first day, as before the old creation had consecrated the seventh, as a day of *rest*. Had Christ designed that the commemorating festival of the Christian Church should remain the same with the Jewish, he would surely have risen on the seventh day, and not left his great work undone, and the day of joyous rest a day of anxious mourning. But having not completed his work until after the seventh day, we infer that he designed us, after his example, to rest and rejoice, not on the seventh day, but on the first, the glorious day when "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy."

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ consecrated this day to worship, by meeting with his disciples for that purpose.

Four times during this day did he meet with his disciples in some way, and the last interview is minutely recorded. The disciples were met in the evening of the first day, when Christ came into their midst, and, breathing upon them, said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." This interview and bestowal of the Holy Ghost sanctified their assembly, and consecrated the day of that memorable assembling to worship. Had our Saviour designed them to observe the Jewish Sabbath, we should naturally expect to find him meeting with them on that day for this purpose. But when was their next meeting? On that day week, or, in Jewish phrase, after eight days. It is manifest that this meeting was by appointment, for Thomas was there with them, to have his doubts removed. At this meeting, also, Christ gave them his blessing, and thus hallowed the day. Why did he not meet with them on the seventh day, and observe the Jewish Sabbath with his disciples? The only answer that can be given is, that he did not design them to observe it, but intended, by these significant marks of favour, to consecrate the day of his resurrection to worship, as the Lord's day, and the Christian Sabbath.

5. It was farther consecrated to the peculiar promise of the Sabbath by the first proclamation of the gospel, the setting up of the Church, and the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

That the day of Pentecost fell on the first day of the week appears from Lev. xxiii, 15, 16: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, . . . even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, shall ye number fifty days." This, however, was

the day selected for the downfall of the Old Dispensation and the establishment of the New; for the first preaching of the gospel, which was one of the most important duties of the Sabbath; for the outpouring of the Spirit and the conversion of souls, which are the highest blessings the Sabbath can confer; and for the joy that went up from every part of the holy city at these "wonderful works of God." Can we conceive of a nobler consecration of the day than this? Has ever a day since the morning of the creation been so wonderfully honoured, and so evidently set apart for hallowed purposes? If, then, we imitate the apostles in the observance of this day in this manner, can we possibly be wrong?

6. Its consecration is farther evident from the example of the apostles.

The record we possess of the acts of the apostles is so brief, that much is omitted which would otherwise satisfy our queries on this subject. But there is one negative fact of great value in this investigation. We never find the apostles meeting Christians for worship on the seventh day. We find them meeting the Jews, because this was the only day they could have full access to them; and meeting the Gentiles, who frequented the synagogues on this day, for the same reason. But this is only what a missionary to the Jews would do in our own day on the Jewish Sabbath, or a missionary to the Mohammedans on the Mussulman Sabbath, without sanctioning, for a moment, the claim set up by either for the sixth or seventh day as the day of rest.

But the facts are different in regard to the first day of the week. In Acts xx, 6, 7, it is stated by Luke, "We came unto Troas in five days, where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow."

Several points are manifest on the face of the record. It appears that Paul tarried until the first day, for the purpose of preaching to the disciples, and uniting in the Lord's Supper. This proves that they were accustomed to meet for this purpose on that day. The same thing appears from the form of expression used. It is not said, "On the first day of the week the disciples came together," as if this was a special meeting called to hear Paul; but, "On the first day of the week, *when* they came together;" when they were accustomed to come together for this purpose;* just as we should say, "on the fourth of July, when we came together to celebrate our national Independence." Being mentioned thus as a common custom, and a matter of

* For this use of the participle, see Winer's Idioms, part iii, § 46, 1, 9, and Buttman's Larger Greek Grammar, § 144, note 7.

course, it proves that they kept the first day of the week, by assembling for worship, preaching the word, and celebrating the Lord's Supper. This being done under the authority of inspired men, we have the same warrant for keeping the first day of the week that we have for the other parts of the New Testament worship.

The next indication of apostolic example is found in 1 Cor. xvi, 2: "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 argument from this passage is misunderstood in the objection, that this is a mere private laying aside of money, which cannot hallow the day on which it was done. But, in the first place, this was an act of worship, for it was an offering to God for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem. We learn from Philo and Josephus, that the Jews were accustomed to make these offerings on the Sabbath, as a part of the worship of the synagogue. And, as Paul informs the Corinthians that he had given the same command to the distant churches of Galatia, we infer that it was a general regulation all over the Church, thus ingrafting a well-known Sabbatic custom on the first day of the week. Now this must have been a collection made when they came together for worship, because this was a Jewish act of worship, and because, if they simply laid aside their bounty at home, this would not save gatherings when the apostle came; and the reason given for his injunction would be irrelevant and absurd. It is therefore implied, that in doing this act they were assembled for worship. But why was the first day specified? Had it been a private laying by of the savings of the week, the most natural time would have been the close of the week, the sixth day, when the week's business was done. If the seventh day had been kept as the day of worship, it would also have been named as the day of this collection. The placing of these collections on the first day of the week proves conclusively that they kept it, by apostolic authority, as the day of worship, or the Christian Sabbath.

The next indication we find in Rev. i, 10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

The object of the apostle John was to state on what day of the week the vision was seen; and hence he gives it this designation. This proves that the name was well known to Christians at this time, otherwise the use of it to point out a particular day would have been a mockery. Now what day was it? Not surely the seventh, for it is never so designated by any writer, sacred or profane. It could not be an indefinite time for any day, for it would then convey no information such as was required. It must, therefore, have been a

day belonging to the Lord in a peculiar sense; a day set apart for the service of Him who claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath; which is but to say, that the Lord's day is the Christian Sabbath.

7. We gather the same thing from the doctrinal teachings of the apostles.

In Heb. iv, 9, 10, it is stated that Christ's resting from his works (which he did not do until the resurrection) was parallel with God's ceasing from his works of creation; and, therefore, he infers that there remaineth a *σαββατισμός*, a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God. Whether this refers to the Sabbatic rest of heaven or that of earth, it, in either case, teaches that it follows the rule not of the "rest" of the creation, but that of Christ, which took place at his resurrection.

The only other passage we adduce is Col. ii, 16, 17: "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 Christ." The "Sabbath days" here mentioned cannot be all the Jewish festivals, for they are included in the former terms, "holy day and new moon;" and the word Sabbath is not so used in the New Testament. It could not be the general duty of keeping the Sabbath, for this was a moral precept unrepealed. It must, therefore, be the Jewish Sabbath, as far as it was possible to alter it, and adapt it to the New Dispensation; and this was only as to the day of its observance. He then asserts that the Jewish Sabbath, being but a shadow, in its commemoration of the Exodus, of the great deliverance that was made at the resurrection, must give place to a fuller embodying of the substance, in making the Lord's day the Christian Sabbath. The only incident connected with the law of the Sabbath that partook of this shadowy character was the day; and hence this alone could be changed, in throwing aside the Mosaic regulations concerning the day of rest.

8. We infer the same thing from the universal practice of the Christian Church.

There is no fact in ecclesiastical history more undoubted, than the unanimous consent of the Primitive Church in keeping holy the Lord's day. In some of the churches composed of Jewish converts, the observance of the seventh day was tolerated, for the same reason that circumcision, and some other Jewish rites, were permitted during the existence of the temple. But where the seventh day was observed, it was accompanied by the observance of the Lord's day. About this fact ecclesiastical historians are agreed.*

* Murdoch's *Mosheim*, vol. i, p. 85; Torrey's *Neander*, vol. i, p. 295.

We propose to take up the chain of testimony which we have traced to the last of the apostles, and carry it forward to a date when the observance of this day becomes a part of the legal history of the Roman empire. There are but few writings remaining from the close of the New-Testament canon to the time of Constantine; but it is remarkable that there is scarcely one which does not contain a recognition of the practice of the Church in this particular. We subjoin a few of these testimonies, giving, as nearly as possible, the date of the writer's birth, and omitting controverted details.

Barnabas, the companion of Paul, and one of the seventy, thus speaks in his catholic epistle:—"For which cause" [namely, the declarations of God in prophecy] "we keep the eighth day with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and having manifested himself, (to his disciples,) ascended into heaven."*

Ignatius of Antioch, whom tradition declares to have been one of the children blessed by our Lord, and therefore born before the middle of the first century, thus writes:—"Let us no longer Sabbathize," [that is, keep the Jewish Sabbath,] "but keep the Lord's day, on which our life arose by him."†

Justin Martyr, born about A. D. 114, in his Second Apology for the Christians, says:—"On the day that is called Sunday, all both of country and city assemble together, and the commentaries of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as time and occasion permit."‡ "On Sunday we all assemble together, because it is the first day, (of the week,) on which God, transforming the darkness and chaos, made the world; and Jesus Christ, our Saviour, on that day arose from the dead: for on Friday he was crucified, and on Sunday, appearing to his disciples, he taught them those things which we now present to you as our belief."§

Tertullian, who was born about A. D. 160, declares: "On the day of our Lord's resurrection, we ought not only to avoid this, (namely, bowing the knee in prayer,) but every species of anxiety; and also

* "Ἀγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδόην εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ἧ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ἀναερῶσθεις ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς.—*Epist. Barnab.*, c. 15.

† Μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ Κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες, ἐν ἧ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν δι' αὐτοῦ.—*Ep. ad Magnes*, c. 9.

‡ Τῇ δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ, πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἡ ἀγροὺς μενοντῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ, &c.—*Pro Christianis Apologia*, II. *Opera*, p. 98.

§ Τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν κοινῇ πάντες τὴν συνέλευσιν ποιούμεθα, ἐπειδὴ πρώτη ἐστὶν ἡμέρα, ἐν ἧ ὁ Θεὸς τὸ σκότος καὶ τὴν ὕλην τρέψας, κόσμον ἐποίησε, καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος σωτὴρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη, &c., i. g. s., p. 99. See also *Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo*, pp. 241, 245, 260; and the unknown author of *Quest. et Respons. ad Orthodox.*, p. 469.

lay aside our ordinary business, lest we give place to the devil."*

Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was born about A. D. 120, wrote an express treatise on this point, as we learn from Eusebius:—"Among these, also, was Irenæus, who, in the name of those brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, wrote an epistle, in which he maintains the duty of celebrating the mystery of the resurrection of our Lord, only on the day of the Lord."†

Theophilus of Antioch, contemporary with Irenæus, declares:—"Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honour the Lord's day, seeing it was on that day that our Lord Jesus Christ completed his resurrection from the dead."‡

Dionysius of Corinth, who flourished about A. D. 170, declares:—"Now we keep the Lord's day holy."§

Melito of Sardis, who is one of our most important witnesses concerning the canon of Scripture, wrote a work on the Lord's day.||

Origen, born A. D. 185, says, in his Homily on Exodus:—"But if it appears from the Holy Scriptures that God rained manna from heaven on the Lord's day, and did not on the Sabbath, the Jews can thereby understand that our Lord's day is preferred to the Jewish Sabbath."¶

The Apostolical Constitutions, which, though not of apostolic origin, are yet of very great antiquity, and date about this period, declare:—"What apology will he make to God, who does not assemble on the Lord's day to hear the saving word concerning the resurrection," &c.**

Clement of Alexandria, who flourished during the latter part of the second and beginning of the third century, says that "Plato predicts the Lord's day as holy, and explains the proper mode of keeping the day."††

Athanasius, born about A. D. 298, declares:—"We assemble on the Sabbath day, not returning again to Judaism, for we do not keep false Sabbaths; but we come together on the Sabbath, adoring Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. Formerly among the ancients the

* "Solo die dominico resurrectionis non ab isto tantum, sed omni anxietatis habitu et officio carere debemus, differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus."—*Tertullian de Oratione*, c. 23.

† Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* lib. v, cap. 24.

‡ Quoted in Bingham, *Orig. Eccles.*, lib. xx, cap. ii, § 5.

§ See Original in Bingham, *ut supra*.

|| Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, lib. iv, cap. 26.

¶ Quoted in Bingham, lib. xx, cap. ii, § 1.

** Lib. ii, cap. 59, quoted in Pearce's *Vindication of the Dissenters*, p. 499.

†† Clem. *Stromata*, vii, quoted in Bingham, *ut supra*.

(Jewish) Sabbath was honoured, but the Lord changed the day of the Sabbath into the Lord's day."*

This testimony brings us to the time of Constantine, when the Lord's day was ordained to be a *dies non juridicus*, and its observance made a part of the laws of the Roman empire. In the edict proclaiming this ordinance, we find it recognized as an ancient and unquestioned institution; and although agricultural labours are allowed on that day, it is distinctly stated that it was only as works of necessity and mercy; and even this permission, in the unguarded form in which it was given in the law, was protested against by many councils, the canons of seven of which are given by Bingham.†

From the time of Constantine the usage is conceded; although the language of Christian writers does not materially vary from that used in the testimonies already quoted.

We ask any candid mind to look at this chain of evidence, showing an unvarying observance of this day from the time of the apostles, and of apostolic men down to the present day; and evincing a unanimity on this point that we scarcely find on any other, except the essentials of Christianity; and explain it fairly on any other ground than that the Lord's day was made the Christian Sabbath, by the same authority that ordained every other part of the New Dispensation.

9. Our last argument is drawn from the blessing of God on the observance of the Lord's day.

It is difficult to conceive that God could allow the Church to remain in so serious an error as this would be for eighteen hundred years; and that this error, unlike any other that has ever been held, should produce no perceptible evil. If the Church is mistaken on this point, it is the most gigantic Sabbath-breaking institution the world ever saw; and the God who so fearfully punished the Sabbath violations of the Old Testament Church, could not but frown upon this stupendous crime of the New. But, instead of this, the observance of the day has been pre-eminently blessed. The holiest names that glow in the Church's history are blended with its hallowed scenes; the richest ingatherings of souls that have ever been made, were made during its hours; the lands that have most sacredly cherished its observance have been the greenest spots among the nations; and the sweetest memories of piety, the richest trophies of grace, the prayers of the sainted dead, the blood of the noble martyred, the bright recollections of the past, and the brighter anticipations of the future; in a word, all that is most lovely, most glo-

* Augusti Archæologie, die Feste der Heretiker, 3, 346, note.

† Bingham, lib. xx, cap. ii, § iii.

rious, and most precious, in the heritage of the Church, cluster around and consecrate the observance of this "queen of the week." Would God thus endorse a lie? Has he ever thus blessed an error? What, then, is all the wondrous history of Lord's-day blessings and Lord's-day judgments, that stretches its belt of light along the past, but the permanent, cumulative testimony of the Great Head of the Church, that this change has been made by his direction, and according to his purpose?

Gathering together all these multiplied items of proof, we regard the conclusion as irresistible, that the Lord's day is, by the authority of God, the Christian Sabbath.

We had intended, as a corollary to this argument, to subjoin some remarks on the proper means of promoting the observance of the Lord's day; but our limits forbid farther enlargement. We will only remark, in conclusion, that while we most earnestly resist the fanatical crusade that Infidelity is now waging against all laws prohibiting certain violations of the Sabbath, we have no confidence in any effort of civil law to enforce its observance. The province of human legislation here, as on all similar subjects, is negative rather than positive; preventing the invasion of right, rather than enforcing the performance of duty. We hold the Sabbath to be the Paradise of the poor man's week; and all that we ask of those who bear the sword of earthly authority, is to take their stand at the portals of this "garden enclosed," and, with "the flaming brand," prohibit the unhallowed intrusion of King, or Congress, or lawless rapacity, to invade its sweet seclusion or disturb its holy rest. But we desire not that this guard shall itself intrude, to drive unwilling feet to these grateful shades, as to a weekly prison; and enforce where they are at liberty only to protect. And this we may rightfully demand: for the majority of every political community, be it Christian, Pagan, Mussulman, or Jewish, have a right to enact laws for the protection of their lawful privileges; and a minority have no right to disturb them in its peaceful exercise.

It is trifling with our common sense to say, that the rights of the poor artisan, labourer, or shop-keeper, are not seriously invaded by permitting his rapacious employer to force him to labour seven days in the week or lose his place; or by allowing his unscrupulous neighbour to open his shop beside him, attract his customers, and diminish his sales, as well as disturb his Sabbath quiet by the noise and bustle of trade. To protect the weary labourer and the humble trader from this petty, but, in the aggregate, most formidable oppression, we have a right to demand the interposing arm of legal prohibition, and to resist every effort to break down this munition

of laws, as the beginning of a tyranny the most cruel and heartless, because its sorest pressure must be felt in the end by the poor, the defenceless, and the unfriended.

To secure the proper observance of the Sabbath, we must look to other agencies than human law. We must teach men to love the Sabbath, as the lent day of Eden, and the prophetic type of Heaven, embodying a relic of the peace of the one, and a promise of the rest of the other. We must convince them that it is not only an obligation, but a blessing; that it is God's great gift to toiling man and beast; the link he has given to bind together things sacred and profane, things temporal and eternal; and by interfusing a heavenly spirit into our earthly life, to elevate, civilize, and refine society. We must teach the poor man to hail its soft light, as it steals into his cottage window, as the glad signal of Heaven to welcome him to the bosom of his family; to sweeten the joys of his humble home; to call him to the house of God, where his mind shall expand and his heart soften, as his hopes are remembered and his cares forgotten; while his toilsome lot on earth is gilded with a calm and holy light, as there rises to his gladdened vision the heritage of rest above. We must convince the rich man of the wise political economy of the Sabbath; its relation to a nation's wealth and greatness; its action as a great balance-wheel in human affairs, checking over-production and under-payment; preventing over-working and deterioration; restoring wasted energies; keeping alive the pure and powerful influence of domestic joys; compensating for the neglect of early education; and preparing the labourer to return refreshed, elevated, and cheered to the toil of another week. We must cause them to feel that the violation of Sabbath rest is as blind, suicidal, and ruinous an economy, as the robbery of the refreshing sleep of the night. When to this pervading sense of the value and sweetness of the Sabbath, there shall be added a waking church; a ministry burning with light as well as love; a membership emulous of the fervent spirit of their spiritual chiefs; a sanctified press; a purified literature, and a Christianized education; then shall we hope to see that Sabbath which is "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable;" that Sabbath whose golden promise has brightened the horizon of the future to the eye of prophecy; and which, when it weekly draws its girdle of light around the glad earth, shall aptly prefigure that blessed Sabbatism, where "the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest."

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