

Review of Objections to the Seventh-day Sabbath

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WE have ever doubted the right of any man, or body of men, to make a purely human assertion the basis of an argument for changing the word of Jehovah. We remain of the same opinion. Every "thus saith the Lord" is rock-bottom; and every doctrine which rests on such a foundation must stand. But that argument which is based on the assertion of men, has at best a very precarious foundation, however strongly it may be stated.

OBJECTIONS

1. THE definite day - the seventh - is of the nature of a positive institute, capable of change, while the observance of *a day* of rest, and worship and commemoration, is moral and eternal.

2. The object to be obtained, of rest etc., can be as well carried out by the first day, now observed, as by the seventh; being after six days of labor, and no difference but in the number and name. It is more convenient and can only be changed for Saturday with *great difficulty*.

3. The first day observance by Christ and the apostles, and John's calling it the Lord's day, gave it sacredness, and caused its observance among the primitive Christians, from the first century, and first writers that we have after the apostles. D. I. R.

ANSWERS

1. In the first objection, the writer asserts that the fourth commandment of the moral law is *capable* of

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being changed. In the second, he asserts that the commandment, when thus changed, would answer the divine purpose as perfectly as though it had not been altered. The third objection contains the writer's proof that the commandment has actually been changed. Let us candidly consider the first objection.

Whether this objection is just or not, none will deny that it rests wholly on the assertion of men. The writer - as many others have done - has here separated the fourth commandment into what he is pleased to call its moral and its positive parts. The requirement to keep a day is moral, and therefore eternal. But that part of the commandment which tells us what day it is that God would have us keep, is positive and therefore changeable. In other words, this argument may be thus stated: That part of the fourth commandment which designates the seventh

day as the Sabbath has passed away and left only words enough in force, to require that some day be kept.

We now ask for the commission by which men have been authorized to cut in twain the fourth commandment. As the Scriptures do not furnish it, the answer must be that reason authorizes this act. Reason, then, is sufficient to prepare for destruction that part of the commandment which requires the observance of the hallowed Rest-day of the Creator. Let us try the same engine upon the remainder of the commandment, as follows:-

The duty to rest is no doubt a moral duty, and of an unchangeable character, but the requirement to devote a day to this "is of the nature of a positive institute capable of change" so as to require *a part of each day*, instead of the observance of any entire day!

If this same mode of reasoning does not as effectually destroy the remaining portion of the fourth commandment, as it does that part which it was aimed against, we certainly fail to see the difference. Indeed it shows that the one part of the commandment

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is equally as changeable and positive as the other. So that if it is sufficient to prepare a part of the commandment for destruction, it is of equal value to those who would destroy the remainder. When did God ever authorize men to take his commandments to pieces in such a manner? Is not this the very course which the Romish church has taken with the second and the tenth? Nay did not the Protestant church borrow this very argument from the church of Rome? Here are the words of the "mother church" on this point:

"As far as the commandment obliges us to set aside some part of our time for the worship and service of our Creator, it is an unalterable and unchangeable precept of the eternal law, in which the church cannot dispense; but forasmuch as it prescribes the seventh day in particular for this purpose, it is no more than a ceremonial precept of the old law, which obligeth not Christians. And therefore, instead of the seventh day, and other festivals appointed by the old law, the church has prescribed the Sundays and holy days to be set apart for God's worship; and these we are now obliged to keep in consequence of God's commandment, instead of the ancient Sabbath. *Catholic Christian Instructed*, page 204.

From what has been said, two important facts are made plain: 1. That this argument was invented by the church of Rome to justify the change of the Sabbath. 2. That if this argument be just, it proves conclusively that no part of the fourth commandment is moral, unless it be the requirement to rest.

This argument first cuts off from the commandment, the requirement to keep the seventh day, because that is positive and susceptible of change to another day; and it cuts off the duty of keeping any day, as such a requisition is also positive, and susceptible of being changed so as to require the observance of a *part of each day*. We think the fourth commandment has undergone a sufficient amputation to

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have nothing now left but the moral part. But what now remains? Alas, not enough to hold the form of a commandment together! In cutting off the seventh day from the fourth commandment, we cut off the term "Sabbath of the Lord," for that term is expressly applied to the Rest-day of the Creator, the seventh day. And when this has been severed from the commandment, no man can show that the requirement to keep any day remains behind. Here is the fourth commandment with the "positive" and changeable parts taken out:-

"Remember to . . . keep . . . holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but . . . of the Lord thy God: . . . 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 sea and all that in them is, and rested . . . wherefore the Lord blessed . . . and hallowed."

Like a building with its frame taken out, the fourth commandment is now only a mass of ruins. And even could we allow men to repair the commandment, by inserting the words, "first day of the week" where they have taken out the seventh day, it would only turn the truth of God into a lie, as the commandment would then require us to keep holy the first day of the week, because God rested upon that day from his work of Creation. Nor would there be any way to mend the matter, except to strike out the reason on which the fourth commandment is based; viz., "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it," and to insert instead, these words: "Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week; wherefore the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath." The fourth commandment would then read thus:-

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"Remember the first day of the week to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the first day of the week 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 Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week; wherefore the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath."

Here is the commandment as multitudes desire to have it read. As it requires the observance of a different day from the original commandment, and for a different reason from that which is there assigned, it leaves no part of the original Sabbatic institution in existence and thus this matter ends in the total destruction of the fourth commandment.

2. Let us now examine the second objection. In this it is asserted that the first day of the week will answer the purpose of rest, worship and commemoration, equally as well as the seventh. We reply that so far as rest from toil is concerned, men may doubtless obtain this on the first day of the week; though the idea of a day of rest at the commencement of the week instead of one at its termination, is the very reverse of God's plan, not to say of propriety also. It is only by joining the last six days of one week to the first day of the following week, that men are able to hide this absurdity.

But we deny that the worship of God can be maintained as acceptable to him in the observance of a different day from that which he ordained, as in the observance of the right one. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in *truth*." John 4:24. Those who make the commandments of God of none effect by their tradition, worship God *in vain*, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matt.15:3-9. That this is strictly true of Sunday-keeping, none can deny.

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It is a tradition of the elders that directly makes void one of the ten commandments. If God should pronounce it a vain oblation, and say in the day of judgment to its observers, "Who hath required this at your hands?" would they not be speechless?

But will not Sunday answer as a day of commemoration equally as well as the Lord's Sabbath? We answer that the fourth commandment requires us to commemorate the rest of Jehovah from the work of creation. The seventh day - the day of his rest - is the memorial of that event. Hence the commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath-day [literally the Rest-day,] to keep it holy." "The seventh day is the Sabbath [Rest-day] of the Lord thy God." The first day of the week can never become the memorial of the Creator's rest; for he began his labor on that day. It is not the memorial of Christ's resurrection, for the Lord never set it apart for that purpose, but ordained a far more appropriate memorial of that event, viz., baptism. Rom.6:4,5. It is not a *divine* memorial of *any* event. If any one thinks that it is, let them tell us where God has said so.

The fourth commandment presents before us an important event which God would have commemorated. It presents us also with the memorial by which he would have us commemorate that event. And it states distinctly how God made that memorial, and when. To insert Sunday in the commandment as the memorial of Christ's resurrection, not only destroys the divine memorial there given, but also destroys, as we have seen, the *reason* which God assigned for giving the commandment.

3. The third objection contains the writer's proof for First-day observance. It asserts that Christ and the apostles observed the day, and that John called it the Lord's day. Did Christ observe the first day of the week? If he did this, when, where and how, did he do it?

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The resurrection of the Saviour, it is true, occurred on this day; but this was not so remarkable an event as the sacrifice of the Lamb of God which occurred on another of the six working days. Jesus showed himself to his disciples on the day of his resurrection, and perhaps on that day the next week, though this cannot be claimed as *certain*. But to show that the day of his appearing was not thereby made sacred, the next time he appeared to them was a fishing-day, and the last time was on Thursday. John 21; Acts 1. This is all the evidence that can be brought to show that Christ observed Sunday!

Did the apostles observe the first day of the week? The first instance which is cited as proof, is this: The disciples sat at meat, and while thus engaged, Jesus came in and upbraided them for their unbelief respecting his resurrection. Mark

16:9-14. The next incident which is cited, was "after eight days" from the one just noticed. John 20. It is *possible* that this was on the first day of the week, but it is by no means *certain* that such was the case. But whether it was Sunday or not, nothing transpired which might not have occurred with equal propriety on any day.

Paul's act of breaking bread on that day may also be cited. But though he broke bread on that day - just as his Master had done on another of the working days, and as the apostolic church at Jerusalem had done every day - he never dreamed that it had become the Christian Sabbath; for as soon as it was light, he started on his long journey to Jerusalem! a positive proof that he did not consider that day the Sabbath. Paul commanded the members of the Corinthian church, every one to lay by himself in store on that day for purposes of charity. But this is the very reverse of a public collection, as each must be at his own home in order to obey.

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, but he

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does not say that the Lord's day was Sunday. The objector *says that* for him. The Bible many times calls the Sabbath, the Lord's holy day. It never tells us that he has put another day in its place. It never calls Sunday the Lord's day. Those, therefore, who affirm that the Sabbath of the Lord is not his holy day, and assert that Sunday is such, directly contradict the authority of the holy Scriptures.

OBJECTIONS

1. To say that it was *first appointed* or *caused* to be *observed* by Constantine, or *by the Pope* is historically false!

2. Or to say that "Pope Nicholas first called it the Lord's day" is *historically false*, as may be seen in *Bingham's Christian Antiquities*.

3. Constantine caused it by *law* to be observed by the *unconverted* and the *heathen* and *officers of government*; but it had been observed by the saints 150 years before, voluntarily.

4. And the councils which made canons on it, did not *introduce* it thereby, but only required *uniformity*, where there were some neglectful. For it was *generally* held sacred and observed from the first century.

5. It was also called Lord's day by A. D. 168, or the middle of the second century, by Dionysius writing to Pope Soter, and was thus in the second and third century distinguished from the Sabbath.

6. But the seventh Saturday Sabbath *never was* made a day of legal rest, nor strictly a rest by the church or councils; but a day of meetings only. Both were called "festivals," but the *first day* had the *pre-eminence*. D. I. R.

ANSWERS

1. We have never said that the keeping of Sunday as a *festival*, began with Constantine, or originated from the law which he enacted in its behalf. On the

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contrary, we believe that the Papal apostasy as stated by Paul, began even in the days of the apostles. 2Thess.2. Hence we are not surprised that some time after the days of the apostles, men began to pay some regard to Sunday, as also to good Friday and to holy Thursday. Dr. Chambers says, "It was Constantine the Great who first made a law for the observance of Sunday." But whether such a law had been made before his time or not, it is a fact, obvious to every reader of the New Testament, that Christ and his apostles never established such a precept. Not the first word was ever uttered by one of the apostles, enjoining Sunday-keeping. Hence the first-day Sabbath is a human institution which has usurped the place of the Lord's Sabbath, and which has nothing divine or apostolic about it.

2. The statement to which the objector refers was made in the "History of the Sabbath" published by the American Sabbath Tract Society. Here it is:

"To give the more solemnity to the first day of the week, (as we learn from Lucius' Ecclesiastical History.) *Sylvester*, who was bishop of Rome while Constantine was Emperor, changed the name of Sunday, giving it the more imposing title of *Lord's day*."

We understand the above extract to teach that Pope Sylvester, by *formal act* christened Sunday with the name of Lord's day. But the same writer speaks of certain, who before the days of Constantine, regarded Sunday, not in the place of the Lord's Sabbath, but as a festival under the name of Lord's day, and who kept as equally sacred, good Friday, and holy Thursday.

3. If Sunday was observed 150 years before the edict of Constantine, this would only extend as far back as A. D. 171, *eighty or one hundred years this side of the apostles*. Whoever then observed it, did it as the writer has well expressed it, "*voluntarily*," for they were doing what God had never required.

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Those who then kept Sunday as a festival, were careful to observe the Sabbath. Hence we cannot refer to such cases as a justification of those who now coolly violate the fourth commandment in order to keep a day which God never enjoined. And to say that the apostles gave a commandment for Sunday-observance which was not recorded, but which was handed down by tradition, is to say that the Bible does not contain all the commandments of God necessary to salvation and to assert the right of men to supply from tradition that which the Bible lacks, and to correct by tradition that which is not right in the Word of God. As an instance take the fourth commandment, which men without hesitation correct by the tradition of the elders. In other words, this work begins by adding tradition to the Bible, and ends with correcting the Bible by tradition. This is the earliest and leading principle of the Papal apostasy.

4. The councils which have made canons respecting the change of the Sabbath, were engaged in a fearful work. They had no warrant from God to justify them in corrupting the fourth commandment, or to sanction their acts of bolstering up that which God had never ordained.

5. The following from the "History of the Sabbath" may be to the point:-

"We will notice but one more of these misinterpreted citations, and this is from Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, who lived a little after Justin. His letter to Soter,

bishop of Rome, is cited as saying, 'This day we celebrated the holy Dominical day, in which we have read your epistle.' As given by Eusebius, it is thus: 'To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day.' etc. The only ground upon which this phrase can be referred to the first day of the week is, that this day was at that time known by the same title that God has given to the Sabbath, [Is.58:13.] of which there is no proof."

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6. The Lord's Sabbath is none the less sacred because that men have never made laws to enforce its observance. Neither is Sunday-keeping a divine institution, because the edicts of emperors and the canons of councils can be produced in its favor. A stream can never rise higher than its fountain. The command for keeping Sunday originated this side of the apostles: hence it follows that, although its observance should continue ten thousand years, it would never become apostolic or divine. J. N. A.

SEVENTH PART OF TIME THEORY

Vindication of the True Sabbath

THE only object, direct or indirect, of this [the fourth] commandment, is "*the day*." What are we commanded to remember? "The day." What are we required to keep holy? "The day." What did the Lord bless and hallow? "The day." In what are we forbidden to work? In "the day." Now let us inquire:-

1. What day? *Not* the day of Adam's fall; nor the day Noah went into the ark; nor the day of the overthrow of Sodom; nor the day of the Exodus; nor the day of the Provocation; nor the day of the removal of the ark; nor the day of Christ's birth; nor the day of his crucifixion; nor the day of his resurrection; nor the day of his ascension; nor the day of judgment. It may be, and certainly is, proper, that we should remember all these; but we are not told to do so in this commandment. Neither is it some one day of the week, but no one in particular;

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for how could we remember "*the day*," that is no day in particular? - how could we keep holy "*the day*" that has not been specified? - and how could we say that God had blessed and hallowed "*the day*," that was no one day more than another? What day, then? God says, Remember *the Sabbath-day*, or *the day of the Sabbath*; Keep holy *the day of the Sabbath*; The Lord blessed and hallowed *the day of the Sabbath*. He also says, *The seventh day* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; *in it* thou shalt not do any work. This day therefore, is "the seventh day," or "the day of the Sabbath."

2. What Sabbath? Not "*a Sabbath*," or any Sabbath that man may invent, or that God may hereafter keep; for that would be "*some Sabbath*," but no one in particular. Not some institution yet undetermined, that God may require man to observe weekly; for the command is not, "Remember the Sabbath institution," but, "Remember the *day* of the Sabbath;" not, "Keep holy the Sabbath institution," but, "Keep holy the *day* of the Sabbath." The Lord did not bless and hallow "*the Sabbath institution*," but "*the day of the Sabbath*." We are not

forbidden to do work in "the Sabbath institution," but in "the *seventh day*." In fact, the phrase, "the Sabbath," in this commandment, means neither more nor less than "the rest." It is not *here* the name of any institution at all, though it is often thus used in other parts of the Bible. Hence, this Sabbath is "the Sabbath or rest of the Lord thy God."

3. Which day of the week is "the day of the Sabbath?" No other than that day on which the Lord rested; for the command refers to God's Sabbath. On which day of the week did he rest?

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"And he rested on the seventh day." Gen.2:2. Therefore, "the day of the Sabbath" is the same day of the week on which God rested from the work of creation; and as he rested on the seventh day of the first week, and on no other, the seventh and no other day of every week must be the only "day of the Sabbath."

Let it be particularly observed, that God does not say, Remember the Sabbath, or, Remember the Sabbatic institution, though this is necessarily implied in the command; but, Remember "the day of the Sabbath" - the day on which I have ordained that the Sabbatic institution be observed. As if he had said, There is little danger, *comparatively*, that you will forget the fact of my having kept Sabbath; nor is it likely that you will altogether neglect to observe *some day* of rest from your arduous toils, for you will be driven to this by the ever returning demands of your exhausted bodies; but you are, and always will be, in especial danger of forgetting the proper day of the week for honoring me in my own institution. Satan, who takes infinite delight in all kinds of "will-worship," while he hates with a perfect hatred every act of strict obedience to my law, will do all he can to persuade you that some other day will do just as well, or even better. Remember, therefore, the day of my Sabbath, and keep the same day holy in every week; for - mark the reason - I have myself rested on the seventh day, and on that account I have blessed and sanctified that and no other day of the week, that you may observe it, and keep it holy, not because it is in itself better than any other day, but because I have blessed and sanctified it.

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There is only one day of American Independence; only one day of the Resurrection of Christ; only one day of the birth of any one man; and only one day of Judgment. And why? Because American Independence was declared on but one day; Christ rose on but one day; the same man cannot be born on two different days; and God hath appointed only one day in which he will judge the world. Now, on the same principle, there can be but one "day of the Sabbath" of the Lord our God. If I should say that the day of Christ's Resurrection is not any particular day of the week, but only "one day in seven," you would not hesitate to call me a fool, while my ignorance would excite your deepest sympathy; but when *you* say that "the day of the Sabbath" does not mean that particular day on which the Lord's Sabbath occurred, but only "one day in seven," you expect me to receive your assertion as the infallible teaching of superior wisdom. I cannot, however, so receive it, for the following reasons:-

1. If God had meant "one day in seven," he would have said so. His first and great design, in writing his law on tables of stone, was to be understood by his creatures; but, for more than two thousand years after he gave the law, no human being ever suspected that "the day of the Sabbath" meant anything else than the seventh day of the week, because it was commonly known that that day alone was in reality "the day of the Sabbath." Indeed, this "one-day-in-seven" doctrine is known to have been invented within a few hundred years, with the pious design of accounting for a change of Sabbath, without the necessity of repealing a portion of the moral law. It is a matter of great surprise, that those

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pious theologians, who first substituted "one day in seven" for "the day of the Sabbath," did not shudder at the thought of presuming to mend the language of the Holy Ghost.

2. God never blessed "one day in seven," without blessing a particular day. He either blessed some definite object, or nothing. You *may* say, indeed, without falsehood, that God blessed "one day in seven;" but if you mean that this act of blessing did not terminate on any particular day, you ought to know, that you are asserting what is naturally impossible. As well might you say of a band of robbers, that they had killed "one man in seven," while in reality they had killed no man in particular. No, brethren, yourselves know very well, that God had not blessed and sanctified any day but *the seventh of the seven*, prior to the giving of the written law. You know, that if God blessed any day of the week at all, it was a definite day, distinct from all the other days of the week. But this commandment says, that "the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day." Therefore the Sabbath-day must be a particular day of the week. Therefore "the Sabbath-day" is not "one day in seven," or an indefinite seventh part of time. Therefore it is not "one day in seven" that we are required to remember, and keep holy, and in which we are forbidden to do any work; but "the seventh day" of the week, which was then, is now, and will be till the end of time, "the day of the Sabbath" of the Lord our God.

3. No day of the week but the seventh was ever called "the day of the Sabbath," either by God or man, till long since the death of the last inspired writer. Search both Testaments through and

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through, and you will find no other day called "*the Sabbath*," or even "*a Sabbath*," except the ceremonial Sabbaths, with which, of course, we have nothing to do in this controversy. And long after the close of the canon of inspiration, the seventh day, and no other, was still called "the Sabbath." If you can prove that any one man, among the millions of Adam's children, from the beginning of the world till the *rise of Antichrist*, ever called the first day of the week "*the Sabbath*," you will shed a light upon this controversy, for which a host of able writers have searched in vain.

If you say, that when God speaks of "the Sabbath-day," he means "one day in seven, but no day in particular," you are as far from the truth as if you said that, when he speaks of Moses, he does not mean any particular man, but "some one of the Israelites." Moses *was* one of the Israelites, just as the Sabbath-day *is* one day in seven. But when God says Moses, he means Moses the son of Amram;

and when he says "the Sabbath-day," he means the seventh day of the week. You *may* give different names to the same object, without interfering with its identity; but to apply the same name to two different objects, and then to affirm that these two objects are identically the same, so that what is predicated of the one must be true of the other, is as though a navigator should discover an island in the Southern Ocean, and call it "England," and then affirm that the late work of Mr. Macaulay, entitled "The History of England," is a veritable and authentic history of his newly discovered empire. Which would you wonder at most, the stupidity or the effrontery of that navigator?