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## ARTICLE IV.

## THE WEEKLY SABBATH

BY J. C. MURPHY, LL.D., T.C.D., PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, BELFAST, IRELAND.

1. THE weekly Sabbath has its ground, not in the periodical motions of the solar system, but in the history of the human race. Hence, in the first place, it leaves no mark on the outward course of nature. The beast of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea are not sensibly affected by its recurrence. So far, indeed, as labor is concerned, life is to them a perpetual sabbath. They know no toil, properly so called, but spend their time in a constant round of instinctive enjoyment; for the fruits of the earth are ready for their use without any preparation of art. But, with regard to the spiritual engagements of a sacred leisure, they may be truly said to have no sabbath, inasmuch as they want the higher nature which is susceptible of such delights. It follows, in the next place, that the origin and import of the sabbath are to be sought, not in the history of matter, or of brute nature, but in that book which alone contains the true and complete account of man. We propose, in the present Article, to examine three of the texts bearing upon the sabbath (Lev. xxiii. 3; Col. ii. 16, 17; Mark ii. 27, 28), and to ascertain what light they throw,

- I. On the Nature of the Sabbath;
- II. On the Change of the Dispensation of Grace;
- III. On the Christian Sabbath.

I. *The Nature of the Sabbath.*

2. This is brought before us in Lev. xxiii. 3: "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the

sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." This is one of the most interesting verses in the Old Testament. It stands at the head of this chapter on holy seasons. It reiterates and explains an institution of incalculable value for the preservation of religious feeling in the households of Israel. After a prefatory clause, it enumerates four characteristics of the sabbath—a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation, a cessation from all work, a sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. The preface to this ordinance is: "Six days shall work be done." This involves at once an allusion to history, an appeal to the memory of the past. It raises the thoughts to the six days of creative work, of which we have a record in the first chapter of Genesis. There is an admirable symmetry in the proceedings of these six days. They consist of two counterparts, or periods, of three days each. In the former, we begin with light, and go on to the creation of plants. The latter commences with the centres of light, and advances to the creation of the animal world. After the inhabitants of air, water, and earth are called into being, man himself appears with wonderful dignity upon the stage of existence. He is created after the image and in the likeness of God, the Eternal Spirit. Hence he is a spiritual being, having reason, will, and power, capable of knowing, loving, and obeying his Maker, and of holding sway over this nether sphere. When the Almighty contemplated the works of his hand, they were all, man included, pronounced to be very good. It is manifest that these six days are to be had in everlasting remembrance by the race of man. As long as memory lasts, rational, godlike man will look back with wondering interest to the fountain-head of his being.

Accordingly, the six days come up for historical notice in the fourth commandment (Ex. xx. 8-11): "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." Hence it is evident that the six days of work have their ground in the six days of creation, and consequently in the

constitution of man, the head of whose race was then called into being. And man is not the mere instinctive recipient of the blessings of life, but the rational agent, who understands motives, devises plans, and performs actions for which he cannot but feel himself responsible to the Author of his being. Hence the permission, as well as injunction, "Six days shall work be done."

In this sentence the term "work" means business, rational occupation, the putting forth of the active powers of our nature for the attainment of an end. It is the term employed to denote the activity of God, when it is said that he "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Gen. ii. 2). It is, therefore, suitable to man, who was made in the image of God. He has an end in view; he contrives the means by which it may be attained; and he puts forth the powers requisite for carrying them into effect. This last is properly called work. But we observe in the fourth commandment another term, employed in conjunction with work: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." It is important to distinguish labor from work. Labor is hard toil—the exertion of hand and foot, the organs of physical power, by the individual in pursuance of his object. Work is a more comprehensive term, including not only labor, but business, such as the routine of domestic activities, the training of youth, the exchange of commodities, and other operations that do not require hard labor. All these are allowable on the six days of the week.

The example set by the Creator, the primeval institution of the week, and the reason assigned for six days of work in the fourth commandment, combine to show that the intervention of a seventh day of rest between every six days of labor was suitable to the nature of man antecedent to the fall. This disastrous event only enhanced the necessity of the weekly arrangement of time. The self-same reasons prompt us to beware of the not uncommon error that the six days are profane, and the seventh day alone holy, or that the secular is opposed to the sacred. The six days' work of

God and the seventh day's rest are equally holy; and so it is with man. The fundamental distinction is not a moral, but a physical one; not that of the sacred and the profane, but that of work and rest. And work, the rational employment of means to an end, has been consecrated and elevated to its proper dignity by the example and the command of the Creator of man.

3. The first characteristic of the seventh day is "a sabbath of rest." This very important phrase occurs six times in scripture. It is once applied to the sabbatical year (Lev. xxv. 4), twice to the day of atonement (Lev. xvi. 31; xxiii. 32), and three times to the weekly sabbath (Ex. xxxi. 15; xxxv. 2, and in the passage now before us). The first term, "sabbath," is the ordinary name for the seventh day and for the sabbatical year (Lev. xxv.). It is also applied to the day of atonement, but to no other festival. The sabbath mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 11 is the weekly sabbath in the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, and therefore included a sabbath. This will be evident to any one who examines Lev. xxiii. 15, 16, notwithstanding the statement of Josephus to the contrary.<sup>1</sup> And the word

<sup>1</sup> The sabbath mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 11 is commonly supposed to be the first day of unleavened bread; which was a day of holy convocation, on which no servile work was to be done. Josephus, Antiq. iii. 10, 5, states indeed that the wave-sheaf was presented on the second day of unleavened bread, which implies that "the sabbath" here means the first day of unleavened bread. And the Septuagint by the phrase, "On the morrow of the first day" (*τῆ ἐπαύριον τῆς πρώτης*), and Onkelos by the rendering "after the good day," are supposed to concur with him in this statement. Nevertheless it is clearly erroneous. 1. The term "sabbath" is not elsewhere applied to any day but the weekly sabbath and the day of atonement. 2. The institution of the wave-sheaf is a new communication distinct from that of the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. xxiii. 9), and hence it is natural to understand the "sabbath" here of the weekly sabbath. 3. The feast of weeks was to be held on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, counted from the sabbath on the morrow after which the wave-sheaf was offered (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16); and as this seventh sabbath can only be a weekly sabbath, that from which it was counted must be the same. 4. Josephus is by no means accurate or consistent in all his statements. On this very point in Antiq. xiii. 8, 4, he expressly states that the pentecost was immediately after the sabbath (*ἐπέστη γὰρ ἡ Πεντηκόστη ἑορτὴ μετὰ τὸ σάββατον*); which is a clear indication of the ancient usage, and determines the sabbath, on the morrow of which the

rendered sabbath in vs. 24, 39 of the above chapter simply means a rest, as it is rendered in the phrase "sabbath of rest." The second term, "rest," occurs only eleven times — six, as we have seen, in the phrase "sabbath of rest"; once in pointing out the nature of the sabbath (Ex. xvi. 23); once in describing the first day of the seventh month, the original new-year's day; twice in reference to the first and the eighth days of the feast of tabernacles; and once in reference to the sabbatical year, which is called the year of rest. The combination of these two terms in the phrase "sabbath of rest," is very emphatic. It indicates a perfect rest as the right and duty of man on the weekly sabbath and the day of atonement, and as the right of the land in the seventh year. But leisure does not imply idleness, as liberty does not mean licentiousness. It leaves man free to attend to the higher relations of fellowship in which he stands with his Maker and his fellow-men. It suspends, as far as possible, the labors of the field and of earth, that he may realize in a special measure the joys of home and of heaven. This day is a season of rest, and therefore of liberty, of peace, of joy, of memory, and of hope. It is the poor man's day of release from the toil and moil of life, but no less the rich man's interval of relief from the engrossing and often exhausting wear and tear of the hunt after earthly pleasure, wealth, power, or fame; the day of freedom from the bondage under which man labors in consequence of the fall; the day of peace and joy, of refreshment, of that inex-

wave-sheaf was presented, to be the weekly sabbath. The Septuagint and Onkelos also describe the pentecost as the day after the seventh week, which is most simply interpreted as the day after the weekly sabbath which closed the week. 5. The Baithuseans or Sadducees, whose later representatives are the Karaites, who were zealous for scripture against tradition, regard the day in question as the weekly sabbath. 6. In the New Testament the only sabbath mentioned in connection with the feast of unleavened bread is the weekly sabbath. At the passover during which the Messiah was crucified, the weekly sabbath fell on the second day of unleavened bread (John xix. 31). The first day is hence called "the preparation," which was a day of only partial rest, as a trial and an execution took place on it, not to speak of other things that were inconsistent with a total rest. The second and third of the above reasons are decisive of the question; and the others corroborate this conclusion.

pressible delight which is felt when the chain is broken, the burden laid down, the pressure relaxed, the task accomplished, and mind and body at ease, but above all when the eye of faith beholds at leisure, and the hand accepts, the blessings of peace with God in Christ Jesus; the day of memory, when we recall the wonderful works and merciful ways of God, and the struggles and victories, the blessings and triumphs of his children in the past; and the day of hope, when gratitude for the past moves us to hope for the rest that remaineth to the people of God, and to meditate with fond anticipation on all the exceeding great and precious promises which are to be realized in that eternal rest.

4. For the sake of connection, we take as the second characteristic of the sabbath the negative sentence: "Ye shall do no work therein." Work here means the business of life, including labor, the hard toil of tilling the ground, and gathering in the raw material of human subsistence. The sabbath is here distinguished from other set days of partial rest. Besides the weekly sabbath, there were seven other days in the year set apart to a religious use, all of which are mentioned in Lev. xxiii. — the first and seventh days of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, the first day of the seventh month, the day of atonement, and the first and eighth days of the feast of tabernacles. The day of atonement differed from all the other appointed days of festival in being a fast, a day of sadness, of confession of sin, in which the people were to afflict their souls; whereas, the others were feasts, or seasons of thanksgiving and rejoicing before the Lord. The day of atonement and the weekly sabbath differed from the other six feast days in being days of perfect rest; whereas the others were days of partial rest. Of the former alone it is said that they were sabbaths of rest, in which no work was to be done. Of the latter it is only said that they were days of holy convocation, in which no servile work was to be done. They are not called sabbaths, or sabbaths of rest, and only servile work or hard labor was to be suspended on them. Hence the management

of affairs and the interchange of commodities might take place on these days, though the laborer was released from his toil. We find the trial and the crucifixion of the Lord proceeding, and the purchase of linen by Joseph of Arimathea for grave clothes taking place on the first day of unleavened bread. The weekly sabbath, on the other hand, was a day of perfect rest, on which no manner of work, servile or other, was to be done. Thus the body of the Lord was taken down hastily from the cross, and laid in the new tomb of Joseph, without the due rites of burial, before the setting of the sun, that the weekly sabbath might not be broken. There is in scripture a considerate moderation in imposing only seven days of rest besides the weekly sabbath in the whole year, and in making them all except the day of atonement days of only partial rest.

This cessation of work is curiously adapted to the physical constitution of man. "The operations of the corporeal frame consist of three parts: first, that which is involuntary and without intermission, as the action of the heart and other internal functionaries of the vital organism; secondly, that which is instinctive, as the travail of the animal power in search of food, shelter, and other natural requirements; and thirdly, that which is rational, as the effort to attain a certain end beyond the mere animal wants. The first part of the movement is kept in constant vigor by the regular supply of food. The second has its recompence in the natural repose of sleep. The third remains over to be relieved by a recurring period of rest to be determined by reason. As, on the whole, about a third part of the exertion of our powers may be due to this last source, and that for the half of the natural day, it follows that a sixth part of each natural day needs its compensating repose. After six days, therefore, a seventh day of rest seems needful to repair the waste and weariness accruing from voluntary rational effort. At all events, the special activity of the rational evidently stands in need of being recruited by a third provision, not of the animal, but of the rational, nature; and that is plainly the Sabbath."



As the law of the sabbath is a beneficent arrangement for the physical and moral good of man, occasional works of necessity and mercy are not to be regarded as breaches of it. Hence the preparing of food and drink for man and for domestic cattle, and of comforts and medicines for the sick, as far as it cannot be conveniently done on the day before, and the relief from distress or danger, as far as it cannot be safely deferred till the following day, are all allowable, as works of necessity and mercy, on this day. There is a special injunction regarding the observance of the sabbath in Ex. xxxi. 12-17; xxxv. 2, 3, immediately before the construction of the tabernacle was commenced, which appears designed to warn the people against the presumption that a work so holy as the making of the tabernacle might be prosecuted on the sabbath. In the latter passage occurs the prohibition: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings upon the sabbath-day." This appears to be a special order adapted to the occasion. In the wilderness, where they had little or no store of fuel, the kindling of a fire involved the gathering of sticks and the performance of other operations unsuitable to the day of rest. Moreover, domestic fires were scarcely necessary or little used in those days in tent life. When necessary, they could be kept in from the previous day, so that kindling would not be required. But, considering the occasion on which the prohibition was introduced, we may presume it had some reference to the forging of such metal work as was necessary for the tent of meeting. All such operations were to be suspended on the day of rest.

5. The third and leading characteristic of the sabbath is contained in the clause: "It is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." This is the highest aspect of the day. The first sabbath was the fitting sequel of the six days of creation. It was blessed and hallowed by the Creator (Gen. ii. 3). The seventh day was henceforth dedicated to the Lord, devoted to solemn worship and holy fellowship with the Lord. The due celebration of it brought man into intelligent and cordial intercourse with his Maker. This

essential character of the sabbath will shine forth in all the peculiarities of its observance.

A very important circumstance that distinguishes the observance of the sabbath is expressed in the words: "in all your dwellings." This indicates that it is to be not central, but local; not confined to the capital, but pervading the country; not peculiar to Shiloh or Zion, but common to every village and home of the people. This is a singularly interesting clause in the institution of the sabbath. It plants the holy leisure in our homes, and brings to our hearts the intimate relationship of grace and adoption, in which we and our sons and daughters, our men-servants and maid-servants, and the stranger that is within our gates stand to our Heavenly Father. The august celebration of anniversary festivals, the observance of the sublime solemnities of pure and undefiled religion in the capital of the nation, has its importance and effect. But its sweet and sanctifying influences do not penetrate into the sequestered nooks and corners of the land, nor stir the depths of stagnant life in our hamlets and households, nor entwine themselves with the very habits, memories, and affections of every inmate of our homes. The sabbath, with its hallowed rest and freedom and peace and memory and hope and present gospel, gliding softly into all our dwellings, is alone fitted to quench the strange fire of our passions, awaken the cry of faith and penitence, and call forth the melody of praise from the breast of each individual of the community. Hence the inestimable value of "the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings."

It is not difficult to understand the duties and pleasures of the home on such a day as this. They will rise with the rising light and life of the soul. But they must be always of the same tendency. The private and family devotions of the day will be more calm and leisurely than those of the busy working-days. The private meditation, the social converse, the studies and teachings and readings, the very fare and fashion and recreation, will be in keeping with the

solemnity of this primeval and heaven-born festival. Liberty, variety, spontaneity in the employments and recreations suitable to this festal day will prevent the listlessness or weariness which uniformly results from a forced sameness of occupation or protracted strain of attention. Especially must the innocent tendencies and propensities of the youthful heart towards variety, novelty, lightness, and brevity be indulged to the utmost bounds of propriety.

The social converse should be frank and sober. It is not so much the subject that is to be regulated, as the aspect in which it is to be viewed and the mode in which it is to be discussed. Let it be our aim to regard everything from a lofty, if not from the loftiest, point of view. Holiness, be it remembered, is to be the character of our thoughts, intents, words, and ways on the working-days as well as on the day of rest. This, therefore, does not mark the difference between our sabbaths and our other days. The purposes and orders and operations of business are to be banished from our sabbaths, not because they are unholy in themselves, but because they are unsuitable to the day of rest. But almost any topic of history or science or every-day experience may form the ground of remarks in harmony, or not out of harmony, with the truth of God and the day of his rest. Such conversation, on ordinary topics familiar to the mind and level to the capacity of the social circle, as will awaken attention and give it a good direction and a healthy impulse, is incomparably better than poverty of thought, dearth of ideas, apathy of spirit, blankness of imagination, and consciousness of constraint, all of which are in sheer antagonism with the notion and design of the sabbath. And there is a special advantage in admitting the themes of daily life into the tissue of our sabbath talkings, as they are thereby consecrated in our minds, and set apart, as they ought to be, to a holy use.

To an ardent heart, however, in full harmony with the mind of God and the bents of piety and humanity, more spiritual themes will not be wanting to diversify and elevate

the train of thought. Especially will the book of God, judiciously used, not read merely, but searched; not mechanically perused, but patiently dissected and probed, examined in its several principles and facts, and in their mutual relations and special ends, afford an inexhaustible fund of interesting and edifying meditation and conference. Treating of the ways of God with man, laying down the fundamental principles of human nature, epitomizing the universal history of past generations from the beginning, foreshadowing the history of the latter ages to the end of time, republishing the immutable principles of metaphysical and moral truth that had been forgotten or forsworn by man, and revealing the plan and purpose and work of mercy and salvation for the sinner in harmony with the requirements of holiness and truth, this unique volume affords a noble theme of transcendent interest for the sabbath of rest. Nor let us imagine that our sons and daughters can take little interest in the revelations of the heavenly book. Let us only smooth our brow, or, better still, light it up with the smile of real interest, of genuine joy and hope regarding the ancient, the great, the small, the high, the deep, the secret, the invisible, the visible, the terrible, the wonderful, the glorious, the excellent, the present, the coming, the spiritual things of God; and the response in the youthful heart and eye will not be wanting.

The sacred song, instinct with true poetic fire, will be appreciated, while it is willingly treasured up in the memory. The question and answer of the catechism, clearly explained or simply illustrated and rightly understood, the well-selected proof-text to be committed to memory, the choice chapter or portion of scripture for reading, expounding, and applying the history or destiny or duty of the race as treated in the Bible, the glad tidings of God's pardoning, redeeming, and regenerating love — all these afford a pleasing diversity of occupation and interest for the day of rest. The cultivated talents of pious minds have also yielded a rich harvest of books, combining the instructive with the agreeable, that are

well suited for sabbath reading. Fathers and mothers will find growing upon them the habit of profitable and entertaining conversation of a free, easy, familiar kind, that will gratify the taste, without wearying the attention. And the spontaneous question, indicating thought, is always to be encouraged, and either answered, if possible, or turned to good account.

Attention to tidiness of person and neatness of attire is not an unbefitting mark of outward respect for the sacredness of the day, and by no means devoid of its moral lesson for the youthful mind. Gentleness of manner and of voice, if wisely inculcated, will not be considered a burden on this day, if a reasonable scope be allowed to the exuberance of the spirits in some other direction. The habit of abstaining from songs and tunes and plays that are allowable on other days has not only an intrinsic propriety on this day, but tends to form the valuable habit of self-control.

It is well for parents, also, to drop the reins of conversation, whenever it is becoming tedious to themselves or to their little hearers. In a well-ordered house there is no fear of the prattle of children wandering far from the bounds of propriety, without receiving a check from a senior, or even from one of themselves. At all events, in our piety let us be natural, not stiff, constrained, or affected, if we would be at ease ourselves, or put others at their ease. We may be formal, if only we be natural. Only the earnest is fitted to make a salutary impression on the young.

Let us never forget that liberty is one of the characteristics of the sabbath. This will help to endear it to the child. Let it not, therefore, be a day of too many tasks. And, as it is a day of many joys, let not the buoyancy of the youthful mind or body be put under any control but what befits the solemn quiet of the sabbath. Let them feel that it is truly to them a day of rest, freedom, peace, joy, light, hope, and blessed memory. It would be quite incongruous with the freedom of the day to lay down for all parents or families a fixed routine of duties and relaxations for the occupation of

all its hours. The stated hours of family prayer, of meals, and of public worship will give a general direction to its engagements. The times for private devotion and reading will shape themselves according to circumstances. Nevertheless, it will be wise for the parents of each household to have some general plan, to be carried out as far as occasion permits, so that the occupations of the day may be a potent and precious means of moral training. A great deal of sanctified ingenuity may be put forth in devising the quietest and best methods of reaping the full blessedness of the sabbatic freedom and gladness and fellowship.

6. A fourth and last characteristic of the sabbath lies in the words: "a holy convocation." This leads us from the home to the meeting-place, from the private to the public worship of God. For a convocation is a meeting called together for joint action, such as the affairs of trade or state or religion. And a holy convocation is a meeting set apart for a purely religious purpose, such as the worship of God. The sabbath, then, is a day of holy convocation, of public worship in all the meeting-places of the land.

The fundamental principle of all worship, public or private, is prayer, starting from a promise and waiting for an answer. The promise is a word of God, and the answer may be a word of God. The prayer, encouraged by these cheering words of God, will expand into praise. And so we have all the elements of worship—praise, prayer, and the word of God. We have a record of its early commencement, in the words: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. iv. 26). The worship of the great Spirit is a rational service; and hence, though there could be no reading until there was a written revelation, yet it was ordained that a reason should be given of the ordinances of religion to the young (Ex. xii. 25-27; xiii. 8, 14; Deut. xxxii. 7). And as soon as the law became a written code, provision was made in it that it should be read before all Israel at the feast of tabernacles in the sabbatical year (Deut. xxxi. 10-13). And, in the course of time, the five

books of Moses, which were the first Bible of Israel, were divided into fifty-four sections, one of which was to be the lesson of each sabbath-day, and thus the whole read over once every Jewish year. In the time of Daniel the service of song became a stated part of the Temple-worship, and was probably a custom in some meeting-places long before his day. We find that Moses had no difficulty in arranging the singing of a magnificent triumphal ode on the occasion of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. In the days of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Nehemiah public attention was given to the teaching and expounding of the word of God throughout the land (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9; xxx. 2; Neh. viii., ix. Thus the worship of God grew, as occasion required, from the living root of prayer into the goodly tree of prayer, praise, reading and expounding the word of God, and exhorting the assembled worshippers in accordance with its heavenly lessons. Such was the occupation of the holy convocation on the sabbath of rest, according to the institution of Moses, the servant of the Lord. It was truly a rational and edifying service. Before the invention of printing and the appliances of a literary education, it was of inestimable worth to the successive generations of Israel as a training-school for truth and purity of morals and religion. And even in the midst of our present wealth of book-learning and periodical-intelligence, it has still the peculiar and indispensable advantage of the living voice of living men speaking to the living and the dead, whether they can read or not, of the things that concern eternal life. This holy convocation, with its spiritual exercises, may, without exaggeration, be said to be essential to the growth of true religion and the restitution of all things in a world that has sunk into moral disorder and decay.

Moreover, the people are instructed that these holy convocations of the seventh day are to be "in all your dwellings." This is a circumstance of paramount interest and of the most momentous consequence. The seven holy convocations of the annual festivals were held in the ecclesiastical metropolis of the country, and therefore mainly representative, as

the women and the children and many of the men were absent. But the holy convocation of the sabbath was to be held in all the dwellings of the land, in every hamlet, village, or township in which the people dwelt. In a genial clime the town square, the village green, or the sequestered dell under the widespread oak or terebinth will be the meeting-place of the holy convocation. There is nothing, however, to hinder the spreading of the tent, the rearing of the tabernacle, or the erection of the more permanent edifice for the holy convocation of the weekly sabbath. Thither went the rural multitude in their best array to keep the holy day, to pour out the desires of their heart to God, to raise the grave, sweet melody of thanksgiving to him, and to hearken with reverent attention to his word read, and it might be expounded, by the elders that had the rule over them. It is evident this ordinance was of vital importance for the growth of piety and the maintenance of true religion through the length and breadth of the land. And there can be little doubt that, in compliance with this wise and simple regulation, meeting-places were early established, and holy convocations held in many parts of the land from the very first settlement of Israel, and that they had the effect of keeping up the light and life of religion in some of the humble abodes of the country, when it had well nigh died out in the high places of the nation. This alone will sufficiently account for the knowledge of God and the habit of piety which in times of declension still lingered and occasionally gleamed out in unexpected places throughout the history of the people. It was owing, in part, at least, to this custom that Deborah and Barak, Gideon and Manoah, Boaz and Ruth, Elimelech and Hannah, and other judges and worthies, were found to espouse the cause of God, and that seven thousand in Israel in the time of Elijah had not bowed the knees to Baal.

And it is equally undoubted that, if this institution had been fully carried out and faithfully maintained, the national piety would have flourished apace, the temptations of super-



stitution would have been overcome, the encroachments of surrounding idolatry would have been successfully resisted, and the Lord's people would have sooner become, what they were destined to be, a light to the Gentiles. And it may be added, that primitive Christianity revived and carried to a higher perfection the rational observance of the sabbath and the religious ordinances of the holy convocation, and that the churches of the Reformation held their ground and perpetuated their vitality, just in proportion as they acknowledged and restored the sacred rest, as well as the holy convocation of the primeval sabbath, in all their dwellings.

This aspect of the sabbatic institution unfolds to us the origin of the synagogue. A synagogue is, in its original sense, a congregation for the worship of God. It afterwards came to signify the place of meeting for worship. It has been alleged that synagogues took their rise in the times of the Maccabees. They are, indeed, mentioned by Josephus (*Jewish War*, vii. 3, 3) as existing in their time, but not as then a new institution. Moreover, the stone and lime building is not the essence of the synagogue. This venerable institution had its rise in the custom of calling upon the name of the Lord, mentioned in *Gen. iv. 26*. It was re-enacted in the verse now before us, and from the time of Moses it is probable that it did not altogether cease to exist down to our own day. It is most probable that the synagogues mentioned in *Psa. lxxiv. 8* were really meeting-places or tents for holding the holy convocations of the weekly sabbath.

The sabbath, in fine, was sanctified by the example of God, who in six days made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day rested and was refreshed (*Ex. xxxi. 17*), who blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it (*Ex. xx. 11*). It was deemed worthy of a place in the ten commandments. Its position there shows that it immediately concerns the glory of God, as well as the good of man. Its principle is, that one day out of seven should be dedicated to sacred rest and refreshment of body and spirit. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, employers and entertainers, are

made directly accountable for its observance (Ex. xx. 10). It is thus a salutary check on the temptation to avarice and tyranny on the part of the rich and the powerful. It asserts the right of God and man to a seventh part of time for hallowed rest, refreshment, and intercommunion. It is the reasonable and beneficent provision of him who made man and understands his nature. It is coeval with the origin of man, and congruous with his physical and moral nature. "Made for man," looking back to his past and forward to his future, and intermingling with his habits and associations, it exercises a benign and sacred influence on the whole heart and life.

## II. *The Change in the Economy of Grace.*

7. After the fall, the coming of the Messiah is the grand central point in the history of the human race. The former generations were taught by prophecy and figure to look forward with longing eyes for his advent. And the latter ages are directed to look back with thankful remembrance to the atonement completed by his death and attested by his resurrection, while they at the same time look forward with fond anticipation for his second coming to consummate the restitution of all things by raising the dead, pronouncing the final judgment, winding up the affairs of this world, and inaugurating the kingdom of glory. It is manifest, therefore, that the epoch of his first coming was fraught with a mighty revolution in the condition of the church, and attended with a corresponding alteration in the economy of grace. This is indicated in the following words of the apostle Paul: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. ii. 16, 17). It is taken from a remarkable chapter, in which the apostle touches with a master hand the counter tendencies of rationalism and ritualism, which are constantly appearing in the religious history of man. To elucidate the change of the economy of salvation, we

shall consider, first, the things that are a shadow of things to come, the body of which is Christ; and next, the admonition of the apostle: "Let no man judge you" in these things.

8. First, meat and drink, or eating and drinking, and the ordinances of the holy day, the new moon, and the sabbath are here described as the shadow of the things of Christ. It is obvious that these rites are not of heathen, but of Jewish, origin; not from a human, but a divine, source. For they are said to be a shadow of Christ. If they had been Gentile rites of man's device, they could not have been a shadow of things to come. Merely human rites can have no authority, and therefore no significance. And they are devoid of any prefigurative import. Proceeding from a fallible source, they are liable to propagate error; and purporting to be an addition and an amendment on that which God has deemed sufficient, they tend only to obscure the meaning and weaken the force of that which is divine. The invention and use of them is therefore a mere presumptuous interference with the prerogative of heaven. The rites here mentioned, however, are declared to be a shadow of things to come, and hence they must be a part of the Mosaic ritual, which was of divine origin.

Meat and drink form an important and significant part of this ritual. In Lev. ii. we have the meat-offering, or oblation. It stands after the burnt-sacrifice (Lev. i.), and therefore presupposes the propitiation for sin as already made. But the meat-offering was handed over to the priest, and therefore did not involve a solemn eating before the Lord on the part of the ordinary worshipper. We meet with this, however, in the peace-offering (Lev. iii.; vii. 11-18). From the latter passage we learn that in the peace-offering the worshipper partook of the victim offered with the unleavened cakes, one of which was presented as a memorial to the Lord, and with the leavened bread, which was prepared for this special occasion. Now, the peace-offering was to be voluntarily presented by those who were

at peace with God through the blood of the atonement made in type by the burnt-sacrifice. And the common meal after it was a symbol of the communion of the saints in the blessings of salvation. Hence these blessings came to be specially indicated by the bread which was then solemnly eaten before the Lord.

The drink-offering, or libation, is brought to view in Num. xv., from which it appears that with a stated meat-offering there was to be a drink-offering of a fourth part of a hin of wine for a lamb, a third part for a ram, and a half for a bullock. This was to accompany every offering, and among others the peace-offering. And, from Deut. xiv. 23-27, it is manifest that the worshipper, after presenting his peace-offering, partook not only of meat, but also of drink, when he appeared before the Lord with his household as accepted through the atonement and entitled to share in the blessings of salvation. Hence we gather that bread and wine were appointed emblems, not strictly of atonement, but of salvation through an atonement, and that partaking of them was a type of the enjoyment of salvation by the worshipper.

Hence meat and drink, and in particular bread and wine, are a shadow of Christ. He said unto the Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John vi. 32, 33). He then says explicitly of himself: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). Hence we perceive that Jesus is both meat and drink to the soul. It is said of wine that it cheereth God and man; and how can it cheer God so much as by typifying the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin? Bread and wine appear at a very early date as the staff of life. On the return of Abraham from the rescue of Lot, Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, came forth to meet him with bread and

wine. It is proper here to repeat that these elements express not the propitiation for sin, but its consequent blessings, namely, the pardon, peace, and privileges belonging to the ransomed people of God. They are, therefore, a shadow of the benefits of the redemption that is in Christ.

9. The second class of things that foreshadow Christ are thus described: "In respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath." The word "respect" here means the part, portion, or ordinance appertaining to each of these occasions. It is not the set time in itself that is typical of Christ, but the ordinances appointed for it, and giving character and significance to it. The holy day refers to the annual festivals of the Mosaic ritual, of which the chief are three — the feasts of unleavened bread, of weeks, and of tabernacles. The feast of unleavened bread begins the cycle of the year. On the night on which the children of Israel were to depart from Egypt, they were commanded to slay a lamb, to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and the side-posts of the door, and to partake of the roasted flesh, with loins girt and staff in hand, ready for the march. On that night the destroying angel passed over Egypt. He passed over the households unharmed where the blood was on the lintel and side-posts of the door. But where there was no blood on the lintel and side-posts, on the morrow the first-born of man and of beast was found dead. The passover, then, is the feast of redemption, and hence Christ is called "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

The feast of weeks was at the end of the grain harvest, as that of unleavened bread was at the beginning of it. The offering peculiar to this feast was the two wave-loaves of wheat flour. Bread is the staff of life. And Jesus says of himself: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." As Christ gives legal life, that is, the right to life, by the passover in which the lamb of propitiation was slain, so he gives spiritual life by the Holy Spirit of life descending on the apostles and the church. The feast of weeks was simply

the complement of the feast of unleavened bread. They are related as the meat-offering to the burnt-sacrifice, or as the feast to the preceding sacrifice in the peace-offering, and therefore form two parts of a great whole. In like manner the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost was the consequence of the atonement made by the Son of God, after which he ascended to the Father, and sent down the promised Spirit.

The feast of tabernacles represents a new stage in the typical history of redemption. The vintage, as well as the harvest, has now been completed, and the ingathering of the fruits of the earth has followed. The time for enjoying all the rewards of human industry is come. It is a season of repose, of gladness, of gratitude, and of enjoyment. It is typical of the end of all things earthly, of the realization of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. As the passover foreshadows redemption from death, and the feast of weeks restoration of life, so the feast of tabernacles prefigures pardon, acceptance, and everlasting inheritance with the Father. Thus these three festivals represent the three stages of salvation of Christ — redemption by his doing and dying, renewal of life by his Spirit and power, and reception into glory by the good-will and word of his Father. They form, therefore, a singularly full and particular shadowing forth of the things of Christ.

The new moon is distinguished chiefly by its sacrifices, of which we have an account in Num. xxv. 11-15. They consist of a manifold burnt-sacrifice and a kid of the goat for a sin-sacrifice. It is needless to say more at present than that these are shadows of things in Christ.

The sabbath had also its proper burnt-sacrifice of a lamb in the morning and another in the evening, besides the continual burnt-sacrifices of every day. Thus was the great propitiation of Christ foreshadowed every day, every week, every month, and in a cycle of festivals every year. The ordinances on these festal occasions represented the great atonement itself, and the meat and drink the participation

in that eternal life which flows from it. And thus the year, the month, the week, and the day were consecrated to the God of salvation.

10. The admonition of the apostle concerning all these shadows of Christ is: "Let no man, therefore judge you." This gives rise to several reflections of very considerable importance with respect to the change in the economy of grace. In the first place, the apostle does not formally abrogate these ritual observances. He merely says, Let no man judge you in these matters. He simply makes them optional, with the Jew, as well as with the Gentile. He could not do more. These rites were a divine institution, and therefore allowable, especially for those who had observed them from their youth. The Jews were zealous for the law in proportion to the ardor of their nature. The apostle himself complied with some of the Jewish forms. But they were no longer obligatory, when the purpose for which they were instituted was served, and the reality which they prognosticated was come. He therefore tacitly permits their observance by such as were attached to them from long habit or free choice. But he refuses to admit this observance to be morally binding on those who have in Christ the substance of which they are but the shadow. In this gentle way must these Mosaic rites be allowed to pass into disuse.

We learn from this admonition that ceremonial forms, even of divine appointment, are secondary in importance to moral principles. This is a maxim constantly insisted upon in the Old Testament. When Saul pleaded that the best of the sheep and of the oxen taken in the expedition against Amalek were spared, contrary to the express command of God, only that the people might offer a sacrifice unto the Lord their God, Samuel made the indignant retort: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). When our Lord wished to rebuke the formalism of the scribes and pharisees, he brought up before them an

unnoticed, if not unknown, saying by an ancient prophet : " For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice ; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings " (Hos. vi. 6). Mercy and the knowledge of God are the fundamental principles of all moral and evangelical truth. The acknowledgement and acceptance of these form the right intents and motives of the worshipper in presenting his sacrifice and burnt-offering. These are essential to a right understanding between God and the soul, with or without the shadow of the great propitiation which Christ has made ; and without these sacred motives, culminating in faith towards the Redeemer and repentance towards the Father, neither the shadow nor the substance can be of any avail for the salvation of the soul.

11. It follows, moreover, that he who has Christ and all the benefits of redemption does not need to observe those rites which were a shadow of these while yet to come. Now that the archetype of all these types is come, the example and the shadow of the heavenly things decay and wax old and are ready to vanish away. Let no man, therefore, judge you in these things, seeing you have the reality of which they were the symbolic promise. This explains the " therefore." Nothing can surpass the grandeur of the preceding description of the New Testament believer's privilege: " And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power ; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism, wherein, also, ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses ; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross ; having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." " There-



fore," being complete in him, quickened together with him, and accepted of the Father in him, and delivered from the thralldom of the prince of the power of the air through him, let no man judge you in regard to the by-gone shadow of this great realized salvation.

12. It behooves us to notice, farther, that, though the Mosaic ritual had served its purpose, and was now ready to vanish away, it does not follow that the church of the New Testament was to have no symbolic ordinance nor festive sabbath of rest. We are to discriminate between the old and new, and between the transient and the perpetual. The sacrifice, no doubt, on sabbaths, new moons, and annual festivals, of bulls and goats, that could not take away sin, or make the worshippers perfect as pertaining to the conscience, was but the prelude of Christ, the true Lamb of God, as well as the true High-Priest. And, therefore, it was fit that this should vanish away on his appearance. The new moon, also, had no other significance, apart from the sacrifices that were prescribed to consecrate the beginning of the month. But other rites had still an unexhausted significance; and in these the symbol was still to remain, though the form might change. And no one was more familiar with this principle than the apostle Paul. Hence circumcision had its significance perpetuated in baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12); the solemnity of eating and drinking in the passover, and the peace-offering had its continuance in the Lord's supper (Matt. xxvi. 26); and in like manner it can be shown that the seventh-day sabbath has its legitimate successor in the first-day sabbath. These blessed realities are still things present and to come to the children of God, under the New Testament, as under the Old. And they have precisely the same relation to their appointed signs and seals in the new as in the old economy. The old signs have merely received a new form correspondent with the new economy. They do not pass away; but still serve to refresh the memory, the faith, the hope, and the love of the saints of God. And the sabbath of rest, the holy convo-

cation, the sabbath of the Lord in all our dwellings, is at least as requisite, as authoritative, and as suitable for the moral and spiritual well-being of man in Christendom, as in the kingdom of Israel.

13. A distinguished expositor of scripture, to whom the churches of Christ owe a debt of gratitude for his commentary on the New Testament, the general excellence of which we are happy to acknowledge, has the following remark on the present text: "If the ordinance of the sabbath had been, *in any form*, of lasting obligation on the Christian church, it would have been quite impossible for the apostle to have spoken thus. The fact of an obligatory rest of one day, whether the seventh or the first, would have been directly in the teeth of his assertion here; the holding of such would have been still to retain the shadow, while we possess the substance." This is a very strong statement. The best way, however, to test the force of an argument, is to apply it to a parallel case; and, happily, we are furnished with one in the very text before us, which begins thus: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink." To this part of the sentence let us apply the argument of the esteemed writer: "If the ordinance of eating and drinking had been, in any form, of lasting obligation on the Christian church, it would have been quite impossible for the apostle to have spoken thus. The fact of an obligatory eating and drinking would have been directly in the teeth of his assertion here; the holding of such would have been still to retain the shadow, while we possess the substance." Now, it so happens that the apostle Paul not only acknowledged the obligation of baptism, but put on record the institution of the Lord's supper, which is an obligatory eating and drinking, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 23-29). Hence the argument entirely breaks down in the first part of the sentence, and therefore equally fails in the second; and it applies, indeed, still less in the latter part, because the apostle speaks here, not of the sabbath, but of a part or ordinance of the sabbath. It is manifest, therefore, that our author

has misinterpreted the meaning of the apostle, and made him say that which he did not intend. It may be said that this does not prove the perpetuity of the sabbath. But it refutes the only argument that can be brought against its perpetuity; and therefore the sabbath, as a primeval institution of God, can stand alone.

It cannot be said that the meat and drink in our text have no relation to the Lord's supper. They have simply the relation of the old and the new. The old is done away; the new is come in its place. In other respects, they both signify precisely the same thing, namely, the benefits of the great and only propitiation, all of which may be included in any of the phrases, "salvation," "eternal life," "glory, honor, and immortality," or the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And so it is with the sabbath. There is here the old and the new, as we hope to show in the sequel. And there is precisely the same import and the same suitableness to the nature of man and the exigencies of the religious life. It is to be borne in mind, too, that the sabbath is not in itself a mere symbol of anything that has already come, that it was instituted in the era of primeval innocence, and that it was embodied in the ten commandments, which are binding in their present form as long as man is in the body.

### III. *The Christian Sabbath.*

14. The word of God is quick and powerful. The Psalmist says: "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." There is nothing so contrary to the reason of man, the usage of speech, or the style of scripture, as a bald and narrow literalism. Analogy and abstraction are familiar to the infant mind. They play a chief part in the birth and growth of language, and they have their noblest sphere in the consecrated figures and lofty generalizations of scripture. Examples of this fact are abundant and obvious. "Life," in scripture, is not only the natural life, which may be called the literal sense, but legal life, spiritual life, resurrection.

life, eternal life. "Death" is used in an equal variety of meanings. "The word" is not merely the articulate sound, but the set of written characters, the sentence, the law, the gospel, the whole Bible, and even the second Person of the Godhead. Such being the expansive freedom with which words are applied in scripture, it is strange that the children of the book should have so often become the slaves of the letter and the abettors and enforcers of a rigid and unmeaning formality. Such were the Pharisees in their conception and practical observance of the sabbath. They objected to the plucking of a few ears of corn by the way for the appeasing of hunger as a breach of the sabbath rest. In answer to the outward and mechanical view which prompted their censure of his disciples, our Lord unfolds the true relation of the sabbath to man in the following remarkable statement: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath." He here enunciates a principle, and draws an inference from it.

15. The principle is, that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. The first thought that strikes us in this statement is the dignity of man. The sabbath was made for man. The sabbath was only a means; man was the end. When we reflect that this was the day on which God rested from all his work which he had created and made, we understand that it had a right to everlasting remembrance in the annals of time. When we remember that he blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it, we become aware of the importance and sacredness which he attached to the day. But all this serves only to enhance the dignity of man, for whom, we are informed, this hallowed day was made. This is, however, only a single instance of the dignity that belongs to man. The six day's creation was merely a preparation for his entrance upon the sphere of being. The gleaming forth of light; the arrangement of the atmosphere; the emerging of the dry land and clothing of it with a mantle of living green; the periodic times and in-

fluences of the sun, moon, and stars; the peopling of sea, air, and land with fish, fowl, and beast—all this was but the orderly fitting up and furnishing of earth for the habitation of man. But when we go back to his origin, we arrive at the true source of his dignity. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him.” Now, God is a Spirit; and hence man, who is created in his image, is a spirit, having the faculties of understanding, will, and power; capable of penetrating into the nature and design of all things around him, of comprehending his own being and powers, and of apprehending and revering the eternal Author of his existence. When we contemplate, therefore, the grandeur and glory of man’s original nature, we do not wonder that the earth and all its inhabitants were formed to be the sphere of his dominion, and that the sabbath itself, the weekly commemoration of the six days’ creation, was also made for man.

16. The next point that comes out in the consideration of this passage is the perpetuity of the sabbath. The sabbath was made for man by him who made man, and knew his inmost nature and real wants. While, therefore, man exists as he is, the sabbath must coexist with him. It was not an expedient, adopted for a particular phase of his being, or called into existence by a special emergency, or framed to be part of a peculiar economy designed for a chosen race. It was an institution made for man at the origin of his being, antecedent to the fall, the propagation of his race, the dispersion of his posterity throughout the earth, and the formation of the nations and polities of after times. Hence it is manifest that the sabbath is to last as long as man. He who made man knew his whole nature, the whole course of his development, the laws by which it was regulated, and the results to which it tended; and he made the sabbath for man. Hence the sabbath is simply as perpetual as the race. Hence it finds its place in the ten commandments, which are a compend of the moral law adapted in its present form

to man so long as he is in the flesh. And the nature of the sabbath we have found to be adapted, not to the physical wants of the inferior animals, but to the rational and religious nature of man. As long, therefore, as man remains in the conditions of his earthly existence, so long, at least, must the sabbath continue to be a law of his life. Nothing could more plainly demonstrate the perpetuity of the sabbath.

And we are not to overlook the negative statement, "And not man for the sabbath." If this had been the case, the sabbath might have been a rigid, unbending rule, to which the free-agency of rational man should have been forcibly or mechanically conformed. This would have been a preposterous arrangement, utterly opposed to reason and propriety, subjecting the moral to the physical, and ushering in that bondage of the will to the outward form in which the Pharisees were held captive, and leaving no scope for the free play of the moral and susceptible nature of man in the works of necessity and mercy. Such an order of things could not come from the fountain of reason and freedom. This negative form of the relation of man to the sabbath is added for the sake of contrast, clearness, and emphasis.

17. The inference which the Lord draws from the principle is this: "Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath." If the sabbath is made for man, then is he to some extent lord also over the sabbath. As the dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and the beast of the land has been committed to him, so also has the due control of the sabbath been assigned to him as the possessor of reason. But, as he cannot change the nature of the inferior animals, so neither can he alter the principle of the sabbath. He is not at liberty to neglect or profane the day of rest by any worldly employment or recreation. But, as the sabbath was made for his good, he is free to do a work of necessity or mercy on this day of rest. The moral law of mercy, in case of necessity, prevails, for the occasion, over the positive law of restraint from all the business of this life.

But it is to be observed that it is not "therefore man,"

but "therefore the Son of Man, is Lord also of the sabbath." The Son of Man has a twofold authority over the sabbath. As man he has the discretionary power, already noticed, of performing a deed of mercy or necessity on this day. But the Son of Man is here a phrase of peculiar meaning. It is employed by our Lord, conscious of being the Son of God, to intimate that he has now been born of a woman, and become the Son of Man, for the purpose of recovering the rights that man had lost through the fall, by fulfilling all righteousness, and submitting to the penalty of death. The Son of Man was therefore an emphatic and highly significant phrase by which the Son of God was designated when he became manifest in the flesh. In this higher character he was therefore Lord of the sabbath in a higher sense. It was therefore competent for him not only to allow works of necessity and mercy, as a legitimate deviation from the strict letter of the sabbatic rule, but to make such alteration regarding the day as the altered state of the human race might require. There was no fundamental change in the nature of man calling for any modification in the law of the day. But an event of transcendent importance was to occur on the seventh day, that would render it unsuitable to be any more the sabbath of rest; and events of corresponding magnitude were to take place on the first day of the week, marking it out as the most suitable day for the sabbath of all subsequent time. It is undeniable that the Son of God, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ages, and none but he, has authority to make this change of the day.

18. Having laid down these fundamental principles, let us review the history of the first day of the week, as recorded in scripture. The first of all first days of the week was the first of the six days of creation. On this day "God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were

the first day." This day, then, is illustrious as the first day on which light shone on the world of man. To a spectator who had never witnessed such a sight before, the process must have been inexpressibly grand. In the stately march of twenty-four hours, the midnight darkness, with slow, imperceptible steps, gave way to the dawning light, as it increased more and more to the perfect day; which, after waxing in brightness till the noon, again gradually waned until the evening, when the twilight with the same lingering pace retreated before the returning darkness. From that day to this the same sublime panorama has been passing before our eyes. But the unceasing reiteration prevents it from exciting any feeling of astonishment in our minds.

It will be remembered that Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). He is also called the Sun of Righteousness, that ariseth with healing in his wings. And the church is summoned to be the light of the world in the significant words: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Christ is the light of truth and life—the moral and quickening light, of which the physical light, called into manifestation on the first day, is the most appropriate emblem.

19. The next first day of the week we have to notice is that mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 11. The children of Israel were directed to bring a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest unto the priest. Of this it is written: "And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." The sabbath here mentioned is the sabbath in the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, and therefore must have included a sabbath. Now, the morrow after the sabbath is the first day of the week; and, accordingly, on this day the wave-sheaf of barley was offered and accepted for the people.

The sheaf of barley is the symbol of life. It implies, therefore, righteousness, the ground of acceptance, and



therefore of the right and the enjoyment of life. Under the influence of sun and shower, the seed cast into the ground strikes root, and puts forth the stalk, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. This is a lively emblem of a higher life. Now, John says of the Word: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." This connects the first day with that of Gen. i. 3. The Lord himself says: "I am the way and the truth and the life." The wave-sheaf is therefore an emblem of Christ, the righteousness and the life, as well as the light, of men.

20. The next first day of the week is the day which is called the feast of weeks, which is instituted in the following terms: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord." These wave-loaves are of wheaten flour. They are presented at the end of the grain harvest. The offering is no longer the raw material, but the manufactured product, baked and ready for the table. The one sheaf is now replaced also by the two loaves, indicating a double measure of the same blessing in its full perfection. For the feast of weeks is the consummation of that of unleavened bread, and the two loaves are evidently of like significance with the one sheaf, though in a more advanced stage. These two loaves are presented on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, and therefore on the first day of the week.

Here, again, we have a very striking emblem of life, or that which sustains life. Now, Jesus says expressly of himself: "I am the bread of life," "the living," life-giving bread. The two loaves are not unsuitable to denote the twofold life which he bestows—the life of the soul and the life of the body. He raises from bodily death all those

whom he has raised from spiritual death. "I am the resurrection and the life."

21. Passing from the Old to the New Testament, we meet with still more remarkable events distinguishing the first day of the week. Let us first call to mind the unparalleled event of that which was properly the last seventh-day sabbath. Our Lord, we are aware from history, was crucified on the sixth day of the week, which was on this year the first day of unleavened bread. It was, therefore, a day of partial, not of total, rest, in which no servile work was to be done, though the ordinary routine of business was not suspended. As the following day was the sabbath, and that a high day, because it was in the week of unleavened bread, the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross on the sixth day, wrapped in the linen clothes which Joseph of Arimathea had purchased, and hastily laid in his new tomb before sunset, that the sabbath might not be needlessly broken. And so, during all that live-long Jewish sabbath-day the Lord of life lay under the power of death. That was the only full day during which his body was imprisoned in the tomb.

It is manifest that this day was no longer fitted to be the day of rest, of peace, of joy, of blessed memory, or of liberty. The Lord of life and glory now lay shrouded in the death and dishonor of the grave. This day is henceforth only a day of unrest, of darkness, of mourning, of terror, and of constraint. And it is to be observed that the event that has now taken place is at least co-ordinate in importance with that which occurred on the first seventh day. Then God rested from the work of the six days' creation, of which the crowning achievement was the creation of man. Now, the Son of God, by whom all things were created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, has fallen under the power of death, as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world of fallen man. Beyond all question, the latter is as great, if not a greater, event than the former.

Whatever the former did to glorify the day, the latter has done to cover it with dishonor. This is obviously a sufficient reason for the change of the day of rest. And, in point of fact, the seventh-day sabbath was now abrogated.

22. We come now to the morrow after the sabbath, the first day of the week. Early in the morning the women, who had been the constant attendants of Jesus, were at the sepulchre to perform the last rites of friendship to the deceased, which had been deferred on account of the sabbath. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear ye not; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; for HE IS RISEN." Mary Magdalene, after bearing the first message which brought Peter and John to the sepulchre, returned and lingered, weeping, and at length looked into the tomb and found it empty. On turning back disconsolate, she "saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. He said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary," in his wonted tone, and she recognized the Lord. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." He now made his immediate appearance before his Father, and was "accepted" for his people.

Here we are to bear in mind that this was the morrow after the sabbath in the passover week (Lev. xxiii. 11), on which the wave-sheaf was presented to the Lord. The wave-sheaf was the token of life. Now, on this same day, Jesus,

the beloved Son of God, has risen from the grave of death to the resurrection of life, and presented himself to the Lord, by whom he has been accepted for his people. We ask, What is the import of this great act? Here is the Father accepting, and the Son accepted, for the chosen people. Is not this event commensurate in magnitude with the resting of God after the work of creation? Is not the redemption of man parallel in grandeur with the creation of man? Is not the glory of grace "the glory that excelleth" all the glory of power, wisdom, and goodness? Is not the day of the resurrection of the second Adam greater than the day of the creation of the first? Is not this day worthy to be the new sabbath of rest, when the seventh day has become a day of gloom?

23. Another first day of the week now comes before us, of equal significance with the day of resurrection. This is the day of pentecost. We have already seen that the feast of weeks was on the morrow after the seventh sabbath from the sabbath in the passover week; and, as the seven weeks amount to forty-nine days, this morrow is the fiftieth day, that is, the pentecost. Hence the pentecost was always on the first day of the week. On this day the apostles were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Before this the disciples were weak, ignorant, unlearned, wavering, and contentious. Peter denied the Lord thrice, and when their Master was seized as a criminal, they all forsook him and fled. But now they are brave, enlightened, mighty in the scriptures, resolute, preachers of the word, speaking in the tongues of all who heard them the wonderful works of God; and Peter — the hasty, rash, impetuous, inconstant Peter — preaches the first sermon, on which three thousand believed and were

baptized, and "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Now, let us mark what this means. Jesus, having shown himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of the apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, while they beheld, was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. He had said: "The Comforter will come unto you. . . . And when he is come he will convince the world, . . . . Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." He is now gone to his Father, and they see him no more, which is a proof that he had finished his work; since, otherwise, he would have been sent back to finish it, and they would have seen him once more. He now furnishes a still more striking proof that he has been accepted and endowed with all power in heaven and in earth. For, according to his promise, he sends the Comforter from heaven on the day of pentecost to give life and power to the assembled apostles for the evangelization of the world.

This was the day on which the two wave-loaves were presented to the Lord. And after he had completed the demonstration of his resurrection, and conveyed his last instructions to his apostles, Jesus ascended finally into heaven. And now, after the short interval of a week, the great High-Priest, being also the Lamb of God and the bread of life, by his all-prevalent intercession has obtained and sent down the Holy Spirit to be the Quickener and Comforter of the apostles and of the church of the latter ages. He is thus the holder and dispenser of a twofold life. He now adds the life of regeneration to the life of redemption. And hence he is fitly represented by the two loaves of wheaten flour, denoting the completeness of that life of salvation which is contained in him. By the preaching of the inspired apostle the Holy Ghost begets faith in Jesus Christ and repentance toward God, the two fruits of the new birth, in thousands of anxious souls. Being united by faith in the

risen Saviour, they are justified and adopted in him, and so made partakers at the same time of the inward principle and the outward right of eternal life.

The regenerating work of the Holy Ghost, in baptizing the apostles with fire, and adding daily to the church such as should be saved, is a manifestation of divine power equal in importance with the propitiation for sin effected by the death and resurrection of Christ. And thus the first day of the week was signalized by the resurrection of the Son of God and by the descent of the Holy Ghost. The atonement and the new birth are two of the three essential parts of salvation, due to the second and third Persons of the God-head. Hence the first day of the week is eminently and exclusively fitted to be the new sabbath of rest.

24. Let us now turn our attention to the practice of the apostles regarding the first day of the week. The ten met together on the evening of the first day, when Jesus, having that morning risen from the dead, stood in the midst of them, and said: "Peace be unto you." Again, after eight days, that is, on the next first day of the week, they were again assembled, and Thomas with them; and Jesus stood in the midst of them, as before, and said: "Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." It is not improbable, from the expressions, "Being assembled together," and "When they were come together," that the day of the ascension was the first day of the week, especially as in this case there would be precisely forty days between the resurrection and the ascension (Acts i. 2, 3, 6). If so, there would be a curious significance in the verse: "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey." But we do not press this. On the day of pentecost, however, which was the first day of the week, they were all, again, with one accord in one place. And on this occasion the

Holy Spirit descended upon them. Here two things are to be noted: First, that the apostles were wont to meet on this day, and next, that on two of these occasions Jesus appeared to them, and on the third the Holy Ghost descended on them. By both of these events their meeting on that day was sanctioned and approved.

Advancing, in the Acts of the Apostles, we meet with the following passage: "And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow" (Acts xx. 6, 7). Now, this is the same Paul who is supposed to have announced the absolute cessation of a sabbath of rest. We find him here abiding in one place seven days, which is evidently a week, or interval between one holy convocation and another. And on the first day of the week the disciples come together to break bread, and Paul preaches unto them. We have thus on record four clear instances of the custom of assembling for worship on the first day of the week.

Moreover, the custom of assembling for worship is noticed again and again in the writings of this self-same Paul. In 1 Cor. xi. he praises the brethren, because they keep the ordinances (vs. 2) as he delivered them to them; and he goes on to speak of the proprieties of public worship, and incidentally of praying, prophesying, and singing, and repeatedly of their regularly coming together for these exercises into one place (1 Cor. v. 4; xi. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34; xiv. 23, 26; Heb. x. 25). Now, it is impossible to come together stately, unless there be a set time, as well as place, of assembly. Here, then, we have a day of holy convocation in all the dwellings of the people, on which they engaged in prayer, praise, reading, and expounding the scriptures. In the same Epistle to the Corinthians he expressly mentions the day of meeting: "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" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). It might not be called the sabbath, because, in common parlance, the seventh day was still called by that name. But it became, to all intents and purposes, the sabbath of the New Testament church.

There is one other noteworthy passage in the Book of Revelation: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10). We observe, 1. On this day John was in the Spirit. This recalls to us the day of pentecost, that great feast of weeks on which the Holy Ghost fell on the assembled apostles. 2. Next, on this day the Lord appeared to John in his glory and power—an incident reminding us of the first day on which he rose from the dead, and appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, to Cephas, and to the ten assembled together in the evening. 3. On this day the Lord communicated to John some part, if not the whole, of the revelation which God had given to him for the church. 4. This day is now distinguished by the special name of the Lord's day. We have in scripture two things called the Lord's, namely, the Lord's supper and the Lord's day. The former is so called because it was instituted by the Lord to commemorate his death. And when we find the apostle John in the Spirit on this solemn occasion speaking of the Lord's day, we cannot but conclude that it has been appointed, as it has been repeatedly sanctioned, by the Lord himself, to commemorate his resurrection, and become the sabbath of rest, instead of the seventh day, which, after he had lain all that day in the tomb, was unfitted to be the day of rest, of gladness, or of worship. 5. We are thus brought back to the text now before us, in which it is concluded: "Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath." He has now exercised his lordship over it by transferring it to the first day of the week—the day of light, of the wave-sheaf, of the two wave-loaves, of the resurrection of the Son of Man, and of the descent of the Holy Ghost. It reminds us, also, of the last clause in the fundamental definition of the sabbath:



“It is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.” This has been the sabbath of rest, the holy convocation, the sabbath of the Lord, in all the dwellings of Christendom.

The experience of the past has proved to all thoughtful men that the sabbath was made for man, and therefore perpetual in its obligation. It is an unspeakable boon to the sons of toil or care. It is the touchstone of a nation's piety. And the spirituality, intelligence, and efficiency of a church rise in proportion to the degree in which it remembers the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Like the fifth commandment, it has its promise. “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”