

The Bible Sabbath

THE following articles and extracts are a careful selection from the publications of the Seventh-day Baptists. We send out this choice work with the expectation that those, who "delight in the law of God," will be much instructed and blest in reading the clear, comprehensive and irrefutable arguments which it contains. Though the Sabbath is one of the most simple truths of the Bible, yet we are thankful for the comfort and strength which we have received from the publications of the "American Sabbath Tract Society," especially their "History of the Sabbath."

We trust that this work will be the means, with the blessing of God, of leading many to observe ALL of the commandments of God, and no longer violate the fourth by treading down the Bible Sabbath.

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When was the Sabbath Instituted?

Some have contended that the Sabbath was not instituted until the law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. But there are serious difficulties in the way of this belief. In the second chapter of Genesis, after having given an account of the creation, the sacred historian says: "On the seventh day God ended his work 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." Now, if any part of this narrative is to be construed literally, the whole of it must be; and if we may not venture to deny or explain away the account which Moses has given of the creation, then we may not deny or explain away this unequivocal statement respecting the original institution of the Sabbath in Paradise. The blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day is mentioned in connection with the first seventh day in the order of time, and it is so mentioned as most forcibly to impress the reader that the Sabbath was then instituted. God's resting on the day is given as the reason for its sanctification; and it cannot be supposed that

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this reason existed two thousand five hundred years before the institution. We conclude, therefore, that the Sabbath was enjoined immediately after the close of the work of creation.

This opinion is corroborated by some facts recorded in the Scriptures. There are frequent and early notices of reckoning by sevens. Noah observed a period of seven days in sending the raven and dove from the ark; the term *week* is used in the contract between Jacob and Laban; Joseph mourned seven days for his father; and Job and his friends observed the term of seven days.

Nor is it in the sacred volume or among the Jews alone that such facts are found. Nearly all the nations of antiquity were acquainted with the weekly division of time. The Assyrians, Egyptians, Indians, Arabians, and, in a word, all the nations of the East, have in all ages made use of a week of seven days. And we find that these nations not only divided time thus, but that they regarded as holy the very day which had been sanctified as a Sabbath, although they had forsaken the true worship of God. *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Callimachus*, say, "The seventh day is holy." *Theophilus* of Antioch says, respecting the seventh day, "The day which all mankind celebrate." *Josephus* asserts that, "no city of Greeks or barbarians can be found, which does not acknowledge a seventh day's rest from labor." And *Philo* says, that "the Sabbath was a festival not peculiar to any one people or country, but so common to all mankind, that it might be called a public and general feast of the nativity of the world." These authors, who lived in different ages and were of different nations, cannot be supposed to have written thus in order to please the Jews, who were generally despised and persecuted; and this universal reverence for the seventh day cannot be accounted for upon any other supposition than that the Sabbath was instituted at the close of creation, and handed down by tradition to all the descendants of Adam.

If additional proof of this early institution of the Sabbath is needed, it may be drawn from the manner in which it was revived in the wilderness. Before the children of Israel came to Mount Sinai we find them voluntarily making provision for the Sabbath, by gathering on the sixth day a double portion of manna. "And all the rulers came and told Moses. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said; to-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, how long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my

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laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you, on the sixth day, the bread of two days." The rebuke, *how long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* implies the previous appointment of the Sabbath; and the positive assertion, *the Lord hath given you the Sabbath* ought to settle the question in any mind disposed to understand the sacred historian.

What day of the week do the Scriptures designate as the Sabbath?

To this question, it might be supposed that every person who has any acquaintance with the subject would readily reply - *The seventh*. We are aware, however, that efforts are made to render this a difficult point to determine. We shall, therefore, make a few remarks upon it.

It is plainly recorded that the Creator, after laboring the first six days, in which he completed the work of creation, rested the following day, which was the seventh in the order of creation. This particular day God therefore sanctified and blessed. "And God blessed the *seventh* day." When the law was given at Mount Sinai, the observance of the seventh day was commanded; and the manner in which the fourth commandment is expressed, shows beyond a doubt, that one particular and definite day was known to Israel by this name. Consequently, they needed no instruction as to which day was intended. This is observable in Ex.xvi, 22, where the sixth and seventh days of the week are mentioned by their ordinal names, as a subject with which the people were familiarly acquainted. In this place, also, the seventh day is declared to be the Sabbath. There can be no reasonable doubt but that the day which in the time of Moses was known as the seventh day, was the same in its weekly succession with that which is called the *seventh day* in Gen.ii,3. If the seventh day mentioned in the fourth commandment was not the same day of the week mentioned in Gen.ii,3, as some profess to think, it must be perfectly inexplicable, that no intimation is given in the history of those events that another seventh day was intended in the fourth commandment than the one mentioned in the institution of the Sabbath, especially since both are recorded in the same appellation in a direct series of events. But what removes all obscurity from the subject is, that God has positively declared that the day which he commanded to be observed in Ex.xx, is the same on which he rested at the close of the creation. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep

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it holy." "*The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.*" "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." This language is definite; and while it assures us that the day here commanded to be observed is the same in its weekly returns with the day on which God rested, it assures us against any derangement of the week, or loss of time which might have been produced in the long lapse of time from the creation, by the general apostasy from the true worship of God. Had the true Sabbath been lost, it was certainly restored; and the day then known as the seventh day received the divine sanction. The same remark is applicable to the subject during the succeeding history of the Jewish nation. Had the weekly Sabbath fallen into total neglect, and the day of its regular recurrence been forgotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, by giving his divine example in favor of the day known by the Jewish nation as the proper seventh day of the decalogue, has settled the question conclusively, down to that time: so that the day known in the New Testament as the Sabbath, was the seventh day in regular succession from the creation of the world. A perfect uniformity among all the nations in the known world, as to the days of the week, both before and since the advent of Christ, is a further testimony, that no derangement of the days of the week has ever taken place. Indeed, it will not be pretended that the account of time has been lost since the introduction of Christianity. Since that period, the Jews as a people have maintained a perfect uniformity in the observance of the ancient Sabbath, though scattered through every nation of the globe; and the Christian church, in all its divisions, has been known to observe either the seventh or the first day of the week; and for a considerable length of time, both of these days. So that we are as certain that the day now known as the seventh day of the week, is the same with that enjoined in the fourth commandment, as we are of any fact, for the knowledge of which we are dependent on the testimony of mankind.

In this connection, we would remark, that the sabbatical law does not appoint a seventh day, but *the* seventh day. It is but a flimsy subterfuge to pretend that the fourth commandment enjoins only a seventh part of our time to be kept holy. The *people* of Israel never so understood the law of the Sabbath; and their uniform conduct ever since shows that they understood it to mean the last day of the week, and that only. It will be admitted, that had the Jews, in the days of Moses, profaned the

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rest of the seventh day, under the pretext that they had rested on one of the preceding six days, they would have paid dearly for their presumption. If, then, their sense of this precept was correct, no person in any age has a right to understand it in a different sense, for a law cannot have a contrary or a double meaning. While the terms of that precept remain the same, its meaning must continue the same. It is true that the law which enjoins the observance of the last day of every seven, does as a consequence enjoin the seventh part of our time; but it is still *the* seventh day in its order that it requires, and not merely a seventh part. And it should be remembered, that Christ hath said, "not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the law;" and that the most awful penalty is denounced on

him who dares to explain away its proper meaning. It is obvious, also, that if a seventh day, or any *one* day after six of labor, be all that is required by the law of the Sabbath, the seventh or last must still be that day, from the fact, that to change it without divine authority would be to change the length of the week, and violate God's established *order*. And as in the first instance it would be sin, time would never change the character of that act. A *wrong* never will become a *right* by our persisting in it. As it could not be changed without sin, so the sin must ever remain until repented of and retracted. It should be remembered, likewise, that by an admission that a seventh day or a seventh *part* of our time only is required, all argument for a change is effectually silenced; for if any good reason existed for one day more than another, the *mere* seventh part must be abandoned.

Has the Sabbath been changed from the Seventh to the First day of the Week?

This question involves matters of such importance that it should not be answered without a candid and thorough examination. If the Sabbath has been transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, it must be great impiety to neglect that day or to appropriate any part of it to secular purposes. If, on the other hand, the law requiring the sanctification of the seventh day of the week remains in force, then to neglect that day is an act of equal impiety, and exposes the offender to the most awful consequences. The Scriptures should contain the account of it, if the Sabbath has been changed by divine authority. And as the precept requiring the observance of the seventh day is plain and positive, nothing less than this should satisfy an inquirer in regard to the claims of the first day.

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The method commonly pursued by the advocates for a change of the Sabbath, is to impress their readers, 1. That the Jewish prophets predicted such a change; 2. That there was a necessity for the change in order to commemorate the completion of the work of redemption, which was finished by the resurrection of Christ; 4. That on this day of the week Christ frequently met with his disciples after his resurrection; 5. That from that time the Apostles and primitive Christians religiously observed the first day in memory of this event, and as a substitute for the Sabbath; 6. That the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended, was the first day of the week; 7. That by "*Lord's day*," (Rev.i,10,) the first day of the week was intended.

As these are the chief arguments advanced in support of the change, they should be fairly considered, and compared with the Word of God. "To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Let us examine them separately.

1. *Did the prophets predict a change of the Sabbath?* - The first and principal text cited in proof of this is Psalm cxviii,24 "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." In order to make any use of this text, the main points in the argument are assumed. First, it is assumed, that Christ's becoming the head of the corner

refers to the day of his resurrection; whereas there is no conclusive evidence that it refers to this rather than to the day of his birth, or of his entrance on his public ministry, or of his final ascension into heaven. Next, it is assumed, that the day spoken of is a natural day of twenty-four hours; whereas this word is often used to designate an indefinite period of time - particularly the gospel era (John viii,56) - and is very probably so used here. Again, it is assumed, that the day mentioned is the first day of the week; whereas there is nothing which designates this rather than any other, allowing that a natural day is referred to. Of course no confidence ought to be placed in conclusions drawn from such premises.

Reference is sometimes made to Isaiah xi,10. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." This "rest" is referred to the Sabbath, and the expression "in that day" is supposed to show that it was to be changed by Christ. But whoever reads the following verses

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will see that the rest here spoken of is not the Sabbath, but that season when the Lord shall have "set up an ensign for the nations, and assembled the outcasts of Israel, and gathered together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Such a rest may well be called "glorious."

There is one prophetic allusion, however, which some have, not without reason, referred to the change of the Sabbath. This is found in Daniel vii,25, where in describing the papal anti-christ, the prophet says, "he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." The "times and laws" here referred to cannot be those of the Mosaic ritual, since they were abolished at the death of Christ, and it could be no sin to suppress them. But if we allow that the decalogue, with its laws and time of rest, was to continue by divine authority, we are compelled to consider this as an allusion to the Sabbath and the moral code with which it is connected. And the history of the change of the Sabbath together with the idolatries and sins of the papal church, show how literally this prophecy has been fulfilled.

2. *Is it necessary to change the Sabbath in order to commemorate the completion of the work of redemption?* It is said the work of redemption is greater than that of creation; hence the necessity for a change of the day of the Sabbath. In reply to this we remark, the Scriptures are entirely silent respecting the comparative greatness of these two works; and while they give us no information on this point, we are not warranted in making our own suppositions the ground of practice, to the neglect of a positive injunction. But supposing the work of redemption to be greater than that of creation, is it therefore necessary to celebrate it on a different day? Both these works were conceived by the same mind and wrought out by the same hand. And since God has seen fit to make the seventh day a time to commemorate the completion of his creative work, why not gather together all his merciful works for us, and celebrate them on one and the same day? The greatness of redemption, therefore, instead of being a reason for a change, is a reason why the Sabbath as originally given should be doubly dear to us.

Again, supposing that a change of the day *is* required in order to celebrate the completion of the work of redemption, what day shall be chosen as most appropriate? Shall it be the day of the crucifixion, or of the resurrection, or of the ascension? If the time of Christ's greatest display of love for mankind and his greatest labor for them should be selected, then we should

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celebrate the day of his crucifixion. This is the day on which, (if on any particular day,) the work of redemption may properly be said to have been completed, according to the testimony of the Savior himself, who said on the cross, "*It is finished.*" This is the day and the event in which the Apostle Paul eminently gloried; and it was to the passion of Christ that he constantly directed the minds of his brethren as the ground of hope and source of encouragement. But if we would have the day of Christ's highest exaltation to be the day for celebrating the completion of his work, then certainly we must fix upon the day of his ascension, rather than of his resurrection. The Scriptures say it was "when he ascended on high" that "he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Then it was that "all power" was given to him "in heaven and in earth." Then it was that God "highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." If then, a day were to be selected as a weekly Sabbath, which was "validly the day of redemption," it seems most proper to select the day of Christ's death, which was the end of his temptation and conflict with the powers of darkness, and the severest test of his obedience; or the day of his final ascension. These things are not said to prove that any sanction is given to those days above others, since only a divine institution will weigh with us; but to show the absurdities into which they are led who pretend to honor the resurrection while neglecting the law of God.

It is evident from such considerations as these, that the argument for a change of the Sabbath from its necessity to commemorate the work of redemption, is not supported by reason or Scripture. It rests alone upon man's authority, and acknowledges a principle which would justify all the innovations and extravagances of Popery.

4. *Christ's meeting with the disciples after the resurrection.* It is common for the advocates of a change of the Sabbath to lay great stress upon Christ's meeting with his disciples, after his resurrection, on the first day of the week. We will examine these different appearances, and see if they afford any proof of the change they are brought to show.

On the day he was first seen after the resurrection, Christ appeared three times to different persons and at different places. His first appearance was to Mary, while she was alone at the sepulchre, John xx,16. There is nothing, however, in the circumstances connected with this meeting which indicate that the least sacredness is to be attached to the time when it occurred.

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His second appearance was to two of his disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus, Luke xxiv,13-35. He accompanied them to that place, and both they and he returned to Jerusalem the same day, making a distance of about fifteen miles. There is no indication that this journey was undertaken for religious

purposes; and as our Lord did not rebuke the disciples, or instruct them to do differently in future, it is reasonable to suppose he approved of their traveling on that day. Of course, then, this circumstance, instead of indicating a regard for the first day, gives us the example of Christ and the Apostles for traveling upon it. His third appearance was in the evening of the same day, when the disciples were together, probably at their own house; for we find the eleven not long after this occupying a chamber in Jerusalem. (Compare John xx,10 with Acts i,13.) There is not the least intimation here that the disciples have been during the day, or were now, together for worship. On the contrary, the absence of Thomas affords presumptive evidence that this was not a meeting generally agreed upon. And the fact that most of them were not satisfied that Jesus had risen, shows the impropriety of representing this meeting as proof of a regard for the day on account of the resurrection. It was important that the earliest information of the resurrection should be afforded for the consolation of the desponding disciples, and for a testimony to the truth of the Saviour's prediction, that he would rise after three days; and there is nothing in these several appearances which seems intended for any other purpose.

The next and only other meeting of Christ with his disciples, which is held to have been on the first day of the week, is mentioned in John xx,26 - "And after eight days again his disciples were within and Thomas with them." Now had this interview been on the following first day it could afford no strength to its claim for religious regard, since it is not noticed as a meeting designed for worship. Mark, (ch.xvi,14,) in noticing one appearance of Christ, says "He appeared unto the eleven as they were at meat," i.e. eating a common meal. There is nothing which gives to the meeting a religious character, or indicates regard for the day. But it is by no means certain that the expression "after eight days" means just a week: Who can say that it was not on the *ninth* day after his first appearance?

Other appearances of the Saviour are recorded, which no one will claim as having occurred on the first day. He appeared to the disciples when they were fishing at the sea of Tiberius, (John xxi,13,) and was seen of them forty days before his ascension,

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(Acts i,3.) Now, if the appearance of Christ on the first day proves it to be the Sabbath, then his appearances on other days prove them to be Sabbaths, since as important business was transacted, and as much mention made of the Sabbath, in one case as in the others. And if this be allowed, then we have the example of Christ and the Apostles for traveling, fishing, or doing any other business on the Sabbath. To such results would consistency drive us in applying the principle that example, without precept, is to regulate our practice. But the claims of the seventh day rest upon no such authority. God enjoined it, and then added to the precept his own example of resting upon it. No argument, therefore, drawn from example without precept can justly weigh against it.

5. *Regard of the Apostles for the first day.* Another argument for the change of the Sabbath, is the supposed apostolic practice of meeting on the first day of the week for public worship and the breaking of bread. It is often confidently affirmed that the keeping of the first day instead of the seventh is sanctioned by apostolic

usage. The proof of this position rests mainly on two passages. Let us examine them.

The first is Acts xx,7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." But is there any thing in this transaction, or the attendant circumstances, which clearly and undeniably proves an apostolic example in favor of a new Sabbath, or of keeping the first day of the week, in any manner, as a substitute for the former institution? Surely there is not. The passage does not so much as prove that the practice of meeting for worship on the first day of the week was then common and general. But if it did, it would not determine the change contended for. There is nothing said in the narrative which characterizes the day of this meeting as a Sabbath. Assembling for public worship is proper on any day of the week, and so is the breaking of bread. The supper was first administered on one of the six working days; and there is nothing in the Scriptures which restricts its subsequent administration to a particular day - not even to the authorized Sabbath. Besides, in this case, the breaking of bread was deferred until after midnight. Of course, according to Jewish reckoning of time, it was attended actually on the second day; and this must have been the case, also, according to the prevailing custom among observers of the first day, commencing the day at midnight. It seems, therefore that the Apostle and his brethren were not very precise in regard

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to its being done on the first day. Let the most be made of this passage, and it lacks a divine designation of the first day as the Christian Sabbath; and hence it is entirely wanting as to the requisite evidence of a change in the sabbatic law. Surely, if there had been such a change, and this, with one more instance of meeting on the first day of the week, were to contain the evidence for all after generations, we should have been informed of the fact. Something would have been said to determine that the first day of the week was regarded as a Sabbath, and that it had taken the place of the seventh. But there is nothing of this. The record is perfectly silent in regard to either point. Besides, it is evident that the original Sabbath continued to be observed throughout the entire period of New Testament history. This is so plain a fact, that no one who gives the subject a candid examination will deny it. This shows the opinion of a new Sabbath - observed, as it must have been, in connection with the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and without a word being said on the subject, or the least objection, stir, query, or excitement whatever being raised - to be perfectly preposterous. Such is the result of this reasoning from a supposed apostolic example, giving the passage its widest possible scope, as implying a common practice of meeting for public worship on the first day of the week. But in reality there is nothing in this text which proves or implies that such a practice was common at that period. For aught appears, it might have been an occasional meeting, appointed merely in consequence of Paul's being about to depart on the morrow. Therefore, to adopt a practice so important as the one in question, upon such vague, uncertain, and inadequate testimony - especially when, in order thereto, we must dispose of a plain and positive command of God respecting the

observance of the seventh day, and of a usage as old as the completion of the creation - is unreasonable in the extreme.

Another passage quoted in proof of an apostolic example of keeping the first day of the week, and, consequently, in support of the opinion that the Sabbath is changed, is 1Cor.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." This passage, like the others, does not imply that the first day was then commonly and generally regarded as a day for public worship. Indeed, it does not necessarily imply a public meeting of any kind. The direction for "every one to lay by him in store," for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem, "on the first day of the week," necessarily amounts to no

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more than an appointment of this day to make up their bounty *at home*, so that it might be sure to be ready when the Apostle should come. But if it be understood to imply any thing more, it is simply that they should bring their donations together publicly on the first day of the week, so as to be prepared in the fullest manner for the Apostle's visit. Therefore, according to this view of the case, it proves no more than an occasional meeting on this day for the purpose of a public contribution for an important object of benevolence. But even if it could be so construed as clearly to imply that it was then a common and general practice to meet for public worship and instruction on this day, it would not thereby be pointed out to us as the Christian Sabbath, and a substitute for the seventh day, seeing that it contains no information to that effect, and that no divine warrant appears on any part of the New Testament records for the supposed change. Meetings for public worship, taking up of collections, and even breaking of bread, do not constitute a Sabbath. *To sabbatize* is to rest from our own secular labors, and keep a season to God. These proofs for a change of the Sabbath, therefore, which are unquestionably the best that can be produced, are utterly deficient, and the argument therefrom, as generally presented, is deceptive, and unworthy of confidence.

6. *Descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.* - Much has been said respecting the descent of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost. It is urged that this was the first day of the week, and that this circumstance was an intimation that God designed to bestow upon the day in its weekly returns a special honor. This opinion, however, is supported only by assumption. The day on which that remarkable event occurred, is known only as the day of Pentecost, an annual feast of the Jews, fifty days from the feast of the Passover, which was held on the fourteenth day of the first month. It might, therefore, occur on the first, or on any other day of the week. This year it probably came on the *fifth* or *seventh* day. But the fallacy of the argument we here oppose, is apparent from the fact, that it is founded in the presumption that they began to count the fifty days from the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, whereas they counted from the annual passover Sabbath. See Lev.xxiii. The descent of the Holy Spirit at this time could not be considered as rendering famous any other day than the Jews' feast of Pentecost. But we have no evidence that God intended by the event to bestow a

special honor upon any day. It was the fulfillment of an important promise that the disciples should be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

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7. "*Lord's Day.*" - An argument for the change of the Sabbath is founded on the supposed application of the title "Lord's day," to the first day of the week. The only passage referred to for the purpose of sustaining it, is Rev.i,10. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." But that the day here called the Lord's day, is the first day of the week, is merely assumed, and hence is not to be considered as proved. It is not in fact *probable* that this is the day referred to. If these words be understood to refer to a natural day, it is more likely to be the seventh day, which God had blessed and sanctified for his special service, than the first day. The seventh day is called by Him "*my holy day,*" and "*the holy of the Lord*" - phrases very similar to the one in this passage. This was also the Sabbath which was made for man, and of which Christ says he is Lord. And since it was observed up to the close of the New Testament history, it would be perfectly natural for John to speak of it as "the Lord's day." Further, there is no evidence that the first day of the week was denominated the Lord's day, at so early a period. Only one writer mentions the expression till towards the close of the second century; and the reputed author of this passage, when speaking, in his Gospel, (which was written some years later than the Apocalypse,) of the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week, never intimates that the day should be called by any other name. The learned Morer, though an advocate for the first day, in mentioning the different days to which this phrase may be applied, acknowledges the entire uncertainty as to what day is intended, and says, "It is very likely that the more solemn and public use of the words was not observed until about the time of Sylvester II., when, by Constantine's command, it became an injunction." It is evident, therefore, that this passage cannot justly be used as proof that the Sabbath was transferred to the first day of the week.

We have now examined the texts commonly adduced to prove a change of the original Sabbath, and have found them utterly insufficient and deceptive. Hence the claims of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, without alteration, are fully sustained. The advocates for the first day are aware that if an abrogation or change of the original Sabbath law cannot be made out, the seventh day is still the true Sabbath. Dr. Dwight, for instance, makes the following admission: "If we cannot find in the Scriptures plain and ample proof of the abrogation of the original day, or the substitution of a new one, the seventh day undoubtedly remains in full force and obligation, and is now to be celebrated by all the race of Adam." [*From Sab. Vindicator.*]

The Sabbath: Authority for the Change of the Day

It being clear from the Scriptures, that the seventh day was instituted by divine authority for a weekly Sabbath, and religiously regarded throughout the times of the Old Testament, those who now relinquish its observance, and keep the first day of the week, take the ground that the Sabbath was either abrogated and a new institution introduced in its room, or that the time of its observance

was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. To be consistent with themselves, therefore, they are bound to evince one or the other of these positions. The burden of proof evidently lies on their part. For unless it can be shown, that the fourth commandment, which requires the sanctification of the seventh day, has been abolished, or amended by the substitution of the first for the seventh day of the week, it is clear that the original appointment remains obligatory and is now binding on the entire human family. And to substantiate either of these points, the proof must be clear and decisive. It will not do to rest upon doubtful deductions. We have an unquestionable right to demand that divine warrant, in either case, which pertained to the institution as originally delivered.

We will therefore first examine the proofs adduced in favor of the abrogation of the former weekly Sabbath and the introduction of a new institution.

To sustain this position, the broad ground is taken by some, that the Decalogue itself, in which the law of the Sabbath is contained, was abrogated; and that, under the new dispensation, no part of it is binding but what is newly enjoined or expressly recognized, either by Christ or his Apostles.

The perpetual obligation of the Decalogue implies, of course, the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath as enjoined in the fourth commandment. But if *that* was abrogated, the Sabbath which it enjoined was also abrogated; and, consequently, it ceases to be binding, unless renewed under the new economy. What, then, is the proof here relied upon? One of the principal passages in which this proof is supposed to be contained is 2Cor.iii,7,8,13. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? . . . And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." It is argued from this passage, that the clauses "which

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glory was to be done away," and "to the end of that which is abolished," refer to the whole law, *moral* as well as *ritual*, because mention is made of "that which was written and engraven in stones," which is an evident allusion to the Decalogue. But, on careful examination, it will be found that "that which was to be done away," was not the *Decalogue itself*, but "the *ministration* of it," which was then appointed - the same being emblematically illustrated by the glory of Moses' countenance, which was merely temporary. This clause refers expressly to the glory of his countenance, and not to the glory of the law itself. So also the clause "that which is abolished," does not refer to the Decalogue, but to the ministration of Moses, including the appended rights and usages, the priesthood and its sacrifices, which were useful merely for the time being. It cannot be supposed that the Decalogue was abolished, without expressly contradicting Christ's testimony, Matt.v,17-19, as well as many other representations of the Scriptures. The abolishment spoken of, therefore, evidently respected no other than what the Apostle calls in another place "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," inclusive of the entire ministration of Moses. There is

unquestionably a reference in this chapter to the Decalogue, but not as abolished. It was merely the ministration of it, or the then instituted manner of teaching, illustrating, and enforcing it, which was abolished, to be succeeded by a new ministration of the same law by the Spirit. For it is written, "I will put my law" - (the very law of the ten commandments) - "in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Again, "We are not without law to God, but under the law of Christ." What law but the Decalogue is here referred to? Evidently none. For surely we are not under the Mosaic ritual. Again, "Do we make void the law through faith? . . . Yea, we establish the law." The same, no doubt, which was contained in the Decalogue. Hence, the Apostle James says, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." Here the title "the royal law," is given by way of eminence to the Decalogue; and its permanent obligation is manifestly recognized; for the precept alluded to is a summary of the last six commandments of this code, and the allusion is so made as to imply the continued obligation of the first four, which are summed up in supreme love to God. Again, the Apostle John testifies, "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And again, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." In

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both these passages reference is evidently had to the precepts of the Decalogue, as the essential and permanent rule of obedience for Christians. The doing away or abolishment, therefore, spoken of in the above passage, cannot refer to the Decalogue or the moral law *itself*, but to the Mosaic dispensation or ritual.

Another of the proofs alleged for the abrogation of the Decalogue, and consequently of the Sabbath, is Colossians ii, 14-17. "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

By "the hand-writing of ordinances," is most evidently meant the ceremonial law - not the Decalogue, or the moral law. This is never characterized as "the hand-writing of ordinances." Therefore, the "blotting out," "taking away," and "nailing to the cross," spoken of, have no reference to this law, but to the Mosaic ritual. This is particularly distinguished from the Decalogue, and fitly described as "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." It was this, and this only, which was "blotted out" and "nailed to the cross." As, therefore, the reference made by the Apostle is expressly to this law, it follows, by a fair inference, that "the sabbath days" alluded to, or, strictly rendered "sabbaths," are those which were contained in this law, or among these "ordinances," and do not include the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. There were, besides the weekly Sabbath, various other sabbaths appointed, which belonged to that ritual, and not to the Decalogue. Accordingly, these were expressly included in "the hand-writing of ordinances," and like the rest were "a shadow of things to come," and ceased to

be obligatory at the death of Christ. There is evidently no authority in this passage for including any sabbaths but what properly belonged to the Mosaic ritual. This view of the matter is corroborated by a more literal rendering of the 17th verse, viz: "Let no one therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in a part or division of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths." The sabbaths alluded to are obviously those which are found in the same place with meats and drinks, festivals and new moons, and which were of the same general character. The weekly Sabbath, therefore, is not affected at all by their abrogation, but remains in full force, as does every other precept of the Decalogue.

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We find the same distinction as to the law which was abolished, in Ephesians ii,14,15. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Here the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, called "the enmity," is expressly defined, as before, to be "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." This, and this only, therefore, was abolished, leaving the Decalogue, or the moral law, in its original character and obligation. This is the language of the whole Bible. There is no proof in any of these passages, that the law of the ten commandments was abolished, or that the Sabbath enjoined therein was done away.

Nor is there such proof in Romans xiv,5,6. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks: and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." This passage is frequently adduced as proof that the obligation to keep the ancient Sabbath has ceased, and that under the Gospel dispensation there is no divinely authorized distinction in the days of the week; that there is no one constituted *holy* in distinction from the *rest*; and consequently that every one is left at his own liberty to keep a Sabbath or not. It will be easily perceived, that if this argument has any weight in reference to the *seventh* day as the Sabbath, it operates equally against the obligation to keep the *first* day, either as a substitute for the seventh, or as a memorial of the resurrection, seeing it places all distinctions whatever as to days on the same ground with the confessedly obsolete rites of the Mosaic ritual. According to this view of the passage, we have under the Gospel dispensation *no Sabbath at all* - not so much as an *authorized* memorial of the resurrection. He who claims the least authority for the observance of the *first* day of the week for *any* purpose, takes a course which completely overthrows the argument based upon this passage. But, in reality, this text has nothing more to do with the subject before us, than either of those which have been examined. It respects merely the distinctions which formerly existed in regard to the six working days of the week - some of them being appointed in the Mosaic ritual as sabbaths, others as days of atonement and purification, and others as festivals. Some

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of the early Christians thought these distinctions still binding, as also the distinctions in regard to meats and drinks; others thought they were not. Hence the exhortation which is subjoined to mutual forbearance. That the distinctions referred to as to days, were those noted in the Mosaic ritual, and did not include the one contained in the fourth commandment, is manifest from the whole scope of the chapter. There is particular reference made to one's freely eating all things, while another would eat only herbs; and accordingly the following rule, to be respectively observed, is laid down: "Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him." This quotation clearly evinces that the Apostle was treating of *ritual* distinctions, and not of *that* distinction of days which was constituted by the ancient law of the Sabbath.

Again, the abrogation of the Decalogue is supposed to be taught in Romans vii,4,5,6. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." But if the term law here includes the *moral* as well as the *ceremonial* law, it is manifest that believers are not said to be delivered from it, considered in any other light than as *a covenant of works*. Certainly they are not delivered from it as *a rule of obedience*. To suppose this, is inconsistent with Christ's sermon on the mount, before alluded to, and many other decisive proofs of the perpetual obligation of the Decalogue. It is probable the Apostle had special reference to the deliverance of believers from the *curse* of the moral law. This is reasonably inferred from the clause, "that being dead wherein we were held." If any thing more pertaining to this law be intended, it must be its original character when given to Adam as a covenant of works or of life. For surely we are not and cannot be delivered from it as a rule of obedience, so long as God is what he is, and we are what we are. Seeing that as long as the relation constituted by his character as Supreme Ruler, and by ours as moral subjects, exists, we shall be bound to love him supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves, which is the fulfilling of this law. And to suppose that this law, as a rule of obedience, was actually annulled, and that those precepts only

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are now to be considered obligatory, which are enacted or published anew under the Gospel, is to suppose that God, at a certain time, actually rescinded the rule requiring supreme love to him, and to our neighbor as ourselves, which is palpably inconsistent, and contrary both to the current of Scripture and the nature of things. It would be maintaining that to be changed which is manifestly unchangeable. It would imply that, for the time being, the obligation recognized by the law did not exist; that the tie by which God and moral beings are united, was sundered, not by rebellion on the part of his subjects, but by his own act of abrogation. Can this be admitted?

But if it *were* admissible, and if no part of this law is binding on Christians but what is newly enacted or particularly recognized under the Gospel dispensation, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment could not in this way be set aside; because its continued obligation is plainly taught in the New Testament. It is altogether a mistake, that we have no express recognition of this precept under the Christian dispensation. It is plainly recognized by the Saviour in Matt.v,17-19, where he says, that he "came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill;" that "one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;" and that "whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." If any commandment of this law is binding, the fourth is binding of course, even if it should be called the least. It is also recognized in the following declaration of Christ, Mark ii,27 - "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The word *man* is here obviously used for the entire race - not for a part - not for the Jews in distinction from the Gentiles - not for those who lived under the Old Testament dispensation, or till the time of Christ's death; but for man in his protracted existence during all future periods of time, i.e. *for mankind in general*. This is the plain import of the declaration. And if we render the original with the article, it is still more evident that the entire race is included. "The Sabbath was made for *the man*," i.e. for Adam, the original parent of man, including, of course, his posterity. But, according to either rendering, the entire human race is manifestly included in the term. The Sabbath, then, was as truly made for the Gentiles as for the Jews; and for those who should live after the crucifixion, as for those who lived before; which is an explicit recognition of its perpetual obligation.

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The same recognition also appears from its continued observance under the ministry of the Apostles, and there being not the least hint or stir in reference to its abrogation, or to the substitution of another day in its room. The weekly Sabbath is frequently mentioned in the Apostolic records, as a part of practical duty, and it was unquestionably the seventh day. Thus we have the continued obligation of the Sabbath sanctioned by Apostolic example. If, therefore, a new edition, or an express recognition of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment be considered necessary, to bind the consciences of men under the new dispensation, the foregoing considerations will show that we have such an edition or recognition, as truly as we have of the other precepts of the Decalogue. So that nothing is gained in regard to setting aside the seventh day of the week, by attempting to show the abrogation of the Decalogue. If those precepts of that law which require that we should have no other gods before the Lord - that we should not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal - are newly enjoined or expressly recognized under the present dispensation, and, consequently, universally binding; the same is true of the fourth commandment, which requires the keeping of the seventh day.

Again, an attempt is made to prove the abrogation of the original Sabbath, by showing that the entire Decalogue was peculiar to the Jewish nation, constituting a national covenant, which, at the coming of Christ, was annulled, and a new

covenant introduced. But admitting that it was delivered immediately to them, in the form of a national covenant, this does not in the least imply that it was not equally binding, as a rule of obedience, upon other portions of the human family. We might as well argue that the New Testament belonged merely to the primitive Christians, because it was delivered directly to them, and constituted the rule of their conduct and the basis of their hopes. Yea, we might as well suppose that no nation except the Jews were bound not to have any other gods before the Lord, not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false witness, as to suppose that the Decalogue was purely of a national character, and binding merely on that people during their continuance as a national church. And, as the Decalogue was not merely national *as a whole*, so there was nothing national in the fourth commandment. It belonged, equally with the other nine, to the entire family of man, inasmuch as the essential reasons of all and of either of the commandments, were of universal obligation.

Again, that the original Sabbath was peculiar to the Jews, and consequently abrogated by the introduction of the new dispensation,

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is argued from its being specially urged upon them by the consideration of their deliverance from Egypt. But this argument is of no force, because the same reason is urged in the preface to the entire Decalogue.

For the same purpose, also, an argument is founded upon the fact that the fourth commandment was enforced with a deadly penalty. But this argument also fails; because a similar penalty was annexed to the breach of the other precepts of this law. The truth of the case is, that these penalties belonged not to the Decalogue itself as first promulgated, any more than they belong to it now under the milder dispensation of the Gospel. They were added in the Mosaic ritual, and constituted a part of the political arrangements for the time being. Their abrogation, therefore, affects not the original law. Though there be no civil power now given to the church to enforce obedience to this precept by temporal punishments, as formerly, the sacredness and obligation of the institution are not thereby at all affected. The sin of disobedience will be visited in God's own time.

Again, some have inferred the abrogation of the former Sabbath, or at least its change, from our Lord's vindication of the act of the disciples, in plucking the ears of corn, and rubbing them in their hands, as they passed through the corn-fields on the Sabbath day, and from his saying, that "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath day," Mark ii,23-28. But there is evidently nothing in this narrative, or in this declaration, to justify such an inference. It must be admitted on all hands, that the fourth commandment was obligatory, as originally given, till the death of Christ, if no further; and therefore Christ, who "was made under the law," was bound to obey it in its original strictness. Admitting that he possessed the right, in a given instance, to intermit its obligation, it is not consistent to maintain that he did it; because he came to render perfect and universal obedience. Hence he affirmed that one jot or one tittle should in no wise pass from the law "till all be fulfilled." His whole life was a perfect comment on the requirements of the law. Had he failed in the least particular, he would have been inadequate to the great purposes of our salvation. It is obvious, therefore, that the transaction

alluded to was not, under the circumstances, a breach of the fourth commandment, but in perfect accordance with its prescriptions - the labor implied by the act of the disciples being a matter of urgent necessity. "It is lawful," said he, "to do well on the Sabbath day." Neither does the declaration, that "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath day," imply that he abrogated or changed it, but rather that he

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was bound and engaged to protect it as a divine institution, and to enforce an enlightened and strict obedience to its requirements.

The foregoing being the principal proofs adduced for the abrogation of the Decalogue, and the original Sabbath, it is evident that this view of the subject cannot be sustained. It is not sanctioned by any plain scriptural evidence. It is, therefore, palpably absurd to rest so important a matter upon so slender a basis. It is laying violent hands on a code of moral and immutable precepts, given by God, and promulgated under peculiar and terrible signs of purity and majesty, to vindicate a practice which was introduced long after the commencement of the Christian era. [*From Sabbath Tract No. 3.*]

What day of the week was observed by the Apostles and Primitive Christians?

The practice of the Apostles and early Christians is justly admitted to have an influence in determining how we should understand and discharge our religious duties. For this reason, the strongest efforts are made to show that they regarded the first day of the week as the Sabbath. But the Scriptures afford no evidence of this. On the contrary, there is the fullest proof that they religiously observed the seventh day - the only day which is called Sabbath in the New Testament. In confirmation of this statement, we notice the distinction that is constantly made in the writings of the Apostles between the Sabbath and the first day of the week. The seventh day is uniformly called the Sabbath, and the first day is mentioned only as such. Had the writers of the New Testament adopted any other day for the Sabbath than the one commonly called by that name, their manner of speaking of these days is both mysterious and deceptive, as it is directly calculated to mislead us respecting a religious duty. No person who regards the first day for the Christian Sabbath, will apply this name to the seventh day; neither will one observing the seventh day, style the first day of the week the Sabbath. The reason is obvious. Such a course would be contrary to his understanding of truth, and it would lead others to misunderstand his sentiments. For this reason the Apostles would not do it.

In addition to this custom of calling the seventh day the Sabbath, we find it was the custom of those early Christians to assemble for divine worship on the Sabbath day. The manner in which the Sabbath and the first day following our Lord's crucifixion

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were observed, sufficiently proves what the sentiments and practice of the disciples were at that time. It is said of them, that "they rested the Sabbath day

according to the commandment," and on the first day they "traveled and went into the country." In the 13th chapter of Acts, we are told that Paul and his company went to a place of worship in Antioch on the Sabbath day; and we have a sketch of the sermon preached by Paul on that occasion. By the request of his Gentile hearers, he preached the ext Sabbath, when nearly the whole city came to hear him. In Philippi, Paul and his company, on the Sabbath, resorted to the river side where prayer was wont to be made. At this time Lydia was converted and baptized. In the 18th chapter of Acts, it is said of Paul, who was associated with certain disciples in Corinth, that "he reasoned in the synagogues every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and Greeks;" and this practice he continued in their city a year and a half. At Ephesus, Paul went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews, which is also admitted to have been on the Sabbath day. In Thessalonica, there was a synagogue of the Jews, and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures; Acts xvii,2. - These quotations are sufficient to show that the Apostles and primitive Christians observed the ancient Sabbath. In Acts xxviii,17, Paul, in reply to the slanderous reports of his enemies, declares that he had committed nothing against the customs of the fathers. Now, was it the custom of the fathers to keep the seventh day for the Sabbath? And was it contrary to their custom to keep the first day? If so, then Paul kept the seventh day of the week, and not the first, for the Sabbath. In this thing there was a perfect agreement among all the Christians of the apostolic churches. The Jews, who were ever ready to accuse them, and render them despicable in the eyes of their nation, never upbraided them with a violation of the weekly Sabbath, which with them was a crime worthy of death. These facts are sufficient to prove that the Apostles and their associate Christians religiously observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

What was the Practice of Christians after the Apostles?

With a consistent Christian, the testimony and practice of what are called the Christian Fathers, have not authority sufficient to direct him either in devotion or in duty, when their testimony is not supported by the Scriptures. It has, however, been

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generally alleged, by the advocates of the first day of the week that the united testimony of the earliest Christian writers prove that they observed this day as the Christian Sabbath, to the exclusion of the seventh day. This is the more frequently admitted, on account of so few possessing the means of investigating the subject for themselves, and from the confidence had in the integrity of those who have asserted it. But, for the honor of Christianity, it is to be hoped that this declaration is made more for want of information and consideration than from a thorough knowledge and recollection of what the Fathers have written on the subject. To aid the reader in forming or correcting his opinion on this subject agreeably to facts, we briefly notice the grounds on which the advocates of the first day have erred, in stating that those early Christians kept this day as the

Sabbath. As vital piety declined in the church, after the days of the Apostles, outward ceremonies and unscriptural observances were made to supply its place; and under a pretence of doing honor to Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and Martyrs, a multitude of days were eventually introduced to religious notice, and urged upon the Christians by their teachers. Among others were Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, etc. The first day of the week, or Sunday, on which it was supposed Christ rose from the dead, was urged upon them as a festival in honor of the resurrection, and as such only it appears to have been used for a long time; and it appears not to have been originally intended to supersede the religious regard universally paid by Christians to the weekly Sabbath. Agreeably to this view of the subject, the learned *Morer*, though an advocate for the first day, states that in *St. Jerome's* time, who was born as late as A. D. 544, the Christians, after divine worship on the Lord's day, followed their daily employment; and *St. Jerome* represents *Paula*, a devout lady, with the virgins and widows attending her, after coming home from worship on the Lord's day, as sitting down to their daily tasks, which consisted in making garments for themselves and others. *Chrysostom*, *Gregory*, *Augustine*, and *Jerome*, not only connived at but recommended and enjoined this labor upon the Lord's day, from the consideration that only a small part of the day was occupied in divine worship. The following authorities will shed more light on the subject.

Athanasius, A. D. 340, says - "We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism, but only to worship Christ the Lord of the Sabbath.

Socrates, an ecclesiastical historian, A. D. 412, says, "Touching

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the communion there are sundry observations and customs, for almost all the churches throughout the whole world do celebrate and receive the holy mysteries every Sabbath; yet the Egyptians adjoining Alexandria, together with the inhabitants of Thebes, of a tradition, do celebrate the communion on Sunday." "When the festival meeting throughout every week was come, I mean the Saturday and the Sunday upon which the Christians are wont to meet solemnly in the church," etc.

Eusebius, A. D. 325, as quoted by Dr. Chambers, states that in his time "the Sabbath was observed no less than Sunday."

Gregory expostulates thus - "With what eyes can you behold the Lord's day, when you despise the Sabbath? Do you not perceive that they are sisters, and that in slighting one you affront the other?"

Sozomen says - "Most of the churches carefully observed the Sabbath."

Grotius, whose learning and candor eminently qualified him for a witness in this case, observes - "The Christians kept the holy Sabbath, and had their assemblies on that day, in which the law was read to them, which custom remained to the time of the council of Laodicea, about A. D. 355, who then thought meet that the gospel should also be read on that day. These things considered, refute those who pretend that the first day of the week, or Lord's day, is substituted in the room of the Sabbath."

M. de la Roque, a French Protestant - "It evidently appears, that before any change was introduced, the church religiously observed the Sabbath for many ages; we of consequence are obliged to keep it."

The authors here quoted are resorted to by our opponents, whenever they have occasion for their testimony, and we have never heard their veracity questioned. From their statements it is very evident, that the introduction of the first day of the week to religious notice was the effect of superstition; that it was at first but partially observed, and that by but few as a festival; afterwards by more; and finally by the greater part of professing Christians, who still observed the seventh day as the Sabbath. It was by ecclesiastical councils and imperial decrees, that it finally superseded the Sabbath as a national and church holy day in most Christian countries. - *Sab. Vindicator*.

-----The reader will observe that some of the historical facts found on this, and the preceding page, are repeated in the four following pages. In selecting this matter from different authors, we have found it difficult to avoid some repetition. W.

History of the Sabbath. The Sabbath from the Time of Constantine to the Reformation

WE here see how the matter stood until the commencement of Constantine's career. The Sabbath was generally observed, while Lord's day was regarded as a festival of no greater importance or authority than Good Friday or Holy Thursday. No text of Scripture, or edict of emperor, or decree of council, could be produced in its favor. But from this time forth may be found emperors and councils combining to give importance to the Lord's day and to oppose the Sabbath.

An important change was undoubtedly produced upon the regard paid to the first day, soon after the accession of *Constantine*, the first Christian emperor, in the early part of the fourth century. When he became master of Rome, he soon gave himself up to the guidance of the Christian clergy. "He built places of public worship. He encouraged the meeting of synods and bishops - honored them with his presence, and employed himself continually in aggrandizing the church. He was scrupulously attentive to the religious rites and ceremonies which were prescribed to him by the clergy. He fasted, observed the feasts in commemoration of the martyrs, and devoutly watched the whole night on the vigils of the saints,"^{i 1} and showed great anxiety for uniformity in the doctrines and observances of religion in the church. He was, therefore, exactly suited to the wishes of the Roman bishop and clergy, in establishing, by his imperial authority, what they had no Scripture to support, and what their influence had hitherto been unable to effect, viz. a uniformity in the celebration of Easter and the first day. In 321, *Constantine* first published his edicts enjoining upon his subjects these superstitious celebrations which he had been taught to perform.

Eusebius says, ^{ii 2} "He appointed as a suitable time for prayers the dominical day, which then was an especial day, and now is undoubtedly the very first. His body guard observed the day, and offered in it prayers written by the Emperor.

The happy prince endeavored to persuade all to do this, and by degrees to lead all to the worship of God; wherefore he determined that those obeying Roman power should abstain from every work upon the days named after the Saviour, that they should venerate also the day before the Sabbath, in memory, as seems to me, of the events occurring in those days to our common Saviour."

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He says again, "An edict also, by the will and pleasure of the emperor, was transmitted to the Prefects of the provinces, that they *thenceforth* should venerate the dominical day; that they should honor the days consecrated to the Martyrs, and should celebrate the solemnities of the festivals in the churches, all of which was done according to the will of the emperor." And as quoted by *Lucius*, he says, that he admonished his subjects likewise that those days which were *Sabbaths* should be honored or worshipped.

Sozomen says, ⁱⁱⁱ 1 "He (*Constantine*) also made a law that on the dominical day, which the Hebrews call the first day of the week, the Greeks the day of the Sun, and also on the day of Venus, (i.e. Friday,) judgments should not be given, or other business transacted, but that all should worship God with prayer and supplications, and venerate the dominical day, as in it Christ rose from the dead; but the day of Venus, as the day in which he was fixed to the cross."

Dr. Chambers says, ^{iv} 2 "It was Constantine the Great who first made a law for the observance of Sunday, and who, according to Eusebius, appointed that it should be regularly celebrated throughout the Roman Empire. Before him, and even in his time, they observed the Jewish Sabbath as well as Sunday; both to satisfy the law of Moses, and to imitate the Apostles, who used to meet together on the first day." He adds, "Indeed, some are of opinion that the Lord's day mentioned in the Apocalypse, is our Sunday; which they will have to have been so early instituted." "By Constantine's laws, made in 321, it was decreed that for the future the Sunday should be kept a day of rest in all cities and towns; but he allowed the country people to follow their work. In 538, the Council of Orleans prohibited this country labor."

To give the more solemnity to the first day of the week, *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*. ^v 3

It is not to be doubted, that the laws of *Constantine* made the first day more conspicuous throughout the empire, as all public business was forbidden upon it. They changed its character from a special day, in which, as a weekly festival, all kinds of business and labor were performed in city and country, to be, as *Eusebius* says, *the very first*. This imperial favor for the first

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day was oppressive to all who conscientiously regarded the Sabbath from respect to the fourth commandment, in obedience to which the seventh day had always been observed; and if it had produced a general abandonment of its observation, it would not have been very surprising, considering the influence of court example and the general ignorance and darkness of the age. Yet this does not appear to have been the case. The Sabbath was still extensively observed; and to counteract it the Council of *Laodicea*, about A. D. 350, passed a decree

saying, "It is not proper for Christians to Judaize and to cease from labor on the Sabbath, but they ought to work on this day, and put especial honor upon the Lord's day, as Christians. If any be found Judaizing let him be anathematized."

Yet this did not produce any material change, for *Socrates*, a writer of the fifth century, who resided at Constantinople, makes the following remarks upon the celebration of the Sabbath, at the time he wrote, A. D. 440. He says, "There are various customs concerning assembling; for though all the churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath day, yet the Alexandrians and the Romans, from an ancient tradition, refuse to do this; but the Egyptians who are in the neighborhood of Alexandria, and those inhabiting Thebeis, indeed have assemblies on the Sabbath, but do not participate in the mysteries, as is the custom of the Christians. At Caesarea, Cappadocia, and in Cyprus, on the Sabbath and dominical day, at twilight, with lighted lamps, the Presbyters and Bishops interpret the Scriptures. At Rome they fast every Sabbath."^{vi} 1

This account of the manner of celebrating the Sabbath in the fifth century, is corroborated by *Sozomen*.^{vii} 2 He says, "At Constantinople, and almost among all, the Christians assemble upon the Sabbath, and also upon the first day of the week, excepting Rome and Alexandria; that the ecclesiastical assemblies at Rome were not upon the Sabbath, as in almost all other churches of the rest of the world; and that in many cities and villages in Egypt, they used to commune in the evening of the Sabbath, on which day there were public assemblies."

In regard to fasting on the Sabbath at Rome, here referred to, it ought to be said, that from the earliest times to the fourth century, the practice had been to observe the Sabbath as a holiday. But the Church of Rome, in its opposition to the Jews, made it a fast day, that the separation might be marked and strong. In the eastern churches they never fasted upon the Sabbath, excepting

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one Sabbath in the year, which was the day before the Passover. But in the western churches they celebrated a fast every week. It was in reference to this that *Ambrose* said, "When I come to Rome, I fast upon the Sabbath; when I am here, I do not fast." *Augustine* also said concerning this, "If they say it is sinful to fast on the Sabbath, then they would condemn the Roman Church, and many places near to and far from it. And if they should think it a sin not to fast on the Sabbath, then they would blame many eastern churches, and the far greater part of the world." This Sabbath fasting was opposed by the eastern church; and in the sixth general Council held at Constantinople, it was commanded that the Sabbath and dominical day be kept as festivals, and that no one fast or mourn upon them. The practice of fasting, therefore, was chiefly in the western churches, about Rome.

It is perhaps difficult to determine exactly the relative importance attached to the *seventh* and *first* day of the week, at this time. Sufficient may be found, however, to assure us, that the Sabbath was observed, and that no one regarded Sunday as having taken its place. This is shown by the provision of the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 365, that the Gospels should be read on that day. It is shown by the action of a Council in 517, (mentioned in *Robinson's History of Baptism*.)

which regulated and enforced the observance of the Sabbath. It is shown by the exhortation of *Gregory of Nyssa*, "How can you look upon the Lord's day, if you neglect the Sabbath? Do you not know that they are sisters, and that in despising the one you affront the other?" And as sisters we find them hand in hand in the Ecclesiastical Canons. Penalties were inflicted by the councils both of Laodicea and Trull, on clergymen who did not observe both days as festivals.

How the first day of the week, or Lord's day, was observed in the early part of the fifth century, we may learn from the words of *St. Jerome*. In a funeral oration for the Lady *Paula*, he says: "She, with all her virgins and widows who lived at Bethlehem in a cloister with her, upon the Lord's day, repaired duly to the church, or house of God, which was nigh to her cell; and after her return from thence to her own lodgings, she herself and all her company *fell to work*, and every one performed their task, which was the making of clothes and garments for themselves and for others, as they were appointed."

St. Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople, "recommended to his audience, after impressing upon themselves and their

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families what they had heard on the Lord's day, to return to their daily employments." ^{viii}1

Dr. Francis White, Lord Bishop of Ely, speaking of this matter, says, "The Catholic Church for more than six hundred years after Christ, permitted labor, and gave license to many Christian people to work upon the Lord's Day at such hours as they were not commanded to be present at the public service by the precepts of the church."

In the sixth century efforts were made to prevent this labor. The following promulgation of a synod held by command of King *Junthran*, of Burgundy, will show the condition of things, and the means used to improve them: "We see the Christian people, in an unadvised manner, deliver to contempt the Dominical day, and, as in other days, indulge in continual labor." Therefore they determined to teach the people subject to them, to keep the dominical day, which, if not observed by the lawyer, he should irreparably lose his cause, but if a countryman or servant did not keep it, he should be beaten with heavier blows of cudgels. ^{ix}2 The council of Orleans, held 538, prohibited the country labor on Sunday, which Constantine, by his laws, permitted. This council also declared, "that to hold it unlawful to travel with horses, cattle and carriages, to prepare food, or to do anything necessary to the cleanliness and decency of houses or persons, savors more of Judaism than Christianity." ^x3 In another council held at Narbonne in France, in the seventh century, they also forbid this country work. ^{xii}4

Early in the 7th century, in the time of *Pope Gregory I.*, the subject of the Sabbath attracted considerable attention. There was one class of persons who declared, "that it was not lawful to do any manner of work upon the Saturday, or the old Sabbath; another that no man ought to bathe himself on the Lord's day, or their new Sabbath." ^{xii}5 Against both of these doctrines *Pope Gregory* wrote a letter to the Roman citizens. *Baronius*, in his *Councils*, says, "This year (603) at Rome, St. Gregory, the Pope, corrected that error which some preached, by Jewish superstition, or the Grecian custom, that it was a duty to worship on the

Sabbath, as likewise upon the dominical days; and he calls such preachers the preachers of Antichrist." Nearly the same doctrine was preached again in the time of *Gregory VII.*, A. D. 1074, about five hundred years after what we are now speaking of. This is sufficient to show that the Sabbath was

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kept until those times of decline which introduced so many errors in faith and practice. Indeed, it is sufficient to show, that wherever the subject has been under discussion, the Sabbath has found its advocates both in *theory* and in *practice*.

According to *Lucius, Pope Urban II.*, in the eleventh century, dedicated the Sabbath to the Virgin Mary, with a Mass. ^{xiii} 1 *Binius* says, "*Pope Innocent I.*, constituted a fast on the Sabbath day, which seems to be the first constitution of that fast; but dedicating the Sabbath to the Virgin Mary was by *Urban II.* in the latter part of the eleventh century." ^{xiv} 2 About this time we find *Esychius* teaching the doctrine that the precept for the observance of the Sabbath is not one of the commandments, because it is not at all times to be observed according to the letter; and *Thomas Aquinas*, another Romish ecclesiastic, saying, "that it seems to be inconvenient that the precept for observing the Sabbath should be put among the precepts of the Decalogue, if it do not at all belong to it; that the precept, '*Thou shalt not make a graven image*,' and the precept for *observing the Sabbath*, are ceremonial."

The observance of the first day was not so early in England and in Scotland as in most other parts of the Roman Empire. According to *Heylyn*, there were Christian societies established in Scotland as early as A. D. 435; and it is supposed that the gospel was preached in England in the first century by St. Paul. For many ages after Christianity was received in these kingdoms, they paid no respect to the first day. *Binius*, a Catholic writer, in the second volume of his works, gives some account of the bringing into use the Dominical day [Sunday] in Scotland, as late as A. D. 1203. "This year," he says, "a council was held in Scotland concerning the introduction of the Lord's day, which council was held in 1203, in the time of *Pope Innocent III.*," and quotes as his authority, *Roger Horeden, Matth. Paris, and Lucius' Eccl. Hist.* He says, "By this council it was enacted that it should be holy time from the twelfth hour on Saturday noon until Monday."

Boethus (de Scottis, p. 344) says, "In A. D. 1203, *William*, king of *Scotland*, called a council of the principal of his kingdom, by which it was decreed, that Saturday, from the twelfth hour at noon, should be holy; that they should do no profane work, and this they should observe until Monday."

Binius says that in A. D. 1201, *Eustachius*, Abbot of Flay, came to England, and therein preached from city to city, and from place to place. He prohibited using markets on Dominical

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days; for he said that this command underwritten concerning the observation of the Dominical day, came from heaven. The history of this singular epistle, entitled *A holy command of the Dominical day*, the pious Abbot stated to be this: "It came from Heaven to Jerusalem, and was found on St. Simon's tomb in Golgotha. And

the Lord commanded this epistle, which for three days and three nights men looked upon, and falling to the earth, prayed for God's mercy. And after the third hour, the patriarch stood up; and *Akarias* the archbishop stretched out his mitre, and they took the holy epistle of God and found it thus written."

[We will give some extracts from this epistle, partly as a matter of curiosity, and partly to show the credulity of our ancestors, and by what means they were awed into what was to them a new religious observation.]

"I, the Lord, who commanded you that ye should observe the Dominical day, and ye have not kept it, and ye have not repented of your sins, as I said by my gospel, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away; I have caused repentance unto life to be preached unto you, and ye have not believed; I sent pagans against you, who shed your blood, yet ye believed not; and because ye kept not the Dominical day, for a few days ye had famine; but I soon gave you plenty, and afterwards ye did worse: I will again, that none from the ninth hour of the Sabbath until the rising of the sun on Monday, do work any thing unless what is good, which if any do, let him amend by repentance; and if ye be not obedient to this command, Amen, I say unto you, and I swear unto you by my seat, and throne, and cherubim, who keep my holy seat, because I will not change any thing by another epistle; but I will open the heavens, and for rain I will rain upon you stones and logs of wood, and hot water by night, and none may be able to prevent, but that I may destroy all wicked men. This I say unto you, ye shall die the death, because of the Dominical holy day, and other festivals of my saints which ye have not kept. I will send unto you beasts having the heads of lions, the hair of woman, and tails of camels; and they shall be so hunger-starved that they shall devour your flesh, and ye shall desire to flee to the sepulchres of the dead and hide you for fear of the beasts; and I will take away the light of the sun from your eyes; and I will send upon you darkness, that without seeing, ye may kill one another; and I will take away my face from you, and will not show you mercy; for I will burn your bodies and hearts of all who keep not the Dominical holy day. Hear my voice, lest ye

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perish in the land because of the Dominical holy day. Now know ye, that ye are safe by the prayers of my most holy mother Mary, and of my holy angels who daily pray for you. I gave you the law from Mount Sinai, which ye have not kept. For you I was born into the world, and my festivals ye have not known; the Dominical day of my resurrection ye have not kept; I swear to you by my right hand, unless ye keep the Dominical day and the festivals of my saints, I will send pagans to kill you."

Provided with this new command from heaven, "*Eustachius* preached in various parts of England against the transgression of the Dominical day, and other festivals; and gave the people absolution upon condition that they hereafter reverence the Dominical day, and the festivals of the saints." The time appointed as holy, was from the ninth hour on the Sabbath until Monday morning at sunrise. And the people vowed to God, that hereafter they would neither buy nor sell any thing but food on Sunday.

"Then," says *Binius*, "the enemy of man, envying the admonitions of this holy man, put it into the heart of the king and nobility of England, to command that all who should keep the aforesaid traditions, and chiefly all who had cast down the markets for things vendible upon the Dominical day, should be brought to the king's court to make satisfaction about observing the Dominical day." *Binius* relates many miraculous things that occurred on the Sabbath to those that labored after the ninth hour - i.e. after three o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh day, or Saturday. He says, upon a certain Sabbath, after the ninth hour, a carpenter, for making a wooden pin, was struck with the palsy; and a woman, for knitting on the Sabbath, after the ninth hour, was also struck with the palsy. A man baked bread, and when he broke it to eat, blood came out. Another grinding corn, blood came in a great stream instead of meal, while the wheel of his mill stood still against a vehement impulse of water. Heated ovens refused to bake bread, if heated after the ninth hour of the Sabbath; and dough left unbaked, out of respect to Eustachius's new doctrine, was found on Monday morning well baked without the aid of fire. These fables were industriously propagated throughout the kingdom; "yet the people," says *Binius*, "fearing kingly and human power, more than divine, returned as a dog to his own vomit, to keep markets of saleable things upon the Dominical day."

Mr. Bampfield says, ^{xv1} "The king and princes of England, in

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1203, would not agree to change the Sabbath, and keep the first day, by this authority. This was in the time of *King John*, against whom the popish clergy had a great pique for not honoring their prelacy and the monks, by one of whom he was finally poisoned."

Binius (*Councils*, Cent. 18) states that King John of England, in 1208, in the tenth year of his reign, for not submitting to popish impositions upon his prerogatives, was excommunicated by the Pope, and his kingdom interdicted, which occasioned so much trouble at home and abroad, that it forced him at last to lay down his crown at the feet of *Mandulphus*, the Pope's agent. After he was thus humbled by that excommunication and interdiction, the king, in the fifteenth year of his reign, by writ, removed the market of the city of Exon from Sunday, on which it was held, to Monday. ^{xvi} 1 The market of Lanceson was removed from the first to the fifth day of the week. In the second and third years of *Henry III.* many other markets were removed from the first to other days of the week, which *King John* would not permit to be done. ^{xvii} 2 He also issued a writ which permitted the removal of markets from the first day to other days without special license.

The parliament of England met on Sundays until the time of *Richard II.*, who adjourned it from that to the following day.

In A. D. 1203, "A council was held in Scotland to inaugurate the king, and [concerning] the feast of the Sabbath: and there came also a legate from the Pope, with a sword and purple hat, indulgences and privileges to the young king. It was also there decreed, that Saturday, from the twelfth hour at noon, should be holy." ^{xviii} 3 The *Magdeburgenses* say, this Council was about the observation of the Dominical day *newly brought in*, and that they ordained that it should be holy from the twelfth hour of Saturday even till Monday. ^{xix} 4

Binius says, "A synod was held in Oxford, A. D. 1223, by *Stephen*, Archbishop of Canterbury, where they determined that the Dominical day be kept with all veneration, and a fast upon the Sabbath. ^{xx5}

The first law of England made for the keeping of Sunday, was in the time of *Edward VI.*, about 1470. "Parliament then passed an act, by which Sunday and many holy days, the feasts of all Saints, of holy Innocents, were established as festivals by law. This provided also, that it should be lawful for husbandmen,

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laborers, fishermen, and all others in harvest, or any other time of the year when necessity should require, to labor, ride, fish, or do any other kind of work, at their own free will and pleasure, upon any of the said days." ^{xxi1}

By such means as these, the observation of the first day was gradually but forcibly urged upon the people, wherever they owned allegiance to the Pope as head of the church, and in England and Scotland, as late as the thirteenth century, and the Sabbath was as gradually brought into contempt and disuse.

The process by which the change was effected appears to be this: By first obtaining an annual celebration of the first day at the close of the Passover in honor of the resurrection; then a partial observation of the day weekly, it being then generally so observed among the heathen; then obtaining for it the support of civil laws, ecclesiastical canons, and penalties, and by giving it the title of Lord's day; then by requiring the consecration of the entire day. To abate and ultimately eradicate all respect for the Sabbath, it was first turned into a fast, then it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, resting upon it stigmatized as Judaism and heresy, and the preaching of it called Antichrist; and finally, pronouncing the fourth commandment ceremonial, and abstracting it from the Decalogue. And thus, so far as the Roman church was concerned, the point was gained, and thus probably she performed her part in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel, (vii, 25,) "He shall think to change TIMES and LAWS; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

The cause of the Sabbath must also have been seriously affected by the rise of the Ottoman empire in the seventh century, and the success of the Mahometans in conquering the eastern division of the church. Mahomet, as he professed, formed the plan of establishing a new religion; or, as he expressed it, of replanting the only true and ancient one professed by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the prophets; by destroying idolatry, and weeding out the corruptions which the later Jews and Christians had, as he supposed, introduced. He was equally opposed to both Jews and Christians. To distinguish his disciples the more fully from both, he selected as their day of weekly celebration, the sixth day, or Friday. And thus, as a writer of the seventeenth century remarked, "they and the Romanists crucified the Sabbath, as the Jews and the Romans did the Lord of the Sabbath, between two thieves, the sixth and the first day of the week."

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We have thus traced the history of the Sabbath in the Roman church down to the thirteenth century; and we see that through the whole of this period, the seventh day every where retained at least the nominal honor of being called the

Sabbath, and that no other day had ever borne that title; and that not until the remarkable letter found on St. Simon's tomb, had it been asserted by any one that the observation of the *first day, Lord's day, or Sunday*, was enjoined by the authority of Jesus or his apostles, nor any example of theirs plead in its favor. Even then it was not pretended that the Scriptures suggest its observation.

There are some traces of the Sabbath found among those Christians who separated from the Catholic communion, or were never embraced in it. Among these is the Greek church, which separated from them about the middle of the eleventh century, and had a larger extent of empire than the papists now have. According to *Brerewood's Enquiries*, p. 128, this church solemnizes Saturday festivals, and forbids as unlawful to fast on any Saturday except in Lent; retaining the custom followed before their separation. The same author states that the Syrian Christians, who composed a numerous body in the East, celebrate divine worship solemnly on both the Sabbath and first day, continuing the custom of the Roman church at the time they separated from that community. *Sandy's Travels*, p. 173, speak of a Christian empire in Ethiopia that celebrate both Saturday and Sunday, "that they have divers errors and many ancient truths." The Abyssinian Christians are another numerous body, whose principal residence is in the empire of Abyssinia, in Central Ethiopia. They are represented as being similar in some respects to the Papists. *Purchase* speaks of them as "subject to Peter and Paul, and especially to Christ, as observing the Saturday Sabbath."^{xxii} 1 They are also mentioned by *Brerewood*. *Mosheim* mentions a sect of Christians in the twelfth century in Lombardy, called *Pasaginians*, charged with circumcising their followers, and keeping the Jewish Sabbath. *Mr. Benedict* considers the account of their practicing the bloody right a slander charged on them on account of their keeping the Jewish Sabbath.^{xxiii} 2 *Binius* says that in 1555 there were Christians in Rome who kept the Sabbath, and therefore called *Sabbatarii*, and are represented as differing in other respects from the Romanists.

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this. He says, "Their doctrines are, as far as the author knows, the doctrines of the Bible. Besides this, they maintain the solemn observation of Christian worship throughout our empire on the seventh day."^{xxiv} 1 If the author used the phrase in its usual and Scripture sense, he has added a numerous body of Christians to those who have retained the ancient Sabbath.

There has probably not existed a class of Christians since the Apostles' time, who could more justly claim to be apostolic than the *Waldenses*, who were formerly a numerous people living in the valleys of *Piedmont*, whither they retired, says *Mr. Burnside*, on the promulgation of Constantine's laws for the observation of the first day, in the fourth century; where they remained, according to *Scaliger* and *Brerewood*, in the time of Elizabeth of England, i.e. the latter part of the sixteenth century.^{xxv} 2 They adhered firmly to the apostolic faith, and suffered severe persecutions from the Catholics, who were their most bitter enemies. *Mr. Robinson*, in his *History of Baptism*, says, "they were called *Sabbati* and *Sabbatati*; so named from the Hebrew word *Sabbath*, because they kept the *Saturday* for the Lord's day." They were also called *Insabbatati*, because they rejected all the festivals, or Sabbaths, in the low Latin sense of the word. The

account the Papists gave of their sentiments in 1250, is briefly this: That they declared themselves to be the apostolic successors, and to have apostolic authority; that they held the church of Rome to be the '*Whore of Babylon*;' that none of the ordinances of the church which have been introduced since Christ's ascension, ought to be observed; that baptism is of no advantage to infants, because they cannot actually believe. They reject the sacrament of confirmation, but instead of that, their teachers lay their hands upon their disciples. *Mr. Jones* says, because they would not observe *saints' days*, they were falsely supposed to neglect the Sabbath also. Another of their enemies, an Inquisitor of Rome, charged them with despising all the feasts of Christ and his saints. Another, a Commissioner of *Charles XII.* of France, reported to him, "that he found among them none of the ceremonies, images nor signs of the Romish church, much less the crimes with which they were charged; on the contrary, they kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of baptism, according to the primitive church, and instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and commandments of *God*."

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the *Waldenses*, that they rejected all the traditions and ordinances of the church of Rome as being superstitious and unprofitable, and that they made light of the whole body of clergy and prelates; on which account, having been expelled their country, they dispersed themselves in different places, viz. Piedmont, Calabria, Dauphiny, Provence, Languedoc, Bohemia, England, and elsewhere." ^{xxvi} 1

The Sabbath Since the Reformation.

With the commencement of the Reformation a new spirit of religious inquiry was awakened. Nearly every item of Christian practice was brought under consideration, and not dismissed until either approved or rejected. Among the subjects for discussion we find the Sabbath early introduced and thoroughly examined. There were three leading views then maintained by different classes of the Reformers, which deserve particular notice.

1. One class of Reformers there was, who, dwelling alone on the sufficiency of faith, and the freeness of the Gospel, trembled at the thought of imposing rules upon men, and seemed to fear the term *law*. These declared that the law of the Sabbath was abolished; that Sunday was no Sabbath, only a festival of the church, which had been appointed, and might be altered at her pleasure. That we may not be thought in error here, as well as to give a fuller understanding of the opinions of that time, we will present the assertions of some of these men.

Bishop Cranmar's Catechism, A. D. 1548, says: - "The Jews were commanded in the Old Testament to keep the Sabbath-day, and they observed it every seventh day, called the Sabbath, or Saturday; but we Christian men are not bound to such commandments in Moses' law, and therefore we now keep no more the Sabbath, or Saturday, as the Jews did, but we observe the Sunday and some other days, *as the magistrates do judge convenient*."

William Tindal says, in his answer to More, chap. 25: "We be lords over the Sabbath, and may change it into Monday, or any other day, as we see need. Or

may make every tenth day holy-day, only if we see cause why; we may make two every week, if it were expedient, and one not enough to teach the people. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday than to *put difference between us and the Jew*,

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and lest we should become servants to the day after their superstition."

Bullinger, on Rev.i,10, says: - "Christian churches entertained the Lord's day not upon any commandment from God, but according to their free choice."

Melancthon says: - "The Lord's day from the Apostles' age, hath been a solemn day: notwithstanding, we find not the same commanded by any Apostolic law; but it is collected from hence that the observation thereof was free, because Epiphanius and St. Augustine testify that on the fourth and the sixth days of the week church assemblies were held, as well as upon the Lord's day."

The Augustan Confession, drawn up by Melancthon, and approved by Luther, says: - "We teach that traditions are not to be condemned which have a religious end, namely, traditions concerning holy-days, the Lord's day, the feast of the nativity, Easter, etc."

These passages distinctly do away with the Sabbath, and place the observation of Lord's day on the ground of human authority. In the books of some early authors who adopted these views, may be found frequent references to a difficulty which drove them to deny the perpetuity of the Sabbath. Bishop *White*, in 1635, says: - "If the fourth commandment, concerning the keeping of the seventh day, is moral and perpetual, then it is not such in respect to the first and eighth day; for this precept requireth the observance of that one only day which it specifieth in that commandment." In speaking of Lord's day, he says: - "Every day of the week and of the year is the Lord's; and the Sunday is no more the Lord's by the law of the fourth commandment, than the Friday; for the Lord's day of that fourth commandment is the Saturday."

In each of these quotations it seems to have been felt to be inconsistent to allow the perpetuity of the Sabbath, without keeping the seventh day. But to come back to this ancient day, and keep it in company with Jews, seemed too great a change. Hence the abrogation of the institution was asserted, as the easiest way of escaping from the dilemma. John Milton, speaking of this difficulty, says: - "If we under the Gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the Decalogue, it will surely be far safer to observe *the seventh day*, according to the express command of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture, to adopt the *first*."

Another influence which led to the rejection of the Sabbath by these men, was the view of it which was held by the Roman

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Church. When the leaders of the Reformation separated from that church, it was claimed that all her festival days, including Sunday, were holier than other days, not only in relation to the use made of them, but to a natural and *inherent holiness* wherewith they thought them to be invested. In addition to this, many and hurtful restraints had been imposed upon the consciences of God's people, until these were days of *punishment* rather than holy pleasure and profit. Seeing

the days perverted from their real design, and made the means of strengthening papal power, it is not surprising that they were discarded together. Anxious to escape one error, they embraced another equally dangerous.

2. But another class of Reformers, (probably somewhat fearful of the consequences of those lax notions to which we have just referred,) considering that the Sabbath was given in Paradise, rehearsed at Sinai, and placed among the precepts of the Decalogue, declared that it must be moral in its nature, and perpetually binding. But having allowed its perpetuity, and having rested its claims upon the fourth commandment, the way of explaining and enforcing the change of the day, presented an obstacle to the spread of this view. How this was removed, let their own words answer. *Dr. Bound*, in 1595, says, "The fourth commandment is simply and perpetually moral, and not ceremonial in whole or in part." *Richard Byfield*, 1630, says, "The fourth commandment is part of the law of nature, and thus part of the image of God, and is no more capable of a ceremony to be in it than God is." Afterwards he says, "The institution of the Lord's day is clearly in the work of Christ's resurrection; as the institution of the seventh day was in the work of finishing the creation." "The resurrection applieth and determineth the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to the Lord's day." Such was the course of reasoning adopted by this class of persons. Having established the morality and perpetuity of the Sabbath by means of Scripture, and brought the sanctions of the word of God to sustain them, they apply all this to the support of an institution, the existence and time of keeping which is inferred from Christ's resurrection. It is easy to see what must have been the consequence.

3. A third class may be found among the disputants about the Sabbath, who endeavored, by strict adherence to the Scriptures, to escape the difficulties and inconsistencies into which others had been led. They contended for the early institution of the Sabbath, for its morality and perpetuity as inferred from its being placed in the Decalogue, and for *the seventh day of the week*,

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as an essential and necessary part of the commandment. *Theophilus Brabourne*, in 1628, says: - "1. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue is a divine precept, simply and entirely moral, containing nothing legally ceremonial, in whole or in part, and therefore the weekly observation thereof ought to be perpetual, and to continue in full force and virtue to the world's end. 2. The Saturday, or seventh day of the week, ought to be an everlasting holy-day in the Christian Church, and the religious observation of this day obligeth Christians under the Gospel, as it did the Jews before the coming of Christ. 3. The Sunday, or Lord's day, is an ordinary working day; and it is superstition and will-worship to make the same the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." These opinions were vindicated by Brabourne, in two volumes, which appeared, one in 1628, and the other in 1632. They have never been answered to the satisfaction of many candid minds. It is true, an answer has been attempted. But this answer, laboring as it did mainly to prove that such doctrine "is repugnant to the public sentence of the Church of England, and to the sentence of divines who lived at the beginning of the Reformation," could not satisfy one who believed the Scriptures to be a

sufficient rule of faith and practice. To these volumes might be added others, which appeared soon after, and to the results of which, living witnesses have testified from that day to this. It was while the discussion just referred to was yet in progress, that King James, in 1618, published his Book of Sports for Sunday, in which is set forth, that "by the preciseness of some magistrates and ministers in several places in this kingdom, in hindering people from their recreations on the Sunday; the papists in this realm being thereby persuaded that no honest mirth or recreation was tolerable in our religion," wherefore, it pleased his majesty to set out his declaration, "that for his good people's lawful recreation, his pleasure was, that after the end of divine service, they should not be disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as dancing, either men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreations; nor from having of May-games, Whitsun-Ales, or Morrice-dances, and setting up of May-poles, or other sports therewith used; so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or let of divine service." This was designed in part, probably, to counteract what was then called the puritan notion, and may be regarded as expressing the opinion of the English Church at that time in regard to the sacredness of the day. The same was re-published

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in 1636, by Charles, with how much real effect upon the practices of men it is not easy to determine.

It is evident that a reaction in favor of the institution had already commenced; and the earnestness of Puritanism on this subject, joined to the influence of Sabbatarianism, has affected almost the whole body of the English Church. Puritanism and Sabbatarianism deserve the credit of having preserved to that country a regard for the day of rest, which raises them infinitely above many other Protestant countries. Had they taken Scripture ground, the result can hardly be predicted.

By what has here been said in regard to the observation of the Sabbath, after the Reformation, it is not to be supposed that there are no traces of it since the Christian era until that time. It is believed that there have been Christians in every age who have kept holy the seventh day. During the first three centuries of the Christian Church, the Sabbath seems to have been almost universally kept. It was kept generally in the Eastern Church for six hundred years. And from that time onward to the present, frequent traces of Sabbath-keepers may be found, either in the history of individuals, or in the acts of Councils against those who kept it. These notices extend to the time of the Reformation; and are as frequent as are the references to the first day of the week under the title of Lord's day.

When we enter upon that period of Reform, we find that Sabbath-keepers appear in Germany late in the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century, according to Ross's Picture of All Religions. By this we are to understand that their ministers were such as to lead to organization, and attract attention. A number of these formed a church, and emigrated to America in the early settlement of the country. There were Sabbath-keepers in Transylvania, among whom was *Francis Darinis*, the chaplain to the Court of Sigismund, the prince of

that kingdom, and afterwards superintendent of all the Transylvanian countries. In France, also, there were Christians of this class, among whom was *M. de la Roque*, who wrote in defence of the Sabbath, against Bossuet, the Catholic Bishop of Meaux. But it is difficult to determine to what extent this day was observed in those countries.

In England we find Sabbath-keepers very early. *Dr. Chambers* says: "They arose in England in the sixteenth century," from which we understand that they then became a distinct denomination in that kingdom. They increased considerably in the seventeenth century; and we find that towards the close of that century there were eleven flourishing churches in different

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parts of the country. Among those who held this view are some names of distinction. Theophilus Brabourne was called before the Court of High Commission, in 1632, for having written and published books vindicating the claims of the seventh day. One Traske was about the same time examined in the Starr Chamber where a long discussion about the subject seems to have been held. Nearly thirty years after this, John James, preacher to a Sabbath-keeping congregation in the east of London, was executed in a barbarous manner, upon a variety of charges, among which was his keeping of the Sabbath. Twenty years later still, Francis Bampfield died in Newgate, a martyr to non-conformity - especially as one who could not conform in the matter of the Sabbath. It is needless to mention other names, or to speak particularly of Edward, Joseph, Dr. Joseph and Dr. Samuel Stennett, John Maulden, Robert Cornthwaite, and others, who have written and suffered in proof of their attachment to this truth.

But the Sabbath found great opposition in England, being assailed both from the pulpit and the press, by those who were attached to the established church. Many men of learning and talent engaged in the discussion on both sides of the question. It is evident that the opposers of reform felt unable to defend themselves against the strength of talent and Scripture brought against them. Therefore, as in similar cases, they excited the civil powers to check the progress of the Dissenters by passing the famous *Conrenticle Act*. By this law, passed in 1664, it was provided that if any person above sixteen years of age was present at any meeting of worship different from the Church of England, where there were five persons more than the household, for the first offence he should be imprisoned three months, or pay five pounds; for the second, the penalty was doubled; and for the third he should be banished to America, or pay one hundred pounds sterling. This act was renewed in 1669, which, in addition to the former penalties, made the person preaching liable to pay a fine of twenty pounds; and the same penalty was imposed upon any person suffering a meeting to be held in his house. Justices of the Peace were empowered to enter such houses, and seize such persons; and they were fined one hundred pounds if they neglected doing so. These acts were exceedingly harassing to those who observed the Sabbath. Many of their distinguished ministers were taken from their flocks and confined in prison, some of whom sunk under their sufferings. These persecutions not only prevented those who kept the Sabbath from assembling, but deterred some who embraced their

opinions from uniting with them, and discouraged others from investigating the subject. At present the Sabbath is not as extensively observed in England as formerly. But the extent of Sabbath-keeping cannot be determined by the number and magnitude of the churches, either there or in other countries. For many persons live in the observation of the seventh day and remain members of churches which assemble on the first day; and a still greater number acknowledge its correctness, who conform to the more popular custom of keeping the first day.

At what time the Sabbath became the subject of attention on this side of the Atlantic we cannot definitely say. The intolerance of the first settlers of New England was unfavorable to the Sabbath. The poor Christian that may have been banished to this country for its observance could find no refuge among the *Pilgrim Fathers*. The laws of Rhode Island were more tolerant, and observers of the Sabbath first made their appearance in Newport, in that State, in 1671. The cause of the Sabbath has gradually gained strength in this country from that period; but it has found much to oppose its progress, even in Rhode Island. It was in opposition to the general practice of Christians, on which account an odium was put upon it, and those who have kept the Sabbath have been reproached with Judaizing and classed with Jews. Besides this, they have been subjected to great inconvenience in their occupations, especially in cities and towns. In Connecticut the laws were intolerant and oppressive to the Sabbath cause.

At no time does there appear to have been in this country any general excitement on this subject. The friends of Sunday have avoided as far as possible its dissension; so that those who have observed the Sabbath have had but little encouragement as they have supposed, to try to extend their sentiments. But the propagation of their opinions has not exclusively depended on their efforts. The common English version of the Bible has been found in many instances a sufficient means of converting men to the Sabbath. Churches observing and assembling on the Sabbath, have been founded in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and in most of the new States, embracing as is supposed, a population of forty or fifty thousand. - *Sabbath Tract No. 4.*

The True Issue

One of the greatest difficulties which we who observe the seventh day have ever found in the Sabbath controversy, is to make our opponents understand what is the real question at issue. So long have their thoughts, feelings and habits, been moulded under one particular view of the subject, that it seems almost a miracle if one is found who can disregard all foreign matter, and look at the precise point in debate long enough to come to any certain and intelligent conclusion about it. But it is evident, that if an opponent is suffered to raise false issues, or to be continually striking off into the discussion of some point which does not affect the final question, we may prolong the controversy *ad infinitum*.

Let us then endeavor to state distinctly what is and what is not, the issue between us and the observers of the first day of the week.

1. The issue is not whether the first day of the week was observed at a very early period by Christians. We admit that it was. We admit that its observance may be traced up to very near the borders of the apostolic age. What more can a generous, conscientious opponent, who scorns any other aid than what the truth will give, ask? He knows in his own soul that this is the very utmost that can be produced from any of his histories. Let him ransack his old musty volumes all the way backward, till he fancies he can almost talk to the "beloved disciple" face to face, and what more can he find? Verily, nothing.

But when you have got this admission from us, then we have another question to ask. *How* - don't dodge the question - HOW was the day observed by the early Christians? We admit the observance of it; but that is not the issue. The issue respects the *manner* of observing it. You, if you are consistent, will say that the early Christians observed it not only by public worship, but by *abstaining from labor*. We, on the other hand, deny that they abstained from labor. We admit that they held public worship; but - we repeat it - *we deny that they abstained from labor*. We deny that they regarded it as a *Sabbath*, "resting according to the commandment." Now with the issue thus fairly stated, we put the laboring oar into your hands, and challenge you to prove your position. Bring proof, if you can, that the early Christians regarded the first day of the week as any thing else than a *religious festival*; between which and the *Sabbath* there is a very important difference, the latter requiring

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abstinence from labor, the former merely requiring public worship in honor of the event commemorated, and allowing the remainder of the day to be spent in labor or amusement.

2. When it is once settled, that in a very early period of the church the first day was observed as a festival; when our opponents have fairly jaded themselves to a "weariness of the flesh," in their "much study" of the old fathers, to find proof of it; though we never called it in question; - then the issue is, whether this festival was *ordained by Christ*? - whether the New Testament furnishes *inspired example* of such festival? Our opponents affirm: we deny. We maintain that in every passage of the New Testament, where the first day of the week is mentioned, the context furnishes a sufficient reason why it is mentioned, without the least necessity of supposing it to have been a festival season. No exception can be made to this, unless in regard to 1Cor.xvi,2. The reason why the Apostle in this place specifies the first, rather than any other day of the week, does not so clearly appear from the context; but the peculiar phraseology employed, "let each one of you lay by him." [himself,] is against the idea of any public meeting: and if no public meeting, of course no festival season. As every allusion to the first day of the week is sufficiently explained by other circumstances noticed in the context, the *inferential* proof of its festival character is thereby destroyed. As for *clear, positive* proof of it, such as express precept or command, no person of modesty pretends it. Still less is there any proof of its *Sabbatic* character.

3. Another point wherein we are necessarily at issue with great numbers of Christians, is whether the *institution* of the Sabbath is separable from the particular *day* to be observed. They affirm; we deny. We maintain that God's blessing and sanctifying a particular day is the very thing in which the institution consists. To render this plain matter yet more plain, we invite close attention to the wording of the fourth commandment; premising, however, that the word Sabbath is not *translated* from a Hebrew word, but is the Hebrew word itself anglicized, just as baptism is an anglicized Greek word. The proper translation of the word is *Rest*. Now let the word Rest be substituted for Sabbath, and how clear it becomes -

"Remember the Rest day to keep it holy." [Surely some particular day is denoted; for it is THE Rest day, not A Rest day.] *Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Rest of the Lord thy God.* [Is it any where historically recorded as a fact that God rested on THE seventh day?

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It is. Gen.ii,2. 'On the seventh day God rested from all his work which he had made.' Who does not see that that day on which God rested, was the *last* of the seven which constituted the first week of time?] *In it* - [in WHAT? why, in the seventh day, the last day of the week; for the pronoun *it* can have no other antecedent] - *thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.* [WHY must no work be done on that particular day, the seventh or last day of the week? The reason follows.] *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and RESTED on the seventh day,* [as the record in Gen.ii,2 proves. See also Heb.iv,4.] *Wherefore the Lord blessed the Rest day and sanctified it."*

The conclusion is irresistible, that the Rest day spoken of is the particular day on which God rested from his work, which, as before shown, was the last day of the week. That very day, and no other, God blessed and sanctified. The only reason assigned *why* he sanctified it, is "because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Gen.ii,3. The Rest day, then, which we are required to observe, is "the Rest of the Lord thy God:" which does not mean the rest which the Lord thy God has appointed, though it is true that he has appointed it: nor does it mean a rest which becomes the Lord's by reason of our appropriating it to him: but "the rest of the Lord thy God" means THE REST WHICH THE LORD THY GOD OBSERVED.

Now from all this we think it must be evident, that whoever observes any other Rest day than the seventh day of the week, does not observe the Rest - Sabbath - "of the Lord thy God." He may, it is true, appropriate it to the Lord his God, and in that sense call it the Lord's; he may ignorantly suppose that Christ in the Gospel has appointed it, and in that sense also call it the Lord's; but it can by no means be called "the Rest of the Lord thy God" in the sense of that expression in the fourth commandment. Hence, irresistible is our conviction, that he does not obey the commandment. O brother Christian, why will you persist in maintaining that your Sunday keeping is an act of obedience to the law of the Sabbath? - *Sabbath Tract No. 8.*

A Christian Caveat

TO THE OLD AND NEW SABBATARIANS. BY EDWARD FISHER, ESQ.

The following article is taken from the fifth edition of a work with the above title, printed in London, 1653. The book was written in defence of the "orthodoxal doctrine of the Church of England," respecting festivals, against the "Sabbatarian novelties," as they were called, of the Puritans. While it demolishes the claims set up on behalf of *Sunday* or *Lord's Day*, it fully establishes the claims of the *Sabbath* or *Seventh Day*. And it is worthy of note here, that it is not possible to refute any of the erroneous views in regard to the Sabbath and Lord's Day, without taking positions which necessarily lead to the observance of *the Seventh Day*. How much easier it would be to fasten the claims of the Sabbatic institution upon the consciences of men, if we were satisfied to take the fourth commandment *as it reads* and enforce it by "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

"The third opinion is of the new Sabbatarians, who dream of a middle way betwixt a Jew and a Christian; and this they usually lay down in two propositions. The first is, *That the Lord's Day, or first day of the week, namely Sunday, may be called the Sabbath*; the next is, *That the observation of the Lord's Day is a moral duty, enjoined by God himself, and declared both by the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles*. The first appearance of this kind of teachers was in the year of our Lord 1595, near the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth: and because they are neither able to produce direct Scripture, nor solid reason for what they say, they labor to support their conceits by fallacies, falsities, and wrestings of God's holy word, as upon scanning their proofs will be manifest to the meanest capacity.

"For their first proposition, they allege two reasons why the *Lord's Day* may be called *the Sabbath*. One is because the Sabbath signifies *a rest*; and therefore the Lord's Day being a *rest*, may be called the Sabbath. But to this we answer, it is false that *the Sabbath* signifies *a rest*; for when by custom of speech a common name is restrained to a particular place, thing, or person, it then becomes a proper name, and so losing its community, does signify that only particular, unto which by custom of speech it is applied; as for instance, *the temple* is a common name, signifying *the Church*; yet in London, where by custom of speech this name, *The Temple*, is restrained to an Inns of

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Court, it is false and absurd to say you were at *the Temple* and mean *the Church of St. Giles*. In like manner *the Sabbath* is a common name, signifying *the rest*; yet in the Christian Church, where by custom of speech, according to God's holy phrase throughout the Old and New Testament, this name, *the Sabbath*, is restrained to the Jewish weekly festival, it is false and absurd to speak of *the Sabbath*, and mean *the Lord's Day*. Their other reason why the Lord's Day may be called *the Sabbath*, is, because the Lord's Day succeeded in the room of the Sabbath. But if this argument be good, then may *baptism* be called *circumcision*, the *Lord's Supper* the *Passover*, and King *James* Queen *Elizabeth*.

"As for the second proposition, wherein they assert the *morality and divine institution of the Lord's Day*, we shall here notice only three of their reasons. The first is, because Adam, according to God's command, kept the Sabbath in the state of innocency. . . . But what is the sanctification of the Sabbath spoken of by Moses in the second chapter of Genesis, to our observing the Lord's Day? That was appointed to be kept on *the seventh* and *last* day of the week; this is kept on *the first* day of the week: that was the day in which God *rested* from his work of creation; this is the day in which God *began* to create the heavens and the earth: that was our *Saturday*; this is our *Sunday*. Their second proof for the morality of the Lord's Day, is from the fourth commandment, where they seek to corrupt the very text, and would persuade us that for *the seventh* day, we must read *a seventh* day; as if God did not there set apart a certain day of the week, but left it to man to keep which of the seven he pleased. Unto which we answer, that this conceit is not only against the letter of all our translations, but even repugnant to the sense of the commandment; for the words are express that God blessed and hallowed the Sabbath day; that Sabbath day was *the seventh* day; that seventh day was *the day in which God rested from his six days' work of creation*. Nay, grant it were true (as these men would have) that this special precept does exactly oblige us, and that no particular day of the seven was by God appointed to be kept holy, then we may set apart Monday, or Tuesday, or any other day to God's service, as well as Sunday; and so, by their own argument, the Lord's Day is no more moral than any other day of the week. Their third proof is from the title or name, *Lord's Day*, which (say they) cannot be for any other reason, but because it is of the Lord's institution. We answer, this is false; for the Lord's Day was not so called because it was *instituted by the Lord*, but because

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it was *dedicated to the Lord*; as we commonly say, Saint Mary's Church, or Saint Peter's Church; which no man did ever imagine were built or founded by Saint Mary or Saint Peter."

Near the close of his book, after having examined each of the positions here referred to, he comes directly to his design, and says:-

"In vain, therefore, it is, and most absurd, for you our opponents to charge us with *befooling and misleading the people*. Your own *practice*, your own *doctrines*, shall bear witness betwixt us.

"You who say one while, that God did not appoint *the seventh* day, the day on which he rested, to be kept holy, but *a seventh* day, and so one day in seven be observed, no matter which of them; another while, that by this commandment God enjoins us to keep holy *the first day of the week* on which he *began* his work of creation - Do you not *befool and mislead the people*?

"You who (forgetting your own doctrine of the fourth commandment) do teach, that the keeping holy the first day of the week, or Lord's Day, was appointed and practiced by Christ and his apostles, yet cannot produce so much as one *example* for it, much less a *precept* - Do you not *befool and mislead the people*?

"You who infer, because St. Paul, and the disciples at Troas, spent the whole night of the first day of the week in praying, preaching, and heavenly conference,

in regard he was to leave them and depart on the morrow; *therefore*, St. Paul and the disciples at Troas met *that* night to keep holy *the day past*; *therefore* the disciples at Troas met *every first day of the week*, to keep that day holy; *therefore* the Church at *Philippi*, the Church in *Cilicia*, and *all* Christian Churches, did then keep holy the first day of the week; *therefore all the apostles* did constantly keep holy that day; *therefore* Christ and his apostles *appointed the first day of the week* to be forever celebrated, instead of the Sabbath - Is not this pitiful logic? Do you not *befool and mislead the people*?

"You who tell stories of an *old* Sabbath and a *new* Sabbath, a *Jewish* Sabbath and a *Christian* Sabbath, a Sabbath of the *seventh* day and a Sabbath of the *first* day of the week; that so you may slyly fix the name *Sabbath* on *the Lord's Day*, and then persuade the simple and ignorant that all those texts of Scripture wherein mention is made of *the Sabbath day*, are intended of *the Lord's Day*; when indeed to call the Lord's Day *the Sabbath*, is as senseless as to call Sunday *Saturday*, or *first day the last day* of the week; when throughout the Old

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and New Testament we have not the least intimation of any other weekly Sabbath, save the old, Jewish, seventh day Sabbath; when you yourselves confess that the name Lord's Day, is more proper and particular, and less obvious to exception, than the name Sabbath; and that the name Sabbath is in dignity inferior to both Lord's Day and Sunday - Do you not *befool and mislead the people*?

"You that condemn the yearly observance of Christ's birthday as heathenish, yet acknowledge this feast to be a constitution of the ancient primitive Church - Do you not *befool and mislead the people*?

"Take ye heed; these are not small matters; consider well with yourselves what it is to stand guilty before God of belying Christ and his apostles, and willfully wresting the Holy Scriptures. Be advised; take time while time is to repent of those notorious slanders wherewith you have aspersed the ancient approved ways of God's worship; and let the sincerity of your repentance appear by the speedy abandoning of your unchristian practices and principles; lest the heavy judgment of seducers, to *wax worse and worse*, fall upon you, and God in the end *deliver you up* to such *strong delusions* that you *should believe your own lies*." - *Sabbath Tract No. 5*.

Misuse of the Term "Sabbath."

It is quite common, in these days, to hear the term *Sabbath* used to designate the first day of the week or Sunday. But such a use of the term is not only unscriptural, but calculated to mislead the people. Throughout the Bible, there is but one sacred day of weekly occurrence called the Sabbath, and that is the seventh or last day of the week. When, therefore, men talk about a *Christian* Sabbath, and a *Jewish* Sabbath - a *first-day* Sabbath, and a *seventh-day* Sabbath - so that they may slyly fix the term Sabbath upon the first day, and then persuade people that all those texts of Scripture which speak of the Sabbath day are meant for the first day, they pursue a course which is unauthorized, and

deserve to be sharply rebuked. There are circumstances, however, which many persons seem to regard as justifying the common practice of calling the first day by the name *Sabbath*. Let us examine some of them.

1. It is said that the term *Sabbath* signifies *rest*; therefore the first day being commonly observed as a day of rest, may properly be called the Sabbath. In reply to this, it may be said, that when by custom and common consent, any term is

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used to express a particular place or thing, it then becomes a proper name for that thing, and signifies only that thing to which it is applied. For instance, a *tabernacle* means a place of worship. Yet, in New York, where this name is used to express a particular and well-known place of worship, it would be absurd and false to say you were at the *Tabernacle*, and mean the Church of the Messiah. So with the term Sabbath; although the word strictly means *rest*, yet after the Scriptures throughout the Old and New Testaments have used this term to express a particular rest, which occurred on the seventh day, it would be foolish and deceptive to speak of the Sabbath and mean the first day of the week. It may be farther said, that if this argument be good for calling the first day the Sabbath, and if the fact of its being a *rest-day* makes it the Sabbath, then may the Mohammedans properly call the *sixth* day the Sabbath, and the fact that they rest upon that day makes it the Sabbath. Yes, and those Mexican Indians, whom Cortes found keeping the *fourth* day, may properly call that day the Sabbath, and directly it is made such. Even those people in Guinea, whom Purchase describes as having a *rest-day*, but which, says he, "they observe not upon our Sunday, nor upon the Jews' Sabbath day, but hold it upon Tuesday, the *second* working day of the week," may properly call that day the Sabbath, and straightway it becomes such. Are the observers of the first day ready to rest upon such ground for calling that day the Sabbath, or to continue to call it Sabbath when there is no better ground? We hope not. And we feel bound, as those who respect the Bible, and dare not charge the Author of that Book with folly in calling the seventh day only the Sabbath, to protest against such abuse of the language of Scripture.

2. The second reason frequently urged, is, that the first day *comes in the room* of the seventh day, and may therefore properly be called the Sabbath. Aside from the fact that the Scriptures say *not a word* about a substitution of the one day for the other, it may be said in reply, that if the argument be good, then the Lord's Supper may be called the *Passover*, and King Solomon may be called King *David*.

3. A third reason alledged for calling the first day the Sabbath, is, because it has long been the practice of Christians to call it so. In answering this assertion, it may be worth while to inquire what has been the practice of Christians in this matter. Few will deny, that wherever, in the New Testament, the word Sabbath refers to a weekly religious day, it is the seventh day. When the *first* day of the week is spoken of, it is under

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its appropriate title. For nearly the whole of the first century, then, we have the testimony of Scripture that the name *Sabbath* belonged exclusively to the

seventh day. During the succeeding four hundred years, there were large numbers, both in the Eastern church, about Constantinople, and in the Western church, about Rome, who kept the Sabbath. And when ecclesiastical councils, in the fourth and fifth centuries, began to enact laws against them, they condemned Sabbath-keeping altogether. From this it is apparent, that the idea of calling the first day the Sabbath had not then entered their minds. What day was meant when the term Sabbath was used for five hundred years later still, the learned Dr. Peter Heylyn has told us in the following words:- "Wherever for a thousand years and upwards, we meet with *Sabbatum*, in any writer, of what name soever, it must be understood of no day but *Saturday*." Indeed, if we search all the books which have been written on this and kindred subjects up to the time of the Reformation, we shall not find that the first day was to any considerable extent regarded as the Sabbath or called by that name. Dr. Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, in a late work on the subject of the Sabbath, says, "in fact, the notion against which I am contending, [viz., that the fourth commandment binds Christians to hallow the first day of the week, and that it may properly be called the Sabbath,] seems as far as I can recollect, to have originated with the Puritans, not much more than 200 years ago, and to have been for a considerable time confined to them, though it was subsequently adopted by some members of our church."

So far is it from being true, then, that the first day has been universally called the Sabbath among Christians, that even now, by the best authorities upon such subjects, it is not called Sabbath at all. The Records of England up to the present time invariably call the *seventh* day the Sabbath. In the Journals of the House of Lords, whatever is entered as having been done on the seventh day, or Saturday, is under the date, *Die Sabbati*, upon the Sabbath day. The same is true of the House of Commons. The Rules and Records of the King's Bench, and the Latin Records in the Court of Exchequer and in Chancery, do likewise call the seventh day the Sabbath. These things may be known by any who will take the trouble to examine; and they show how groundless and erroneous is the supposition to which we are replying. Indeed, in many languages the seventh day is called by a name which indicates its sabbatic character. In Low Dutch it is called *rust-dagh*, the day of rest. In English,

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French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, it has its right name, *the Sabbath*, the day of rest.

Now let us look at some of the *consequences* of calling the first day by the name of the Sabbath. It has given occasion for Papists to charge Protestants with neglecting the Scriptures to follow their traditions. The Papists claim, that the change of the Sabbath is the work of their own church, and that the Scriptures nowhere warrant the keeping of the first day, much less the calling it by the name of the Sabbath. Who will deny this latter position? Again, it has led some earnest and pious men to charge the teachers of religion with "befooling and misleading the people." Proof of this may be found to any extent in books written on the subject in the seventeenth century. The charge is there distinctly and frequently made, of designedly using deceptive arguments.

We will not undertake to say, that those who are accustomed to speak in a manner so likely to deceive, design to do that. But we will say, that such would be the natural effect of their language. It would leave upon the minds of many an impression, that they were not only bound to pay peculiar respect to the first day of the week, but that the fourth commandment required of them such respect. For a religious teacher knowingly to make this impression, is to be guilty of directly fostering error. Nay, more; if he should call the first day the Sabbath, and refer to the fourth commandment as inculcating the duty of observing that day; or should, without direct reference to that law, express himself in such a way as to leave his hearers to suppose that it required the observance of the first day, he would be wanting in faithfulness to the truth, and exposed to the denunciation of those who add to or take from it.

No doubt many will think, that at a time when the prevailing tendency is to disregard all sacred seasons, it were better not to say these things, but to leave men under an impression that the law of God requires the observance of the first day of the week, and sanctions calling that day the Sabbath. But this prevailing disregard of the day of rest, is an important reason for urging an examination of the foundation upon which the Sabbath rests. Common prudence, to say nothing of Christian sincerity, would require us, in such circumstances, to place the duty upon its true ground. If it will not stand there, it will stand nowhere. *Sabbath Tract No. 12.*

The Fourth Commandment

FALSE EXPOSITION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE Fourth Commandment has been variously expounded by its professed friends. Among these expositions, none has been more injurious than that which represents it as requiring the observance, not of *the* Sabbath, and *the* seventh day, but of *a* Sabbath, and *a* seventh day - not of a certain and well-known time, but of an uncertain and varying time. Yet this is the exposition of it which is given both by commentators and writers on the subject of the Sabbath. It will be found, however, that this view is generally presented in order to prepare the way to introduce the first day of the week, under the specious name of Lord's Day, into the place of the Sabbath. Thus some are made to think, that the name Sabbath may as well be applied to the first day of the week as to the seventh. But to such an exposition there are several serious objections:-

1. It is a perversion of the original text itself. In every place where the weekly Sabbath and the seventh day are spoken of, the Hebrew article is uniformly used. This article is often used like our demonstrative *this* - but more commonly like our definite article *the* - never as our indefinite article *a* or *an*; and Gesenius, in answer to the question whether it may be used *indefinitely*, says, "The definite article cannot rightly be said to stand indefinitely." To this opinion agree all our translators, both ancient and modern, who have rendered the terms, both in the fourth commandment and all other places of the Scripture, by *the* Sabbath and *the* seventh day.

2. It makes the Fourth Commandment to be indefinite and absurd. If that commandment only requires the observance of a Sabbath or *rest*, and that on a seventh day, then one man might keep the seventh day, another the third day, and another the fifth day, yet all obey the commandment. What confusion would thus result from carrying out this exposition to its legitimate results! But God's commandment is not yea and nay after this manner. It says, "*the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.*" That man will not be held guiltless who misinterprets and misrepresents it, for however pious a purpose he may do so.

3. It is contrary to the teachings of the very men who give this exposition; for they affirm, that the fourth commandment required the keeping of *the seventh day* until Christ came. Now, if the Jews before Christ, were bound to keep a certain and definite day, and that *the seventh day*, then the commandment

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required a certain and definite day, and that *the seventh day*.

From these considerations it is evident, that those who represent the fourth commandment as requiring the observance of only a Sabbath, and that upon *some one* day of the seven indefinitely, are guilty of a false exposition of the commandment, and of handling the word of God deceitfully. They make a plain passage of Scripture to signify one thing for some thousands of years, and then ever afterwards to signify another thing. Thus do they make void the commandment of God, that they may keep their own traditions.

Now let us turn to a consideration of some of the *consequences* of this kind of exposition. Among these we will mention only three.

1. It overturns all certainty in explaining the Scriptures. If a man in translating from a Latin or Greek author, should pervert his author's meaning in this manner, by using words in a different sense from that in which they were intended, he would be cast out and despised. But yet when a preacher represents the term *the Sabbath* as meaning simply a *rest*, that so he may call the first day of the week a *rest*, and therefore *the Sabbath*, he deals worse with the Scriptures than the translator just mentioned does with his profane author. Instead, however, of being cast out and despised, his speculations are allowed to go for truth. Thus unbelievers are encouraged in their infidelity; and occasion is given for them to say, that the Bible is interpreted by its friends to mean just what they please to have it. It is dangerous for men to use their wits thus to blind the eyes of their fellows.

2. It abolishes the Lord's Sabbath, and makes the Fourth Commandment to be a mere cipher. First, it abolishes the Lord's Sabbath, because it teaches that the observance of the seventh day, on which God rested, and which he introduced into the commandment as one with the Sabbath, is not at all binding, but the day may be spent in any kind of labor. Is not this to abolish *the Lord's Sabbath*? Second, it makes the fourth commandment a cipher, because it takes away the *time*, which is the seventh day, and the *event commemorated*, which is God's resting from his creative work. Now read the commandment, as these expounders would have it, bereft of the *time* and the *event commemorated*. It then commands only a *rest*, without any precept or example as to its length or

frequency. One person, therefore, may rest one hour in each day; another one day in a month; and a third one month in a year; and each

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may call this keeping the Sabbath. Does not this make the fourth commandment a mere cipher.

3. It abuses God's Word, and misleads his people. It abuses his word by representing that the Word teaches what it does not teach, and that it fails to teach what it attempts to teach. It misleads his people, on one side, by pressing the fourth commandment to sustain the first day of the week, which it says nothing about, thus laying a yoke upon the people, requiring them to observe a day, in regard to which they will finally be asked, Who hath required this at your hands? On the other side, it misleads the people, by encouraging them to neglect a day which God hath sanctified, and commanded them to keep holy. [*Sabbath Tract No. 9.*]

The Royal Law Contended For

SOME BRIEF GROUNDS, SERVING TO PROVE THAT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE YET IN FULL FORCE, AND SHALL SO REMAIN TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY. BY EDWARD STENNET. [Printed 1658.]

1. The matter of the ten commandments was written in the heart of Adam before his fall, as doth appear in Gen.i,27. *God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him;* also in Eccl.vii,29, *God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* And the Apostle plainly asserts, that the Gentiles which had not the law, (in the letter of it,) did by nature the things contained in the law, which showeth the work of the law written in their hearts. Rom.ii,14,15. Now if the Gentiles had the word of the law written in their hearts in their sinful state, doubtless they had it in more perfection in their state of innocence, as considered in Adam; for the letter of the law was added, because of transgression. Gal.ii,19. Now if there was transgression before the letter of the law was added, that implies that there was a law before then; in that the letter of the law is said to be added, it implies that the matter of it was in being before, but much worn by sin; and that is one reason why the Lord was pleased to add the letter.

Let it be considered, how it can stand with Scripture or right reason, that Jesus Christ should abrogate this law. Did Christ blot out this law from the hearts of all men by his death? Then all men have not the law of nature to guide them; for we cannot

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be so gross as to imagine that the law is put into their hearts upon a new account, for that were to bring all men under the new covenant.

2. God spake all these commandments unto the people, and they heard his voice, (Deut.v,22-24,) with great majesty and glory, and he added no more; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and delivered them unto Moses - all of which holds forth their perpetuity; they are spoken by God, they are written by

him in tables of stone; so was never any ceremony. Job desired that his words might be graven with a pen of iron and lead in a rock of stone forever. Job xix,24.

3. Afterward the first tables were broken, which I suppose did signify the Israelites' breaking of the first covenant; for Moses broke them on account of their having made a golden calf, and so had broken the covenant. Whereupon Moses was then commanded to hew two tables like the first, and God wrote the same words again upon them, (Deut.x,1-4,) and they only of all the laws were put into the ark, and when the ark is set in its proper place between the cherubim there is nothing in it but the two tables. 1Kings viii,9. . . . See Jer.xxxi,33, where God promises to put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Now what law is this that must be put into the heart, when the law of sacrifice is abolished? Compare Heb.x,6-9, with Psalm xl,6-8. That this is the law that is here spoken of is manifest if we consider how proper and suitable it is for the heart of a believer. Paul calls it the law of his mind in Rom.vii,23, and in verse 22 he professeth he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and God saith he will put the law in his heart and write it there; both which phrases hold it forth to be the same law that was written by God and put into the ark. Man's heart is the tables, and God himself is the writer; the matter written is the law. Hear what Wisdom saith to this: *My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments within thee; keep my commandments and live, and my law as the apple of thine eye; bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thy heart.* Prov.vii, 1-3. Now what laws are these but the table laws? And Wisdom's son is to have them written upon the fleshy tables of his heart.

4. When God promiseth to exalt his first born higher than the kings of the earth, and that his covenant should stand fast with him, and that his seed should endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven, (Ps.lxxxix,28,29,) yet he saith, *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I*

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visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take away, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. Verses 30-32. Mark it, this covenant was with Christ, (though with David in the type,) in behalf of all the seed; and the chastisements must be the portion of the seed if they break the law of God, though his covenant stand fast. Now as this covenant reaches all the seed, so doth the law and the punishments for the breach of it; and if so, then what law is it that reaches all the seed, if not the law of the ten commandments, with those laws which are comprehended in them.

5. These commandments are eminently distinguished and marked out from all the ceremonial laws, both to show their eminency and perpetuity; they are said to be the work of God, in Exod.xxxii,16, and the Psalmist saith, *The works of his hands are verity and judgment.* And these works are called, *all his commandments*, Ps.cxi,7, and they are ten. Deut.iv,13.

They are distinguished from the ceremonial ordinances, and called all the commandments, to set forth their number, as before said, and their eminency; and therefore they are so frequently called in the Scripture, *the commandments of God*, distinct from the other laws, which were shadowy in the time of the law of

shadows, (as these places of Scripture, besides many others, do show, viz., Deut.v,31; vi,11; vii,11; viii,11; xi,1; xxx,16; 1Kings ii,3; viii,58; 2Chron.xix,10; Neh.i,7. and x,29, etc.,) and distinct from the testimony of Jesus in clear gospel times. In Rev.xii,17, note that the dragon's war is with the remnant of the woman's seed which kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. And again, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Rev.xiv,12. And when the man would know what he should do to be saved, Christ told him that he knew the commandments. A cloud of witnesses would come in, if need were, for the confirmation of them. But farther observe what the Scripture saith to their duration. The Psalmist saith, *All his commandments are sure, they stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.* Psalm cxi,7,8. Note it; all his commandments, which are the works of his hands, as aforesaid, stand fast forever and ever; that is not only in the time of the ministration of the letter, which was in a sense for ever, but for ever and ever, that is under both ministrations, that of the letter and that of the spirit, in Old Testament times and in the New. Search and see if you can find any word that doth speak of any thing that is said to

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abide or stand fast for ever and ever, which comes short of the time aforesaid. And when God hides his face from the house of Jacob, then is the time that the testimony is bound up and the law is sealed among the disciples, (Isa.viii,16,17,) clearly relating to the time that the Jews rejected the gospel, and the disciples are commanded to make use of the law as well as the testimony to try the doctrines of others by Isa.viii,20. All which shows the perpetuity of this law of God, which will farther appear if we consider Deut.vii,9. Our Lord saith in Matt.v, 17,18, *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill.* But the question will be, what law is this? To me it appears to be the law of the ten commandments; for these reasons:

1st. Because this comes in as the motive to provoke his disciples to let their light shine in the world, that men might see their good works and glorify their father which is in heaven. Matt.v,16. Therefore it must be such a law as the doing of it holds forth good works to public view.

2nd. It is such a law as Christ professes he came not to destroy; but the ceremonial law he destroyed in this very sense, so that none are to be in the practice of it; he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, and contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

3rd. Destroying of the law is here put in direct opposition to fulfilling of it; to destroy is to take out of the way or to blot out as before; but to fulfill the law is to do that which is contained in the law; therefore saith Christ to John, when he went to be baptized, *It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,* (that is, to perform it.) Matt.iii,15. And the Apostle saith, that love is the fulfilling of the law. What law? Why this, *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, etc. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom.xiii,8-10. So that to fulfill the law of the ten commandments, is not to blot them out or make them void; that were to destroy them, which Christ came not to

do, but on the contrary, to do the things contained in them, which he did exactly in his life, and so was offered up a Lamb without spot.

4th. This is such a law as must stand in force, every jot and tittle of it, till heaven and earth pass away. Matt.v,19. But heaven and earth are not yet passed away; therefore this law stands firm. But because it is said in the text, Till all be fulfilled, hence some affirm that all was fulfilled at the death of Christ, and this fulfilling of it holds forth the abrogating of it.

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But did heaven and earth pass away then? or did Christ, by his taking upon him all that guilt which was due to us, and by his perfect fulfilling of it in his walk, take us from our obedience? God forbid. Because Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law, must we not fulfill it? The Apostle saith that for this end Christ died. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.* Rom.viii,3,4. But what is the fulfilling of the righteousness of the law, but to do the righteous things contained in the law? And in this sense every true believer doth fulfill the law, though his completeness be in Christ; for love is the fulfilling of the law, (Rom.xiii,10,) so that the commanding power of the law is such a just measure, that every one that loves acts his part towards the fulfilling of it.

5th. It farther appears to be the ten commandments, by the use Christ makes of what he had before asserted: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Matt.v,19. That is, forasmuch as that law must stand till heaven and earth pass away, and I came not to destroy it, therefore beware of breaking it, for whosoever you are that break any part of it, and shall teach men so, you shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; "but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." To prevent farther mistake, he repeateth the law in many particulars, and gives the sense, showing how far their righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees. By all of which it plainly appears, that this law, which Christ came not to destroy, is the law of the ten commandments, or the laws that were comprehended in them.

6. The Apostle confirmeth and establisheth this law after the death of Christ, as plainly appears in the third chapter of Romans, the drift of which is to set Jews and Gentiles in a like condition by nature - all breakers of the law of God, and so become guilty before him, (verse 19,) and that therefore no flesh could be justified by the deeds of the law, the law being for another purpose - to convince of sin, (verse 20,) or to bring sin to their knowledge. He proves that Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, are justified by and through faith, and not by the law of works. Verses 27-30. But lest the Gentiles should think, because they could not be justified by the works of the law, that therefore they might look upon the law

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as a thing done away or made void, he puts this question to the uncircumcised Gentiles, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." He settles this question, whether the law be in force to believing Gentiles or no, with a God forbid; which shows the greatness of his zeal against such a persuasion, it being the same answer which he gives to another gross question, whether we should continue in sin that grace might abound; and, as if that were not enough, he adds to it, Yea, we establish the law.

7. This same Apostle doth prove that the law was in force at the time of his conversion. He saith he had not known sin but by the law; he had not known lust except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." Rom.vii,7. He was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died, (verse 9,) that is, not without the letter of it, for that he had, and did in a great measure conform to, but without powerful convictions for sin by the law; and in this sense then the commandment came, sin revived, and he died that before was alive in his own apprehension. "For without the law sin was dead," (verse 8,) and by the law is the knowledge of sin; and sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and slew him. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good," (verses 11,12,) not that the holy and just law was made death unto him - God forbid - but sin, that it might appear sin, by this good law wrought death in him, that by the commandment sin might appear exceeding sinful. Verse 13. And if so, then this law did not die with the body of Christ; though we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, and that we should be married to another, even him who is raised from the dead; we being dead to that spirit of bondage in which we were held, that we set our obedience to the law no longer in the room of Christ as our head and husband; Christ by his blood having purchased us from that power that the law had over us by reason of sin. So that our service is not to satisfy the law, as a woman serves to please her husband that she is bound to; but we are not dead to serving in newness of spirit in obedience to Christ as our husband. Rom.vii,4-6. In this sense the Apostle delights in the law of God after the inward man, (verse 22,) though the other law in his members stood in great opposition to it. Verse 23. Mind this chapter well, and it will appear so plain that he that runs may read, that the Apostle intends no such thing as to take us from

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our obedience to the law, nor yet the abrogating of the law, but the contrary.

8. The same Apostle urges the law, in the very letter of it, to the Ephesians. He saith, in chapter vi,1-3, "Children obey your parents, for this is right; honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise." He proves his exhortation to be right from the commandment, and he takes notice of the order of the commandments; it is the first commandment of that second table, and it hath a promise annexed to it. He speaks in the present tense; he does not say it was the first commandment, but it *is* the first with a promise, "that thy days may be long on the earth." He urges the promise to them for their encouragement; and to prevent mistakes, he shows the extent of it, that it was not only to the Jews, that they should live long in the land of Canaan, but to the

Gentiles also; therefore the interpretation says, "that thy days may be long on the earth."

9. James gives a full confirmation to what I am treating of. He convinces them of sin by this law, in having the faith of Jesus Christ with respect of persons, as appears by chapter ii,10,11. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." He shows what law he means, and how it is that he who offends in one point is guilty of all; because, "He that saith, Do not commit adultery, saith also, Do not kill; now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." And John saith, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is the transgression of the law," (1John iii,3,4,) and in the next verse he explains what law he means, and saith, it was such transgression that Christ was manifested to take away. Now if this law of God was done away by the death of Christ, sin could not be a transgression of it so long after; neither could any be convinced of sin by it, because it was not. But the Apostle saith, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law;" which shows it was in force then, and not only so, but that likewise it should so remain.

10. Let it be considered whether this opinion that the law is done away doth not clash with redemption itself. The Apostle states that all men were under the law, and by breaking of it they came under the curse. Gal.iii,10. And Christ was made under the curse, to redeem his people from under the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through faith. Verses 13,14. Now if we were not under the commanding power, we could not be under the curse,

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(for that follows disobedience,) and if so, then Christ was not made a curse for us; neither can the blessing of Abraham come upon the Gentiles upon that account, if the Jews only were under the law, and under the curse of it. Christ's dying to redeem them from the curse, could not bring the blessing of Abraham upon the Gentiles. And again the Apostle saith, "that Christ was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal.iv,4,5. Now if we were not under the law, we could not be redeemed by Christ's being under the law, nor receive the adoption of sons thereby; but it is manifest that every one is under the commanding power of the law, and by nature under the curse; and Christ hath only redeemed his people from the curse, but they are not redeemed from their obedience to the law of God. I find no Scripture that saith so; but the contrary.

11. God complaineth of the blindness of his servants, and of the deafness of his messengers that he sent, (Isa.xlii,19,20,) and their blindness and deafness appears in this, that they did not hear nor understand God's design in the gift of his Son, that it was not to destroy the law or to slight it, but to magnify it and make it honorable. Verse 2. Previously it was in tables of stone, but now in the fleshy tables of the heart; service was then done from a spirit of bondage, but now from a spirit of adoption. And in this sense I conceive the law to be magnified and made honorable, and upon this account God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, that is, I conceive, for his Son's sake.

- i *Jones' Ch. Hist. p. 164, Am. Ed., 1824.
- ii Life of Constantine, B. 4, ch. 18. Busle ed.*
- iii *Eccl. Hist. B. 1, ch. 8.
- iv Encyclop. Art. Sund. Lond. 1791.
- v Lucius' Eccl. Hist. Cent. 4, p. 740. Bamp. Enq. p. 98.
- vi Socrates' Eccl. Hist. B. 5. ch. 21. Basle ed.
- vii Eccl. Hist: B. 7, ch. 9.
- viii Burnside on the Sabbath, p. 16.
- ix Lucius' Eccl. Hist. p. 323.
- x Chambers' Cyclop. Art. Sunday.
- xi Lucius' Eccl. Hist. p. 103.
- xii Dr. Peter Heylyn's Hist. Sab. part 2, p. 135.
- xiii Bampfield's Enq. p. 101.
- xiv Eccl. Hist. p. 29.
- xv Enq. p. 111.
- xvi Prinn's Hist. Pope's Usurpa. part 3, p. 17.
- xvii Bamp. Enq. p. 116.
- xviii Boethus, B. 13, of Scotland, p. 788. Bamp. Enq. 114.
- xix Ibid.
- xx Binius, p. 385.
- xxi Bamp. p. 118.
- xxii Purchase's Pilgrim, part 2, p. 1176.
- xxiii Hist. Bap. v. 2, p. 44.
- xxiv Researches, p. 160.
- xxv Burnside on the Sab. p. 108.
- xxvi Jones" Church Hist. p. 844.