

THE SABBATH FOR MAN.

*AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF
THE SABBATH INSTITUTION,*

WITH

*A CONSIDERATION OF ITS CLAIMS UPON THE CHRISTIAN,
THE CHURCH, AND THE NATION.*

BY THE

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M.A., F.G.S., F.R.M.S., ETC.

"Magna est veritas et prævalebit."

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THIS BOOK
IS
Dedicated

BY PERMISSION TO

THE REV. CHARLES H. KELLY,
PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE
(1889-1890),

*As a mark of the sincere and respectful gratitude of the AUTHOR
for his indefatigable zeal and assiduity on behalf of*

WESLEYAN SOLDIERS,

*Obtaining for them, in the face of many difficulties and prejudices,
the inestimable blessing of SABBATH SERVICES in harmony
with their education and preferences ;*

And also

*For the untiring energy and tender sympathy which he has for
many years displayed in connection with*

WESLEYAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS ;

*Thus strengthening and safeguarding the bulwarks of
SABBATH OBSERVANCE in our own and
in foreign lands.*

P R E F A C E.

THE Lord's Day Observance Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference was enabled in 1889, through the generosity of J. T. Morton, Esq., of London, a most earnest and devoted advocate of the sanctity of the Sabbath, to offer three prizes of £50, £30, and £20, for the three best Essays on "The Church's and the Minister's Duty in Relation to the Sabbath."

The lines laid down for the guidance of competitors were such as to require a full treatment of the Sabbath question in the light of Scripture, History, Politics, and Science. It was requested, moreover, that special attention should be directed to the duty of Ministers to their Congregations, to the Wesleyan Church, and to their Country, with reference to the Sabbath.

The Rev. Professor Randles of Didsbury Theological College, and the Rev. John Baker, M.A., Senior Secretary of the Wesleyan Lord's Day Observance Committee, acted as adjudicators. They, after a most careful examination of the Essays sent in, arrived at the decision that the one contained in the following pages was "beyond

all question the best." The first prize of £50 was consequently awarded to the writer of this volume, and it is now published with the desire of putting into the hands of those who feel any interest in the subject as concise and systematic an argument for the Divine origin and permanent sanctity of the Sabbath as it was possible for the writer to construct.

For many years the author has given close and careful attention to this subject, and has from time to time published papers on various aspects of it in different religious periodicals. He has, moreover, examined most of the literature, ancient and modern, bearing upon the many questions involved. It may, therefore, be reasonably hoped that no important point has been wholly overlooked, and that the book will be of some little service in fortifying the convictions of the Christian reader, and in stimulating him to increased efforts for the preservation of one of the most beneficent institutions of society from the disastrous influences of present day neglect and abuse.

"The keeping one day in seven holy as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a State, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanises, by the help of conversation and society, the manners of the lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit. It enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them good citizens; but which yet would be worn out and defaced by an unremitted continuance of labour without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker."—BLACKSTONE'S *Commentaries*, vol. iv. p. 63.

"The Sabbath as a political institution is of inestimable value, independently of its claims to Divine authority."—ADAM SMITH.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—EXODUS xx. 8.

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THE SABBATH FOR MAN.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR all who profess any concern in the well-being of their fellow-creatures, the discussion respecting the origin and character of the Sabbath institution must have considerable interest. Even those who might view with indifference any claims to a Divine sanction that might be urged in its behalf, yet readily admit that the manner in which the Sabbath is observed has a most important bearing on the physical, social, and moral condition of the people. Apart altogether from the interest attaching to it as a religious institution, it is so highly utilitarian, so vitally concerned in rational happiness and progress, and fraught with such grave issues in the realms of sociology and morals, as that total neglect of the subject is inexcusable on the part of any who care to be thought philanthropists, or even honest citizens.

It is perhaps not to be wondered at that the sanctity of the Sabbath as a Divine ordinance should meet with but partial recognition, or that hostility against it as a religious institution should be renewed in each successive age. No truth is too sacred, no custom too venerable, to be examined and attacked by the eager,

restless human intellect. Notwithstanding its repeated vindications, the Sabbath continues to be put upon its trial, and the case has to be argued out for every generation. Materialistic renunciations of the Mosaic narrative have to be met in order to demonstrate the Divine enactment of the Sabbath law; some have to be answered who desire to make it a mere legislative ordinance or social expediency; while others, whose character and learning inspire respect for their opinions, and who rank it among Jewish or ecclesiastical rites, and so, as we think, remove the strongest reasons for holding it to be universally and perpetually binding, have to be confronted with the facts of history and the affirmations of Scripture.

It will be useful to present a brief summary of the various opinions and theories in regard to the Sabbath to which we may have to give some attention in these pages.

1. The Edenic origin of the Sabbath law is denied on rationalistic grounds. Professor Baden Powell of Oxford offered the explanation that the Mosaic cosmogony was familiar to the Jews in the form of legends and traditions, and that the Jewish legislator, for the sake of giving to the Sabbath law the force and sanctity of a Divine decree, associated it in the Fourth Commandment with the creation of the world.

2. Archdeacon Paley held that the Sabbath was given to the Jews as a memorial of important national benefits, for rest and for the exercises of piety, and that, as the reasons for its appointment were local and temporary, it has been abrogated, the Lord's Day taking its place, commemorating the Resurrection of

Christ, and being enforced upon the conscience by considerations and motives of a utilitarian character.

3. The Sabbath was an exclusively Jewish institution, and was abrogated with the Jewish ceremonial at the coming of Christ. The Fourth Commandment was partly moral and partly ceremonial, the moral element of which has been perpetuated by the Apostolic appointment of the Lord's Day. This was the teaching of the Council of Trent, though, as we shall see, the fuller development of Sabbath doctrine in the Catechism of Pius IV. was still farther from the truth. At one time these views prevailed very largely in the Church of England. Dr. Heylin advanced them when defending the "Book of Sports." In modern times they have been advocated by Dr. Hessey in his Bampton Lecture for 1860 on "Sunday : its Origin, History, and Present Obligation."

4. The Sabbath was given to the Jews as a figure of that spiritual rest which the faithful were to enjoy under the Gospel, and, with other shadows and types, was abolished by the coming of Christ, so that now no one day is more sacred than another ; but yet, on account of the necessity for agreement as to the specific day of rest and worship, the first day of the week has been appropriated to these objects by civil and ecclesiastical authority. These are the tenets of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in some parts of the Continent, and, in this country, of the Society of Friends.

5. The Decalogue being a moral code, all its provisions are perpetually binding, and consequently Saturday, and not Sunday, ought to be observed. This notion was broached by Bradbourne during the con-

troversy on the Sabbath provoked by King James' "Book of Sports."

6. The Anabaptists and Antinomians of former times endeavoured to abolish all distinctions of days, and to some extent they are imitated by the Plymouth Brethren.

7. The Sabbath was instituted in Eden, and has been observed ever since. The Fourth Commandment formulated the law or custom that had come down from Adamic times. For dispensational reasons the day has been changed, but the law has never been abrogated. The Westminster Confession has given full expression to these views, and they are accepted more or less fully by all the Protestant Churches of this country.

The conscience of England needs appealing to on the question of Sabbath observance and legislation. It is not simply a matter affecting religion, far less a mere phase of ecclesiastical controversy; it is vitally related to the order, morality, and happiness of the nation. It demands the attention of the utilitarian as well as of the advocate for the Divine sovereignty in morals. It is worthy the study of the statesman, the patriot, and the philanthropist, no less than of the theologian. On all grounds, physiological and economical, social and political, moral and religious, this subject deserves the most serious consideration of all who desire the progress and prosperity of their country and the spread of the highest morality.

It will be our endeavour to show in the following pages that the Sabbath dates from the very dawn of man's existence on the earth, and was an important feature in the Edenic dispensation; that its subse-

quent modifications, recognised and sanctioned in the Holy Scriptures, originated from Him who is both Creator of the universe and Lord of the Sabbath; that its observance was enforced in the Fourth Commandment, which, although promulgated primarily with reference to the Jews, was yet not an exclusively Jewish law; that in after-ages the Sabbath ordinance was incorporated in the system of Christianity by Divine authority; that the Lord's Day, kept from the earliest Christian times, is designed by its Divine Author to represent the earlier seventh-day Sabbath, commemorating the creation of the world and its redemption; and that, as a part of God's immutable law, as well as from its suitability to man's condition and requirements, the ordinance of the Sabbath is binding on all mankind, bringing with it grave responsibilities, but fruitful of most beneficent results when cherished and hallowed in harmony with the precepts of the Lord.

It will be obvious that such topics as these can only be adequately dealt with on Scriptural grounds. We shall, therefore, have very little to say in the following pages to those who do not accept the inspiration of the Bible. The Agnostic, even the Theist, could not be approached with arguments based upon Holy Writ. They may be influenced by considerations of a utilitarian character, and to that extent they may occasionally be reached by what we shall urge. But our main business is to enforce Sabbath observance as a duty to God, to demonstrate its Divine origin and authority, and to inquire into the proper modes of such observance, as determined for us in the Scriptures.

This is the most fitting place in which to express

grateful recognition of the influence and activity of such valuable societies as the Lord's Day Observance Society, the Sabbath Alliance of Scotland, the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association, and the Wesleyan Sabbath Committee. By the co-operation of these various organisations very much has been done in Britain of late years to promote the better observance of the Lord's Day. The Government, the Houses of Parliament, and even Boards of railway and omnibus directors anxious for high dividends, cannot but be influenced to some extent by the statistics and arguments which such societies publish from time to time, while the Churches and individual Christians are continually being appealed to. The American Sabbath Union is doing similar good service in the United States, and even as we write, a most interesting letter appears in *The Methodist Recorder* from the Rev. John Baker, M.A., secretary of the Wesleyan Lord's Day Committee, giving an account of the efforts being made in the States to purify the Sabbath, and to pass through the Legislature a Sunday Rest Bill, which has been supported by petitions representing thirteen or fourteen millions of the population.

CHAPTER I.

THE SABBATH MADE FOR MAN.

“O my God, I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbbings stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness.”

—MRS. HEMANS.

“THE Sabbath was made for man.” In the face of a Divine utterance so explicit and decisive as these words of Jesus Christ, very strong reasons to the contrary would have to be adduced before the believer in the authority of the New Testament could have any difficulty in supposing that the Sabbath institution is as old as the human race. The bulk of the evidence, however, both secular and Scriptural, favours the doctrine that the Sabbath is coeval with man.

We shall endeavour to show in this chapter that, from what we know of man's constitution, and his physical, mental, and moral requirements, there arises an antecedent or *à priori* probability that the Creator appointed the Sabbath when man was first placed on the earth, reserving for another chapter the consideration of the Mosaic testimony as to this point.

The nature of the Sabbath and its essential relation-ship to the welfare and progress of mankind being borne in mind, nothing is more likely than that there was an

Edenic day of rest and worship recurring at regular periods, and ordained by a benevolent Creator in the highest interests of His offspring.

1. It is admitted, not only by those who accept the validity of the Mosaic writings, but even by those whose theology is somewhat nebulous, that some such institution is absolutely and universally necessary to mankind. Mons. Proudhon, writing from the standpoint of Socialism, declares a day of rest at stated intervals to be indispensable to society, on grounds that are "at once civil, domestic, moral, and sanitary;" and observes a little farther on in his remarkable pamphlet: "*Dans la célébration du Dimanche est déposé le principe le plus fécond de notre progrès futur.*"¹ Robertson of Brighton, who was as broad in his interpretations of Moses as he was lax in his views respecting the Sabbath, yet affirms emphatically: "Eternal as the constitution of the soul of man is the necessity for the existence of a day of rest."

Physiology, there can be no doubt, declares rest to be essential to man's physical and mental health. The late Dr. W. B. Carpenter, than whom no greater authority has arisen on all questions affecting the relations between body and mind, said: "My own experience is very strong as to the importance of the complete rest and change of thought once in the week." The Rev. James Gilfillan, from whose masterly treatise on the Sabbath this quotation is taken, adds a number of other equally decisive opinions, gathered from scientific sources. Professional men are especially in danger of ignoring this physiological requirement. The

¹ "In the celebration of Sunday lies the most fruitful principle of our future progress."

results of observation, however, show the folly of doing this. Sir David Wilkie, the well-known painter, once remarked that "those artists who wrought on Sunday were soon disqualified from working at all." The neglect of periodical rest is always followed sooner or later by a penalty of some kind or other. When Lord Castlereagh (Marquis of Londonderry), who for many years had been one of the most prominent British statesmen, terminated his life with his own hand, Wilberforce said, on hearing of the sad event: "Poor fellow! he was sadly deranged. The strong impression of my mind is that it is the effect of the non-observance of the Sabbath, considered as a means of abstracting the attention from politics and from the constant recurrence of the same reflections, and as correcting false views of worldly things, and bringing them down to their true diminutiveness."

Rest is a universal law of Nature. The winter and the night are indispensable to the lower creation, and repose is needed by animals and man; and there are sufficient grounds for regarding the seventh-day rest as coming nearer than any other to perfect harmony with the constitution of Nature in general. The tenth-day Sabbath has been tried, and it has failed to meet the requirements of man. As if to teach us that this would be the case, the functions and processes of life all around us are full of striking coincidences with the division of time into periods of seven days, as Mr. H. Grattan Guinness has shown in his book on "The Approaching End of the Age."

But man is not merely an animal. He has a moral and spiritual nature, which needs occasional relief from the chafing and distracting toil of secular life—a nature

in virtue of which he may be elevated towards divinity; and though to some extent it depends on the body with which it is associated, yet it is superior to it, as the flower is indebted to the dry root out of which it grows, but is more lovely and ethereal than it, and is most nurtured when it unfolds its glorious corolla to the sun. The greatest fact about a man, as Thomas Carlyle has remarked, is his religion.

Now the fibre and quality of a man's moral character depend upon nothing so much as upon systematic cessation from the more toilsome efforts of life, in order that he may be able to contemplate the harmonies of eternal truth and revel in the ideals of an exalted virtue. Moral debasement and anarchy are the sure results of unbroken absorption in the secularities and ambitions of the world. At the end of the last century was seen the spectacle of a Sabbathless nation. Reason was apotheosised into a goddess, and the Sabbath was formally abolished in France. The names of the days and months were altered, and decades took the place of weeks. What ensued? The Church soon fell and its dignitaries were slaughtered. All morality was wrecked, and every man hastened to imbrue his hands in his brother's blood. The foundations of society were torn up by the violent hand of Revolution. Terror blanched every cheek and made all hearts quail. Tyranny and cruelty were practised by every one who for a moment could grasp a little brief authority, and then he too fell into the clutches of one stronger or more unscrupulous than himself. The nation was shattered into turbulent fragments and became an easy prey to the invader. And at length, by the aid of those they hated, the

people, wearied and almost destroyed, hastened back to such order and piety as they could attain, and restored the weekly Sabbath.

2. But besides being productive of varied benefits to mankind, the Sabbath is the symbol of God's right to grateful recognition and reverential adoration from every rational creature; hence, on this ground also, it is likely that the Creator would require from man the dedication of a definite proportion of time to the exercises of worship and prayer. This point has been emphasised with great force by Dr. Paley in his "Moral and Political Philosophy," an authority all the more weighty here inasmuch as on some other questions we shall have to disagree with him. In Chapter IV. of his book he contends that "public worship is a necessary institution," and in Chapter VI. he argues for "the necessity of appropriating set seasons to the social offices of religion."

3. Now, if the Sabbath is necessary at all, it is essential that the specific day of its observance should be authoritatively fixed. Unless a regularly recurring day were appointed, it is easy to see that there might almost as well be no Sabbath at all, for many would not care to keep any day, and others would wish to observe different days; so that the master would require the labour of his servant when the latter preferred to rest, the shop would be closed when the housewife went marketing, the employer would need the assistance of his operatives when they were seeking pleasure or were engaged in their devotions, and the churches would invite to worship those who were detained by the exigencies of trade. The atmosphere would never be freed from the noise of

human craft, and this great throbbing world would enjoy no respite from its toil. Every day would become secularised, the sanctuary would be rendered useless, family worship would grow difficult, and spiritual religion would succumb before the invasion of worldliness which would ensue, were it not for the safeguard of a fixed and definite Sabbath.

4. All these considerations in favour of an Edenic Sabbath are now familiar enough, not because the unaided natural reason has arrived at them by way of demonstration, but mainly by experience. The Sabbath has been enjoyed by the human race so long that it has made proof of its value and its adaptation to man's physical and moral needs, and these conclusions might never have been reached had not the all-wise and beneficent Creator bestowed on man, from the very first hour of his existence, the precious boon of a day of rest. It is easy to see the fitness of things when they are once designed and put in operation, but to seek that knowledge by the ordinary methods of observation and induction is usually a slow and uncertain process. Laws which are justified by science the moment they are discovered might never be originated on the ground of their utility if left to the ingenuity of man. Supposing that the Sabbath law, so suitable to mankind, had not been promulgated by the Creator, who can say how long science would have been in deducing its necessity and value from the disasters which would have occurred for the want of it? Does the discovery of a disease suggest its cure the first time that the disease is observed? Our hygienic remedies are all the result of many long experiments and not a few mournful failures. Sociology and economics are among

the newest of the sciences, and have scarcely yet attained to the dignity of a science. Was man to be left without a day for rest and moral culture till physiology and political economy should be methodised and perfected? Then why should not the sacred marriage bond, "instituted in the time of man's innocency," and so essential to the peace and purity of the family, the social body, and the State, have been also left to be evolved out of the consciousness or suggested by the miseries of mankind? Surely there are some things that need legislating for quite irrespectively of what the public sense regarding them might be; and there are some duties that need enforcing by positive enactments, even though the moral consciousness of society might not as yet have pronounced upon them.

5. Now it is inconceivable that the Creator, when He made man, was unconscious of the requirements of human nature, and from what we know of His benevolence it is quite impossible to suppose that He would ignore those requirements, and leave to man the prolonged task of ascertaining by experience what was so indispensable to his well-being that he might have perished for want of it before discovering its necessity. Can we think that God would consign our race to many a dark and weary century of suffering, and perhaps to absolute extinction, for want of rest and recuperation of over-wrought energies, when by the appointment of just such an institution as this, which we judge Moses declares to have been divinely originated at man's creation, all these possible evils could be averted? The presumption arising from these various considerations amounts almost to a demonstration that the Creator would in some way or other

reveal to our earliest forefathers the value and need of a regular, periodical cessation from toil.

6. It is urged by some who admit the adaptability of the Sabbath to man, as he is now constituted and conditioned, that such an institution was not necessary in Eden.

But there are no grounds whatever for imagining that the appointment of the Sabbath was one of the results of the Fall, or even that this sad event was so much as contemplated by the Almighty when He sanctified the day of His rest.

That it would alleviate to some extent the dire consequences of sin, humbling the pride and restraining the ambition of men, softening the rigour of toil, and bridging over the galling distinctions in human society, we readily admit; but that man's nature and surroundings in Eden were such that he needed no regular rest, nor any stated season for worship, is in the highest degree incredible. One of the very first things recorded of Adam is that he slept. He ate and drank and was married, and was therefore physically constituted like his descendants. He worked in the garden, and consequently would grow weary. And if on the very first occasion that he was tempted he sinned deplorably, he could not stand in any less need than ourselves of the helps which religious ordinances afford.

Moreover, our first ancestors had as much cause to praise and adore their Creator as any of the subsequent dwellers on the earth,⁹ and they were endowed with moral and spiritual faculties whose preservation and development demanded the gracious influences which flow from converse with God. As they were to be fruitful and to multiply and replenish the earth, the

need for stated seasons in order to secure united prayer and public worship, or even regular and uninterrupted private devotions, would almost immediately arise.

The analogy between Adam and mankind in general is sufficiently close to make it exceedingly probable that a Sabbath day was as necessary to him as to any of his offspring. It is not irrational, therefore, but it is in perfect accord with sober reason, to believe that in the world's grey morning, when the first man sprang from the dust of the ground as the result of the Creator's operations, before he had felt the fatigue of labour or tasted the sweetness of repose, and when as yet he had not conceived the loveliness of worship or revelled in the luxury of prayer, God gave to him what was better than even the fruit of the garden—a day of rest, recurring at such periods as should best fit in to his bodily and mental requirements, to be consecrated to holy contemplation of his Maker's power and goodness, and to the uninterrupted culture and development of his immortal soul.

CHAPTER II.

AN EDENIC SABBATH HISTORICALLY ASSERTED.

“ So sung they, and the empyrean rung
With hallelujahs ; thus was Sabbath kept.”

—MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*.

“ THUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And 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 ” (Gen. ii. 1–3).

Thus it would seem that what has been shown to be antecedently probable, Moses declares to be an historical fact. There is no ambiguity in the language which the inspired penman uses, nor is there the remotest hint that his words had any other meaning than they appear to have, or that they were intended to apply to any other period than that in which the events associated with them in the same narrative transpired. All the circumstances of the case harmonise most exactly with the plain historical statement that God rested on the seventh day, and sanctified it when that rest commenced. The information here given by Moses respecting the Sabbath is a part of the very warp and woof of the narrative. The events

recorded are said to have occurred long before the days of the writer. They are all closely connected, essentially related to one another, and explain each other; hence they must stand or fall together. The whole history carries with it an air of likelihood and genuineness. What could be more probable than that the heavens and the earth were created by a Supreme Intelligence? and what more fitting than that the day whereon the Divine Architect of the universe surveyed "His work which He had made" should be erected into a memorial of His power and His grace, reminding men for ever of His sovereignty, and making human life radiant and blessed?

But other views than these have occasionally prevailed and are still sometimes advanced. There arises the necessity, therefore, of renewed examination of the whole case.

In this, the oldest cosmogony of which we have any accurate knowledge, compiled probably from records written long before the clay tablets of Assyria were shapen or the Egyptian papyri inscribed with their fascinating legends, and thrown into the form given to it by Moses¹ a thousand years before the "Father of History" was born, there is recorded the sanctification of the Sabbath. Ages before men had begun to prattle about the light of reason, when as yet the first principles of economic science and statecraft had not been formulated, long before the Decalogue had been thundered from Sinai's fire-wreathed summit, or the pro-

¹ The use of *אל*, *El*, in Genesis i., and *יהוה*, *Jehovah* or *Yahveh*, in Genesis ii., to denote the Creator, is taken by many to denote that Moses was guided to two different sources, already in existence in some form or other, for his knowledge.

genitors of the Jewish nation called out of the dark sepulchre of idolatry, and even before the venomous Tempter had beguiled our first parents into that act of disobedience which "brought death into the world and all our woe," the Sabbath was blessed by Him who keeps all times and seasons in His own power, and was set apart for man's use and comfort, to be devoted to hallowed rest and communion with God.

This first mention of the Sabbath represents it as celebrating the completion of the Creator's special operations in connection with man's introduction upon the earth. God looked upon all His works with complacency, seeing in them the promise of happiness to His creatures and the reflection of His own glories; and, as if participating in the Divine satisfaction, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," celebrating thus the first Sabbath that was ever kept on earth.

Materialism, either in the form of contentious Atheism or in the less presumptuous guise of Agnosticism, has made this belief in an Infinite Creator the object of its special aversion and assault. The universe, however, is a fact which wild speculation cannot explain away, and as it exists, it must have had a beginning. Even were creation "unthinkable" in the Spencerian sense, the eternity of matter, the spontaneous birth of the universe, and the evolution of life from the non-living by virtue of inherent forces, would be still more unthinkable. There are mysteries, to be sure, in the Mosaic account of the origin of the world and of man, but not so many nor so profound as those which cluster around the alternative theories that are rife in our time. To make matter self-existent, and then to discover in

it "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," to treat the impassable gulf between the organic and the inorganic as if it did not exist, to recognise no distinction between motion and thought, physics and psychology, to debase man's spiritual instincts and aspirations to the level of a brute's terror or the longings of a disappointed ape—these, forsooth, are the articles of that faith for which we are coaxed to resign our venerable confession that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In view of such strange beliefs, we cease to wonder that Professor Tyndall should have made the damaging admission in the preface to his too familiar Belfast Address that "it is not in the hours of clearness and vigour that this doctrine (Materialism) commends itself to my mind," for, "in the presence of stronger and healthier light it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part." What a pity it is that Mr. Tyndall, and many like him, should delight to dwell in that gloom which is begotten of mental depression and debility, and wherein abound so many spectral errors!

The form in which this Materialistic objection against the Mosaic account of the creation is most frequently presented is that which is suggested by the results of geological researches. It is affirmed that the testimony of the rocks is utterly at variance with the order in which the different kinds of created things are represented in Genesis as first appearing, and hence the facts of geology disprove the theory of a six days' creation, followed by a seventh on which God rested from His works.

The denial of the Edenic appointment of the Sabbath

for the reasons just given is thus expressed by the Rev. Baden Powell: "Since, from the irreconcilable contradictions disclosed by geological discovery, the whole narrative of the six days' creation cannot now be regarded by any competently-informed person as historical, the historical character of the distinction conferred on the seventh day falls to the ground with it." And again Professor Powell writes: "The narrative of the six days' creation, first announced in the Decalogue, and afterwards amplified in Genesis, can now only be regarded as an adaptation of a poetical cosmogony (doubtless already familiar to the Israelites), for the purpose of enforcing on them the sanctification of the Sabbath."¹

It is hardly worth while to stop to point out the manifest contradiction in this latter passage in asserting that what was first announced in the Decalogue had been already familiar to the Israelites, nor need we do more than protest against the unwarrantable statement that Genesis was written after the Sinaitic code was promulgated; for the value of all such opinions of Mr. Powell is at once determined when we find him boldly declaring, a few pages farther on, that "it may be true that God spake these words, but not therefore to us. Our concern is not with what was at first, but with what has been revealed in these last days. The Old Testament is to us nothing except as applied in the New."²

But though we may pass by this question of the validity of the Old Testament, we cannot ignore the assertion which Professor Powell hazards, and which so many now believe to be true, that the researches of

¹ Dr. Kitto's *Journal of Sacred Literature*, pp. 329, 332.

² *Ibid.*, p. 352.

geology have subverted the doctrine of the Edenic appointment of the Sabbath, based on the Mosaic history of the creation.

That there is a fascinating history graven on the successive strata of the earth's crust, which, if it could be deciphered clearly and without error, would solve many a profound problem relating to the origin of our globe and the descent of animals and man, must be deeply felt by every one who has any true conception of what the science of geology is; but, at the same time, it should be borne in mind that it is far too young a science for its conclusions to be received as irreversible, and, moreover, the geological record is so imperfect, and probably will ever remain so, that its evidence either for or against revelation must be of a vague and negative character. Those "geological blanks," which Charles Darwin has so impressively described in *The Origin of Species*, can never be filled up. It is not that there are pages of the "stone-book" not yet turned over, though this, of course, is the fact, but there are tablets which have been ground to dust.

Ever since the publication of Dean Buckland's *Bridgewater Treatise* there have been some who have held that the first verse of Genesis simply recorded the beginning of those creative processes to which the rocks and their myriads of fossils bear testimony, and that at the end of these protracted geological ages there was a six days' creation in connection with man's introduction. The opinion, however, is now almost universal amongst geologists that the Mosaic "days" were periods. Hugh Miller first pointed out that between the organisms whose fossilised remains it is the business of the palæontologist to study, and the

animal and vegetable forms now existing on the earth, there is no such break as is assumed by those who suppose a mighty cataclysm just prior to man's appearance. No line of demarcation exists between the pre-Adamite and the human epochs. The one fact that has led to this geological distinction, and which alone maintains it, is the coming of man upon the scene.

This argument cannot here be pursued in detail, but it must not be entirely ignored by those who undertake to champion the cause of the Sabbath. Geologists cannot be expected to listen to arguments for the existence of a Creator or for the Divine institution of the Sabbath based on assumptions which they believe to be contradicted by the facts of their science. It eases the task of those who wish to interpret the Mosaic "day", as consisting of twenty-four hours to suppose an Edenic creation, but it repels those who have an exact knowledge of the facts of palæontology. We dare not hope to carry with us in everything that we may contend for in this discussion those who reject the Divine origin of the Sabbath, but we desire to put no gratuitous stumbling-block in the way of those who in all questions of this kind are far more powerfully impressed by the teachings of Nature than by the statements of Holy Writ. We must, however, point out the unfairness of such inferences as those of Professor Tyndall, who declared that "the Book of Genesis has no voice in scientific questions. To the grasp of geology, which it resisted for a time, it at length yielded, like potter's clay; its authority as a system of cosmogony being discredited on all hands by the abandonment of the obvious meaning of its writer." May it not be urged that a book which needs only

better interpretations to bring it into harmony with sciences not dreamed of when it was written could scarcely be of merely human authorship? Then, again, it is not correct to say that the "obvious meaning" of the word "day" (Heb. *yom*) is twenty-four hours. How could it mean that, when used of a period anterior to the separation of the light from the darkness? (Gen. i. 5). In Gen. i. 14 it signifies twelve hours, for the lights of the firmament were "to divide the day from the night," and in the same verse the period of the earth's revolution on her axis is denoted, while in Gen. ii. 4 it refers to the entire period of creation. Nothing is more evident than that Moses used the word *yom* in a popular and variable manner, but with the fundamental idea of uninterrupted sequence always involved, leaving it to the context or the circumstances of the case to determine its precise meaning in each instance. In this he only did what the other Biblical writers did (Job xiv. 6; Isaiah ii. 12; Dan. xii. 12, 13; Heb. v. 5; 2 Peter iii. 8).¹

As to the identification of the "days" with the corresponding geological epochs, we are relieved at present from such a task, for Geology has not yet determined the first chapter of its Genesis. It is enough for our present purpose to show that if anything is gained by regarding the Mosaic "day" as a period, then there is no unnatural straining of the Biblical language in so doing.

Whether we suppose, therefore, that Moses is giving us the history of a succession of events which occupied 144 hours, or, which is immensely more probable, he is simply narrating in popular language facts which

¹ See Appendix.

could have had no meaning at that time if they had been described as we know them, the question of the primeval sanctification of the Sabbath remains unaffected. The establishment of the first Sabbath in no wise depends upon the nature or duration of the periods that may have preceded it. It is the "rest" of the Creator that is symbolised, and the creation that is commemorated, and not the manner or duration of either. There are mysteries associated with both the "rest" and the "work" of the Creator. These we must be content to leave in abeyance. We have to deal with the historical assertion that "on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day," that is, He ceased from that special form of activity which had for its object the replenishing of our earth. There is no warrant for the idea that God sank into quiescence, or that the Creator of the ends of the earth was faint and weary, but only that He had reached the final stage of one of His magnificent purposes, and hence He viewed His work with delight, blessing the day upon which it was finished, and every seventh day for its sake. Man in the coming centuries, amid the thoughts and aspirations begotten of the great task appointed to him by his Maker, that of replenishing and subduing the earth, founding societies, and obtaining lordship and dominion over all terrestrial things, grasping the forces of nature and bending them to do his will, acquiring a knowledge of the deep secrets hid everywhere around him, would need a respite and a balm, so that the brain might cease its burning and the heart be sweetened; and therefore was the Sabbath made for man, and caused to shine with joy, bringing radiance upon

all human life, in order that men might be led out of themselves towards the beautiful, the true, and the Divine.

As God did not resume the special work of creation after the close of the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord may be regarded as still continuing, and so answers in respect of its duration to the six periods which preceded it. But from the standpoint of man that Sabbath was of course confined to the one day immediately following his own creation—the first day, in reality, of his existence. This gives us the clue to the meaning of our Lord's saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" for God, through His long Sabbath, has continued to put forth energy in the various acts of His providence and by the operations of His laws. The precise events, however, which were to be commemorated every seventh day were complete, for they pointed up to and found their realisation in the creation of man. "God completed the creation of the world, with all its inhabitants, by ceasing to produce anything new, and entering into the rest of His all-sufficient Eternal Being, from which He had come forth, as it were, at and in the creation of a world distinct from His own essence."¹

The day which God blessed as the symbol of this rest was therefore regarded by man, for whose sake the benediction was pronounced, as sanctioned by such an authority, and hallowed for such reasons, as that he would be convinced of its solemnity and importance. The Hebrew word which is here used to denote this act of sanctification ² (*vay^e Kaddesh*) is commonly used

¹ Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary*.

² וַיְקַדֵּשׁ

in Scripture in the signification of making holy, communicating the quality of holiness, consecrating or setting apart for sacred purposes; and hence it must have been such a transaction as plainly informed Adam that this day was to be distinguished from the others; that it was to direct his thoughts towards God; and that on it he was to occupy himself with the glories of the Creator.

Such a memorial of the Divine majesty and wisdom could not derive its character from the kinds of periods which went before it, but depends for its sanction and uses solely upon what God announced concerning it; and though the day which served for this memorial may be regarded as but the beginning of God's rest or cessation (*κατάπαυσις*) from the special activities described in outline by Moses, yet it was constituted by the Creator a true Sabbath, beautified and made holy for His sake and for the sake of man's varied needs, and representing the long line of Sabbaths which were to perpetuate its design and point onward to that better rest or Sabbath-keeping (*σαββατισμός*) "which remaineth for the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9).

The importance of the doctrine of an Edenic Sabbath is seen when we reflect that the institution is thus made to rank with such great verities as the existence of God, the Divine origin of man, of human society, and of marriage. Moreover, as Paley observes, "if the Divine command was actually delivered at creation, it was no doubt addressed to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it." Creation is a standing fact, and is of as great interest to us as to the ancients;

consequently the day which was hallowed as a memorial of creation is holy still, having the added sanctity which belongs to the Lord's Day. It reminds us of God's supremacy and power ; it speaks to us of His grace and mercy ; it elevates our thoughts and recalls to our forgetful souls the dignity of our nature and the joys we are capable of in communing with our Maker ; it redeems life from dreary Materialism and spiritualises the secular work of the world, thus preserving it from degenerating into servile drudgery ; and it points us onward to an immortal blessedness, of which the earthly Sabbath brings the foretaste.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROLEPTICAL THEORY.

"The seventh day this—the jubilee of *man*,"—BYRON.

WE now approach a very important part of our inquiry. In what way do those who deny the Edenic appointment of the Sabbath interpret the statement of Moses, that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, whereon He rested from His work ?

It is suggested that Moses does not say that God *then* blessed the seventh day at the very time when He rested from His creative labours, but ages afterwards ; or that even though He may then have actually pronounced the blessing, it was in a prophetic or anticipatory sort of way, and not so as to ordain the observance of the Sabbath from that primeval time.

1. The former part of this supposition is easily exploded. If the sanctification of the Sabbath was not pronounced at the close of the creation, then there is an end of all confidence in the statements of Moses. There is not a single event recorded by him which may not be explained away by a method similar to that by which this passage of Genesis is wrested out of its historical connection ; and this is a conclusion to which those who pursue this method of argument have no wish to be driven.

But if this blessing was not uttered in Edenic times,

when was it spoken? Was there any reason at any subsequent period that was not quite as valid in the days of Adam why the Sabbath should be ordained? If a day of rest was necessary for the Jews, it would also be needful for those who lived in patriarchal times. Their bodily conditions were similar to those of the Israelites; their moral and spiritual requirements were as great; the claims which God had upon their praise and adoration were as just. And even had there been no need of a Sabbath until the Exodus from Egypt, it is altogether absurd to suppose that an ordinance of that sort, established then for the first time, would be based on an event which had transpired 2500 years before. But allow that the seventh day was hallowed at the creation—which, at any rate, seems to be affirmed by Moses—and all difficulties vanish. It is plain, in that case, why the cessation of God from His special work should be used as the foundation of the Sabbath institution.

Surely they who first beheld the virgin beauty of the earth, fragrant with the Creator's blessing and shining with the dewdrops of the world's first morn that man had seen, who were permitted to explore Nature's treasures before any mortal hand had stained them, to whom the joyful stars flashed their mystic splendour in the first night that human eyes had witnessed, and who rejoiced in the unshared excellence of Paradise before it had known the slimy trail of the Tempter, would be far more deeply impressed with the solemnity and lustre of the day on which all these works were completed than they who, ages afterwards, were bidden to look back to archaic events, the very remembrance of which had well nigh faded from the

human mind. If, then, the Sabbath derived any force or sanctity from its association with the Divine rest, as it is stated to have done in the Fourth Commandment, much more would that have appeared to be the case on the very day when the Divine rest was entered into.

2. The form in which the theory we are now controverting is usually presented is that which it assumes in Archdeacon Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, one portion of which treats of the Scripture account of Sabbatical institutions. He regarded the Old Testament Sabbath as a purely Jewish ordinance, and the sanctification of the seventh day which Moses records in the narrative of creation he thinks did not really take effect at that time, and he suggests that Moses mentions it in that connection in an anticipatory or proleptical manner, in order that the Sabbatic law of the Jews might be enforced by motives derived from the Divine rest on the day succeeding the creational period.

These opinions have never been held by the majority of Biblical expositors, but there have always been a few eminent men in the Established Church who have advocated them. Amongst these are Archbishop Whately, Dean Alford, and F. W. Robertson. Dr. Pye Smith is a conspicuous instance of a Congregationalist holding these views. We do not wish to insinuate in the remotest degree that these eminent and devout men undervalued the Sabbath institution. They were profoundly convinced of its necessity, and regarded it as of the highest utility to man in all his interests. But by separating its establishment from the introduction of mankind upon the earth they rob

it, as we think, of something of its dignity, its universality, and its perpetuity.

Unfortunately, those two influential and widely-used publications, Eadie's *Biblical Encyclopædia* and Dr. William Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, have kept these opinions before the attention of theological readers. According to these interpreters of Sabbath doctrine, there could have been no regular day of rest amongst the Patriarchs. The Jewish Sabbath having been appointed after the Israelites left Egypt, it became obsolete, like everything else exclusively Jewish, at the advent of Christ; and the Lord's Day derives its authority from apostolical or ecclesiastical sanctions mainly on the ground of its utility. Dr. Hessey, in his article on "The Lord's Day" in Dr. Smith's Dictionary, thus writes: "The Lord's Day is a purely Christian institution, sanctioned by apostolic practice, mentioned in apostolic writings, and so possessed of whatever Divine authority all apostolic ordinances and doctrines (which were not obviously temporary or were not abrogated by the Apostles themselves) can be supposed to possess."

As a Utilitarian in ethics, Dr. Paley is perfectly logical and consistent with himself in holding the Sabbath of the Christian Church to be binding on the conscience because of its vast and universal benefits; but for the majority of mankind some simpler, more practical, and more solemn motive to Sabbath observance must be found than the circuitous and doubtful calculations of Utilitarianism.

Anticipatory or proleptical references are perfectly legitimate, and are frequently made by historical writers; but then the circumstances of the case are always such

that the meaning is clear ; and no writer who betrayed carelessness in this respect would long retain the confidence of his readers. There is a prolepsis in Exodus xvi. 33, 34, where Aaron is said to have laid up the pot of manna before the Testimony, when as yet there was no Tabernacle, and no tables of stone or Testimony. It is plain enough in this case that the writer is anticipating, for he immediately goes on to describe how all these things are to be made ; and as the manna continued to fall during all the time occupied in the construction of the Tabernacle, it was a very natural thing to do to mention, by way of anticipation, the laying up of a pot of manna in the Holy of Holies when first recording this miracle of God's mercy in the wilderness.

There are no such modifying considerations in the case of the Mosaic reference to the hallowing of the Sabbath at creation. The statement is one of a series, and is made in language similar to that which is used in the rest of the narrative of the origin of things. There is no continuation of the creational acts up to the time when it is affirmed by those who hold the proleptical theory that the Sabbath was instituted, for the Sabbath was, in fact, the commemoration of the cessation of those acts. The record, then, of the hallowing of the Sabbath depends for its meaning and authorisation on the very facts or events with which it stands associated, and consequently it can only refer to the period when those events transpired. On what plea, then, can it be reasonably advanced that, although God is plainly declared by Moses to have rested on the seventh day, and to have blessed and sanctified it, yet the actual benediction and consecration did not take effect for some 2500 years afterwards ?

3. Further, the advocates of this proleptical hypothesis are confronted with the formidable difficulty of determining when the Sabbath was first instituted. If it was not ordained at creation, when did it originate, and under what circumstances? It will not be an arduous task, surely, to find for us some clear and definite account of so momentous an event.

Here there is no slight confusion in the reasonings of those who deny the Edenic origin of the Sabbath. It is necessary, of course, to deal with the first explicit reference to the Sabbath after the one in connection with the creation; but, unfortunately for those who are driven to this course, the reference is one which cannot, by any tortuous and ingenious procedure, be made to narrate the origin of the Sabbath. Nevertheless, Dr. Paley chivalrously undertakes to show that in Exodus xvi. is recorded "the first actual institution of the Sabbath," and that "not long after this the Sabbath was established with great solemnity in the Fourth Commandment." Even so acute a reasoner as was Dr. Paley may, it seems, contradict himself within the space of a few pages. If the Sabbath was "instituted" at the giving of the manna, how could it be "established" in the Decalogue? Was Exodus xvi. another prolepsis, and was the interruption in the giving of the manna at every seventh day nothing but a shadow of things to come? If so, then perhaps the "establishment" of the Sabbath at Sinai was the same; but if not, then neither was the reference to it in connection with the creation anticipatory or proleptical.

Nothing is easier than to demonstrate that Exodus xvi. does not record "the first actual institution" of a sacred day. Moses was divinely instructed to bid the

people go out and collect a certain quantity of manna every day. On the sixth day a double portion was to be gathered, because that on the seventh day none would fall. And when on the sixth day the people beheld a larger quantity of manna than usual, they had to be told why. They had grown lax in Sabbath observance during their national calamities, but now it was needful for them to be reminded that the seventh day was holy unto the Lord. When the chiefs of the people, supposing that this excess of manna would breed worms, as had been the case with all that had previously been kept more than a day, reported to Moses what had transpired, he proceeds to give a full explanation of the matter. "This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." The plan which Moses pursued—which, now that we know it, we perceive to have been a most judicious one—was to indicate to the people, not all at once, but as need and circumstances should arise, what was their duty and what the will of God. Their trust in the Lord and their obedience to His commands were thus cultivated. They were not distinctly informed as to the manna until they saw it lying on the ground, and they said (not "It is manna," as in the Authorised Version, but), "What is it?"¹ for they wist not what it was. And Moses said, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." And similarly with regard to the Sabbath, Moses deemed it wiser to defer all reference to the sixth day's proceedings until the people should behold the double portion of manna before them.

Nor does Moses even then refer to the Sabbath as

¹ מַה הִוא—*mahn hū?* "What is it?"

if it were something unfamiliar to the people, but alludes to it in a purely incidental manner: "This is that which the Lord hath said;" that is, this double portion of manna is in harmony with the Lord's previous sanctification of the Sabbath day, which is on the morrow, and which must not be profaned by gathering manna upon it. The pronoun *this* refers to something already mentioned—that is, the manna of which the rulers had been speaking—and not to the Sabbath, which Moses was about to notice. In this sense the passage is taken by the Arabic, by the Syriac probably, and certainly by the Targum of Jerusalem, than which no authorities are higher in such a connection.

It is not said that the manna had fallen precisely six days before this double quantity was given, but only that it was on the sixth day of the week that this occurred; for the numbers of the days of the week were frequently used with exactly the same signification as the names of the days now are.

It cannot be believed that an ordinance so solemn, so vital to all man's best interests, was originated in this incidental manner, and without its having been so much as named to Moses by the Lord, and only contingently by Moses to the people. It was not thus with the Noachian or Abrahamic covenant, nor with the institution of the Passover, nor even with the comparatively subordinate details of the Levitical rites and ceremonies, and it is incredible that it should have been so with the Sabbath.

Dr. Paley held that the phrase in ver. 29, "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath," is a formal declaration of its institution at that time. The fact is, however, that on closer scrutiny this very verse enables us

to subvert that notion; for while it is said that the Lord "hath given"—that is, given previously—the Sabbath, it is added, "the Lord giveth"—is giving now—"the bread of two days."

The same form of words as that from which Dr. Paley makes this sweeping and altogether unwarrantable inference is found in other parts of Scripture, and in none of them does the language imply that the time at which the transaction alluded to took place was definitely indicated. In Ezek. xx. 11, 12, for example, the expression occurs, and it is quite clear that a similar conclusion to that which Paley draws from Exod. xvi. 29 would be utterly erroneous. "I gave them My statutes" could not possibly imply that God's statutes were first promulgated for Israel's sake, for Abraham is said to have obeyed and kept God's statutes (Gen. xxvi. 5). The phrase is used also in Neh. ix., in connection with the Divine judgments, and even in association with the Divine Being Himself, Who surely did not begin to be when He gave His good Spirit to Israel (ver. 20). Our Lord, too, made use of this kind of language, for He said to the Jews, "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision" (John vii. 22), which he certainly did not, in the sense in which Paley interprets the words.

It may be observed, moreover, that if the Sabbath had been established in connection with the gift of the manna, it would probably have been associated with that miracle in the Fourth Commandment; but in that solemn enforcement of the Sabbath law we actually find that it is based on the very ground for which we contend—the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, and the Creator's rest from this

work. As a consequence of this, the servant, the Gentile, the very cattle, to whom the miracle of the manna would have had no significance in after times, were to share in the Sabbath enjoyments.

This first mention of the Sabbath in explicit terms subsequently to the account of its appointment in Eden is utterly inexplicable, then, as a Divine solemnisation of it, but is precisely of the character that we might expect such a reference would possess if the Sabbath institution were already in existence. There is no detailed description of its nature, nor any intimation of its uses or purposes; there is no hint as to the proper mode of its celebration, nor any statement as to the extent of its obligation; in fact, there is merely a casual, an incidental reference to it, without the slightest suggestion that this was the origin of an institution which was to be universally and perpetually binding upon mankind. Before this gift of the manna, the Sabbath is distinctly and solemnly declared to have been appointed to commemorate a fact which would be of surpassing interest to all who should ever dwell on the earth, and afterwards it is as solemnly re-enacted when a nation's laws are being adjusted. On what rational ground, then, can it be asserted that this intermediate mention of it was its first actual establishment?

Our conclusion therefore is, that the only satisfactory interpretation of the language which Moses uses in recording the sanctification of the Sabbath at the close of the creation is that which gives to it the most obvious meaning; not that God purposed to bless the seventh day in after ages, but that He then and there blessed and sanctified it, "because that in it He had rested from all His work which He created and made."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PATRIARCHS AND THE SABBATH.

"Bright days ! we need you in a world like this :

Be brighter still ; ye cannot be too bright. .

The world's six days of vanity and toil

Would, but for you, oppress us with their might."

—H. BONAR.

DR. PALEY makes the strong and sweeping assertion that there can be found in Genesis "no mention of the Sabbath, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it." He would of course admit that there is a reference to it in the account of the creation, though his precise language is, that there is no mention of it "in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham . . . or in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs" (*Moral and Political Philosophy*, chap. vii.).

Even this weighty consideration, however, though it were strictly true, would not suffice to destroy the force of a distinct historical statement such as is contained in the passage we have been dealing with.

1. But when we consider the character of the Book of Genesis, it will not seem so strange that the Sabbath should be rarely mentioned. If Moses had set out to write a formal treatise on ecclesiastical polity, or even to give a systematic account of the rites and observances of patriarchal religion, we should naturally expect to find that so important an institution as the

Sabbath would be described and often referred to. But the scope and design of the Book of Genesis are by no means of that nature. Writing primarily for those who were living under a theocracy, it was only needful that Moses should give such information, concerning the origin of those institutions with which the Israelites were familiar, as should demonstrate their Divine character and exhibit the sovereignty of God in their appointment. There are a thousand mysterious things that we might have liked to know from the pen of Moses, but many of these can be discovered by our own industry and research, and the very pursuit of them ennobles and develops the human mind. The Bible no more claims to be an exhaustive history than it does to be a scientific text-book or a manual of art. How could Moses, within the limits fixed by the conditions of the case, give a detailed record of the public and private acts of the ten *tholedoth* or generations whose relationship to the Creator on the one hand, and to the Israelites on the other, it was his purpose to exhibit? Had he attempted this, the book would have been almost valueless as a guide to the wearied, buffeted, tempted soul, panting after a knowledge of God, and would have become the arena of fierce and interminable contests between obstinate antiquarians.

2. The chief purpose for which Genesis was written being a moral and religious one, it is not surprising that historical references are of the scantiest description. Accordingly, we find that into the first thirty-four verses of the book there is compressed the history of creation and of the Sabbath rest and sanctification; in the next sixty-three verses is given an account of the

creation of our first parents, their primitive condition and capacities, their disobedience and shame, their expulsion from Eden, God's sentences on all concerned, the promise of a Deliverer who should undo the deadly work of the Tempter, the murder of Abel and the punishment of Cain, with the incidental description of the sacrifices offered to God, and an allusion to the fact that worship was habitually given to Him by our earliest progenitors. The same conciseness is displayed throughout all the subsequent records. The original institution of the Sabbath having been described with some minuteness, what reason would there be for presenting in so brief a compendium of history any detailed notices of Sabbath observance? We may safely say, then, that for this objection, grounded on the silence of Moses as to any Sabbath observance having taken place during a period of 2500 years, to have any force, it ought to be shown that there are circumstances referred to by him when the Sabbath would most likely have been mentioned had it been in existence. But he would be a most chivalrous champion of that objection who should undertake to do this. No doubt the Mosaic narrative is at times, as Dr. Paley affirms, "sufficiently circumstantial and domestic;" but that is the very reason why detailed references to so familiar and universal a custom as we take Sabbath-keeping to have been should be omitted. If the Sabbath were mentioned at all in Genesis, it would naturally be in connection with the exercises of religion. Now, from the time of the Fall to the Noachian deluge, a period of 1600 years at least, there are but three references to worship. These instances are (1) the presentation of the offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen. iv.); (2) the

invocation of the name of the Lord by the Sethites (Gen. iv. 26); and (3) the building of an altar by Noah after he came forth from the ark (Gen. viii. 20). And yet St. Paul declares that through all these ages there were holy, heavenly-minded men who walked by faith and died in the faith, having seen the promises afar off, "and were persuaded of them, and embraced them" (Heb. xi. 13).

Even the life of Abraham, concerning whom, as the progenitor of the Hebrew nation, we might expect more detail than in the case of the other patriarchs, contains but four references to his religious practices. And if we pursued our search right on to the days of the Exodus, we should not find half a dozen instances where it would be at all reasonable to look for any explicit mention of the Sabbath, and in no one of these cases is there any necessity that it should be noticed. But surely there were stated seasons for family and public worship during all these centuries. That, however, is not affirmed by Moses, and therefore we are at liberty to suppose that he regarded the matter as of too familiar a character to need any formal or distinct remark. The Jews, at any rate, believed in a patriarchal sacred day of some kind, for they affirm "that Enoch and Noah, Abraham and Jacob, kept a festival to God as a memorial of creation."¹

The fact is, that this whole argument from a negative is utterly valueless, and it is difficult to understand how so strong and judicial a mind as Paley's could ever have made so much of it, save that he was dominated by a theory that had somehow or other to be substantiated.

¹ Dr. Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubit.*, bk. ii. chap. ii. sec. 42.

3. Furthermore, it should be remarked that if the silence of Scripture concerning a custom were to be interpreted as showing that it probably did not exist, it would be easy to annihilate almost every rite with which the Jews were familiar. Circumcision was certainly practised after the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, for we are told that after the crossing of Jordan all those who, amid the change and conflict of the few preceding years, had not been circumcised were bidden to conform to the requirement; and yet from that time to the birth of Christ, a period of 1500 years, which included the most orderly and settled portion of Jewish history, there is not one solitary allusion to the rite. Circumcision, like the Sabbath, is referred to at its origin in order to explain its significance and enforce its authority, but beyond that it is not strange that in so brief a narrative as Moses gives there should be but little mention of such universal ordinances.

With regard to sacrifices, again, there is no record of any having been offered from the age of Seth to the Flood; and even the Passover, that solemn and distinctively Jewish festival, is not once said to have been celebrated after Deuteronomy xvi. for a period of 600 years.

4. We are far from admitting, however, that there are no allusions in the Book of Genesis which support the view that the Sabbath existed in the earliest patriarchal times.

It is probable that there were stated seasons of worship in the Adamic age, for Cain and Abel presented their offerings to God at the same time and in the same place, and it may be that the expression "in process of

time," or, as the margin more accurately has it, "at the end of days,"¹ refers to the lapse of some definite period, at the termination of which the appointed season for worship and sacrifice began. Upon this, however, we do not wish to lay undue stress. It is more certain that the division of time into weeks was a general custom in primeval ages. When Abraham's servant requested Rebekah as wife unto Isaac, her mother asked that she might abide with them "days or ten,"² the word "few," found in our Authorised Version, having no place in the Hebrew text, which is strikingly suggestive of our idiomatic phrase "a week or ten days."

Job, who may have lived even before the call of Abraham, is said to have offered a seventh sacrifice, which probably had some reference to the days of the week; but as Job had seven sons, it is suggested by those whose views require all such allusions to be explained away that the sacrifice had something to do with them; though it is not easy to see how that can be, for Job had daughters as well as sons. There are many passages, however, in the Old Testament which are not at all of a doubtful character, and which put it beyond all dispute that the septenary arrangement of the days was an established usage in those archaic times. Noah had seven days given to him for making final arrangements before the Flood came (Gen. vii. 4, 10). The three occasions on which the dove was sent forth out of the ark were seven days apart, rendering it probable that on the sanctified day, when Noah and his household unitedly contemplated the majesty and goodness of God, they sought to discover

¹ מֵעַתָּה יָמִים—Gen. iv. 3. ² יָמִים אֵלֶּם—Gen. xxiv. 55.

whether the time which He had appointed for their liberation had yet come. On the first day of the first month of the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, he removed the covering from the ark, and saw that the earth was dry, and on the twenty-seventh day of the second month God called him forth. This was a period of fifty-six days, or exactly eight weeks, and so, as the first day which supervened upon the creation was a Sabbath, the day on which Noah looked out upon a renewed earth was in all probability likewise a Sabbath, the worship of which was blessed and honoured by that gracious covenant whose perpetual sign was to be "the bow in the cloud." In the narrative of Jacob's dealings with Laban the very word *week* several times occurs (Gen. xxix. 27, 28). The feast at Samson's marriage lasted seven days (Judges xiv. 12), and at that of Tobias the festivities were kept up for two weeks (Tobit viii. 19). Ahasuerus made a feast at Shushan which continued seven days (Esther i. 5).

There are, moreover, references to the period of seven days and to the number seven which have a distinctly religious aspect. God declared that if any should murder Cain, he should be avenged sevenfold, while in the case of Lamech seventy and sevenfold vengeance should be taken. Noah was bidden to take of the clean beasts and fowls by sevens into the ark. In Pharaoh's dream the kine and the ears of corn appeared in sevens. When Balaam thrice sought to gratify Balak by cursing Israel, on each occasion he had seven altars erected, in order to impart greater solemnity to the proceedings. The mourning for Joseph's father continued seventy days, that is, ten weeks, and another week of mourning was spent in

Canaan when the body was taken thither for burial (Gen. l. 10).¹

We shall have occasion later on to point out that outside Scripture, as well as in it, are many traces of the week, the sacredness of the number seven, and the existence amongst all the earlier nations of a day dedicated to worship.

Now what can such allusions mean, unless they point to some original usage like that of the celebration of the six days' creation and the seventh day's rest? It is probable that there was an Edenic revelation given to Adam which was only partially brought down to Moses by oral transmission or in writing, and which would certainly give directions to our earliest progenitors concerning modes and times of worship. This supposition is no impeachment of the inspiration of Moses, for most of the sacred writers made use of human sources of information, while they were directed in their choice of materials and preserved from error by the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and as Edenic conditions were not to recur in the history of our race, it was not needful that those details whose *raison d'être* ceased with the passing away of those conditions should be transmitted to subsequent generations.

But in some form or another there must have been an early body of truth revealed to man, and of this we have indisputable traces in Genesis. Professor Baden Powell denies that there is anything in these early Scriptures in which later ages have an interest;

¹ Herodotus (ii. 86) gives seventy days as the period occupied in the perfect method of Egyptian embalming. This included the days of mourning, and the seventy days of mourning for Jacob included the forty days consumed in embalming.

but that is a position which is easily subverted. He argues from the scanty hints and allusions given in the Hebrew records as to early institutions and their significance that they cannot be "understood as containing any permanent elements of a universal religion."¹ "In these early and imperfect dispensations it is idle to look for any great principles of universal moral application, as has been sometimes fancied."² But is not marriage a universal moral principle? It is continually referred to as of Edenic origin and of perpetual sanctity by our Lord and the Apostles.³ The tree of life, that symbol of a nobler nature in man than that which was nourished by the material fruit of the garden, points to some mysterious mode by which man was reminded that he might share in the blessedness of the Divine life; and how could this knowledge be imparted save by revelation from God? It is for this reason, no doubt, that almost all the early nationalities possessed some tradition of the tree of life. The Indian *Kalpanskham* bore fruit which gave immortality, and the Persian *Hom*, the Arabian *Tuba*, the Greek *Lotus*, all had a similar signification. On the Assyrian sculptures the tree of life is frequently represented, sometimes accompanied by winged figures, or even the sacred disc, the symbol of the Supreme God. M. Lenormant says that the most ancient name of Babylon in the language of the earliest inhabitants of that region was "the place of the tree of life."

¹ Dr. Kitto's *Journal of Sacred Literature*, p. 329.

² *Idem*, p. 331.

³ See Matt. xix. 4-6; Mark x. 7-9; Eph. ii. 11, v. 31; 1 Cor. i. 24, vi. 16, vii. 18.

There was, moreover, the still more striking fact that the first promise of a Redeemer was given in Eden; and surely this is "a permanent element of a universal religion."

It is only by supposing that there was a primeval revelation, which may have been oral or written, that we can understand the knowledge which Abram had in the land of idols, the priesthood of Melchisedek, or the piety of Job; and such revelations would certainly embrace matters of universal interest, such as the creation of the world, the origin of man, the moral government of God, the need and beauty of holiness, and the mode of Sabbath observance and worship. Those who deny this early revelation, and affirm that the Sabbath belongs to a much later age, are bound to furnish some better explanation than the Edenic sanctification of it gives of the early existence of the week and the sacredness of the number seven. The only attempt at such an explanation is the suggestion that the septenary division of time is based on the phases of the moon. But the fact is, that whereas the year, the month, and the day are all determined by solar and lunar phenomena, the week is an altogether unique and arbitrary arrangement. The attempt to follow the lunar changes as a mode of measurement would in a few months lead to the utmost confusion in the reckoning. We are brought back, then, to the conclusion that all these Scriptural allusions to the week can only be adequately interpreted in the light of a Divine appointment in the beginning, and that consequently they are so many traces of the primitive and patriarchal Sabbath. We contend, therefore, that Genesis is by no means silent concerning the observance of a sacred day in

archaic times, and that the very first institution of it is found recorded amongst the annals of the world's creation. God blessed the seventh day in order that it might be a blessing to man, and sanctified it so that it should shine out with purest lustre from all other days, and by its unique character and position draw away the minds and souls of men from the fever and fret of earthly toil to hold communion with heaven. As Luther has expressed it in his Commentary on Genesis, "God did not sanctify for Himself the heaven or the earth or any other creature, but He sanctified the seventh day for Himself, that we may understand that it was to be chiefly devoted to Divine worship."

CHAPTER V.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE EDENIC SABBATH.

“ A day
By the Almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest.”—WORDSWORTH.

THE Sabbath, which we have endeavoured to show was sanctified at creation, stands in an important relation to Christianity in virtue of the fact that the Divine Son, the Author of Christianity, was associated with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the creational operations and processes.

What we desire to point out at this juncture is—

1. That the Divine Founder of Christianity was co-equal with God the Father in framing the worlds and producing all that exists.

2. That as Lord of the Sabbath which commemorates His creative work and His hallowed rest, He legitimately built the Sabbath into the fabric of Christian faith and practice, and legislated for it as changing circumstances required.

1. The first hint given to us in the Scriptures of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead is that which occurs in connection with the creation. By comparing Genesis with the Gospel of St. John and with various passages in the Epistles, we gather that Jehovah, or Elohim, as well as the Divine Word and the Holy

Spirit, are all referred to in the Biblical accounts of the origin of things. And in regard to man it is distinctly said, "Let us make man." The Son is not an unfamiliar presence in primeval and patriarchal times. As the express image of the Father He is Jehovah, yet as a personality He is distinct from Jehovah. He is the uncreated Angel of Jehovah (Gen. xxii. 16, 17, xxxii. 30; Exod. xxiii. 20, 21). He is the Only-begotten Son (John i. 14), not some inferior demiurgus employed in creation, but "the image of the Invisible God, the First-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible: all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). He is the Son by whom God hath spoken unto us, "whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. i. 2). "Without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3). Between the Father and the Son there is a mysterious fellowship, "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 9).

It is evident, then, that the Scriptures declare Christ to be the Author of creation in association with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and this was the belief of the early Churches. It is not the accumulated reverence of the ages, as Strauss suggests, that has lifted up Christ gradually to this supreme exaltation; the oldest portions of Holy Writ and the first beliefs of Christians coincide in ascribing the glory of creation to Christ as the "very God of very God." The *Apostolical Constitutions*, which contains fragments as old

as the second century, although the work did not assume its present form until the fourth or fifth century, has preserved a prayer commencing thus:—"O Lord Almighty, Who didst create the world by Christ, and didst ordain the Sabbath in remembrance thereof, because Thou wast resting from Thy works, in order to our study of Thy laws, and didst appoint the festal days for the delight of our souls, that we might attain to the wisdom which is by Thee created" (Lib. vii. cap. 36).

As the Author of creation, the Divine Son claimed to be "Lord also of the Sabbath day" (Mark ii. 28). Indeed, the day may be considered as a part of creation, for it not only marked the completion of the creative purposes, but it was glorified by God's blessing into a perpetual source of peace and joy to all that He had made. We may appropriate the jubilant language of the Hallél and say of the Sabbath, "This is the day which the Lord hath made" (Ps. cxviii.). For that noble inspiration, composed at the glad return from the Babylonian captivity, the second great deliverance wrought out for Israel by the Lord, like many another utterance of the inspired writers, had a far deeper significance than was grasped by him who first penned it. That day found its analogue and its glorious antitype in the day when Christ rose from depths of earth, laying the foundation of His universal kingdom in the hearts of men, and opening to mankind the gates of a better and more abiding city than that which the emancipated Jews obtained.

2. Christ as Lord of the Sabbath day modified it so as to make it commemorative not only of creation but also of redemption. In reality redemption is a part

of creation; it was a moral and spiritual creation. It is right, then, that it should have its perpetual memorial.

It is not categorically asserted in the New Testament that the Lord's Day was specially set apart by Christ and ordained by Him to be the memorial of creation and redemption; but when we find that on this day He rose from the dead (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1), that the whole of that day was devoted to His various appearances to the women and the disciples and to conversations with them upon the Scriptures, and that the disciples in their meeting were blessed by the Saviour in a special manner, then there is certainly a suggestion at least of this Resurrection day having around it in the minds of the Apostles a halo that would give it ever afterwards a peculiar sanctity. It would seem, too, that our Lord recognised this and favoured it; for "an eight days after"—an idiomatic expression answering to our phrase "that day week"—the disciples were again assembled, and the Saviour, as before, came into their midst and blessed them.

There is very much in our Lord's teaching and practice, as we shall more fully illustrate later on, that shows the essential relationship between the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day. Just as the Levitical ministries and sacrifices were all said by Him to point to Himself and to find their perfection in Him, so the Jewish Sabbath was but an incomplete type or shadow of the day on which Christ was to finish the work of atonement, and give possession, to all who should believe in Him, of that rest which "remaineth to the people of God." The Jewish Sabbath commemorated the enter-

ing of the Creator into His rest; the Lord's Day celebrates the entering into His rest by Jesus. It takes up the significance of the Jewish seventh day, and carries with it a higher and holier import. It links together creation and redemption, and gives a prophecy of the eternal Sabbatism of heaven. If, therefore, the seventh day was holy to the Jew, still more hallowed ought the first day to be to the Christian; and it is easy to see the probability that Christ Himself ordained the change, and to feel how natural a thing it was for the earliest Christians to admit the Divine authority for the change, and to transfer their reverence for the Jewish Sabbath from the seventh day to the first.

Moreover, it is clear that the descent of the Holy Ghost took place on the first day; for, according to Lev. xxiii. 15, 16, the day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day after the Passover, or the morrow after the seventh Sabbath (Saturday), which, of course, would be our Sunday. The Gospel was preached on this Christian Sunday with such spiritual power that the day was "blessed and sanctified" to the salvation of three thousand souls.

The Apostles, after the example of the Lord, honoured the day of the Resurrection. We can scarcely suppose that they would have departed from the Jewish custom without strong reasons for believing it to be the will of their Lord. It is true that St. Paul preached in the synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath, for this was the only way of getting at the Jews (Acts xvii. 1, 2, xviii. 4); but amongst the Gentile Christians he frequently met the Churches on the first day, and at Troas he actually prolonged his stay for that very purpose (Acts xx. 6, 7). On this occasion

they came together to break bread; that is, as the Peshito version has it, "to break the Eucharist," a service not likely to have been held in the synagogue. The reference to laying by in store on the first day also implies that the members of the Church in Corinth were accustomed to assemble together on that day (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). Professor Powell thinks that the collection was to be made on that day precisely because it was not the Sabbath day, when it would not have been lawful; but the point is that on the first day the Corinthian Christians met together, for the word used by the Apostle signifies that the money was to be "put into the treasury" of the Church every first day of the week.¹

Dr. Hessey denies "that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day," and declares that the Fourth Commandment is simply a positive form or development of the moral element in Sabbath-keeping which rendered it political and ceremonial. "I hold," he says, "that the Lord's Day is, as to its origin, much on a par with Confirmation, and this, while it would at once exclude it from the category of positive institutions ordained by Christ Himself, would also enable me to claim for it an apostolic and, as far as anything apostolic can be called Divine, a Divine origin."²

But is it likely that the observance of the Lord's Day as the Sabbath would have been so fully countenanced by the Apostles as it was unless there had been Divine authority for the custom? And would the transition from the seventh-day to the first-day Sab-

¹ *θησαυρίων*, "putting it into the treasury."

² *Bampton Lecture*, pp. 31, 32, 37.

bath have been so rapid as that by the time of John's exile to Patmos the day of the Resurrection of Christ could be publicly referred to as the Lord's Day, unless the early Christians had been fully persuaded that this Divine authority had been given, in some way or other, to their inspired teachers and pastors? The date of the Apocalypse, in which the expression "the Lord's Day" first occurs, is A.D. 69. But still earlier references to the observance of the "first day" are found in 1 Cor. xvi. 1 (A.D. 57), and in Acts xx. 7 (A.D. 58).

There were some in the early Churches who believed that the Lord did actually command the first day to be kept as the Sabbath,¹ and this belief is perhaps not altogether destitute of New Testament warrant; for St. Luke refers to the fact of Jesus having "given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen," and also states that He had spoken to them after His resurrection "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 2, 3). But, as we have said, there is no definite assertion in the Scriptures that Christ gave such a command. It is from His example that we conclude the change of day to have received His authorisation.

For a considerable period, no doubt, both the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath were observed in different places, for in all revolutions there is a transitional age, when compromises have to be made in things that are not vital. It was not, indeed, until A.D. 360 that Saturday was authoritatively secularised by the Council of Laodicea, but long before that time

¹ Athanasius (*De Semente*) boldly affirms that Christ made the change Himself.

the custom of the Christian Churches had become practically uniform.

In apostolic times, as we have seen, the change had already been adopted in many Churches, and the usage rapidly spread. Barnabas, the first of the fathers, amid some curious millenarian notions, bears witness that the Christians of the first century rejoiced on the eighth day because of the Resurrection of the Lord.¹ Ignatius (A.D. 70), Bishop of Antioch, says that "although the Apostles were brought up in the ancient laws, they yet came to the newness of hope, no longer observing Sabbaths (Jewish), but keeping the Lord's Day, in which our life arose by Him."² He also urged the Magnesians not "to Sabbatise," but to live according to the Lord's Day. The remarkable MS. recently discovered by Bryennios, and entitled, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which is generally dated about A.D. 110 or 120, supplies some most valuable testimony as to the early prevalence of the observance of Sunday. In chapter xiv. are these words: "But on the Lord's Day do ye assemble and break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, in order that your sacrifice may be pure."

Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) says that Christians assembled together on the first day of the week "as being that on which the work of creation was commenced, and on which Christ rose." The same writer uses the term Sunday,³ and it is also thus designated in a law of the younger Valentinian.⁴ Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 178), speaks of "every Christian keeping the

¹ Catholic Epistle, chap. xv. ² Epistle to Magnesians, ix.

³ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ, "on the day called Sunday."

⁴ "Solis die quem Dominicum rite dixere majores."

Lord's Day as a Sabbath, meditating in the law, and rejoicing in the works of God." ¹ The Ebionites of the second century observed the seventh day, but they were declared heretics. Tertullian (A.D. 195) refers to the Sunday services of Christians (*De Orat.*, 23), and says: "Die dominico resurrectionis omni anxietatis habitu et officio cavere debemus, differentes etiam negotia."² Bunsen's *Hippolytus* supplies similar evidence, and the testimony of Pliny, Proconsul of Bithynia, which is all the more valuable because of his exalted position and his great ability, makes it certain that the Christians of the early part of the second century sang hymns to Christ and celebrated the Eucharist on a day different from the Jewish Sabbath. The observance of the Lord's Day went on spreading, until it became the recognised and only Sabbath of the Christian Churches, the matter being at length finally settled by the decree of Constantine (A.D. 321), "Omnes judices urbanæque plebes et cunctarum artium officia venerabili die solis quiescant."

Only a passing reference need be made to a theory which occasionally reappears, the object of which is to furnish a reason for the alteration of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. The theory is that our first-day Sabbath is in reality a reversion to the usage of primeval and patriarchal ages, the seventh-day Sabbath dating only from the Exodus. The idea was referred to by some of the Puritan writers, and even Archbishop Ussher was attracted by it. More recently

¹ This passage is disputed, but there is a similar passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians.

² "On the day of the Lord's resurrection we ought to guard against every kind of anxiety and lay aside business."

Dr. Samuel Lee, in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge in 1833, and the Rev. James Johnston of Glasgow, in an able and scholarly pamphlet published in 1868, have revived the notion.

It is perhaps not impossible that the tradition of the patriarchal Sabbath may have been kept up in the observance of the *dies solis*, Adam's first day; but who could possibly trace back to creation, with any degree of certainty, the long line of Sabbaths? When we reflect upon the apostasies of primeval tribes and nations, the long, dark serfdom of the Israelites, and the repeated tamperings with the calendar in subsequent ages, can we regard any conclusion on such a subject as the identity of our Sunday with the Adamic Sabbath as having the slightest value? Moreover, if this idea were maintained, it would simply be raising one difficulty to meet another. It would be necessary then to explain the solemnisation of the Jewish seventh day in place of the earlier first day; and surely, if that change were accounted for on dispensational grounds, still more satisfactorily would such reasons explain the alteration necessitated by the conditions and exigencies of the Christian Church.

The value and importance of the Sabbath institution need not be made to depend on any specific day or manner of observance outside of what we know to be the Divine will, and it is quite enough for us to possess such indications of Christ's mind concerning that Sabbath of which He is the Lord as are found in His own example, and in the beliefs and practice of those who best knew His purposes. From these indications we may safely infer that the early and general custom of assembling together for worship on

the Lord's Day instead of on the Jewish Sabbath was with the sanction and approval, if not in consequence of a direct and positive command, of Christ, and is, to use the language of Dr. Paley, "a law of Christianity of Divine appointment" (*Moral and Political Philosophy*, chap. vii.). The change from the seventh-day to the first-day Sabbath is an impressive testimony to the sovereignty and glory of the Messiah. On the Lord's Day we are reminded of the greatness of Christ, Who spake a world from nought, and of His still more abundant glory in its redemption. This day of Christ's resurrection "is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. cxviii. 24).

"Dear is the day which God hath made,
Signal of peace to earth displayed ;
Its light the rainbow of the seven,
Its atmosphere the air of heaven.

Lord of the Sabbath, 'tis Thy will
These hours to hallow ; bless them still !
Send down Thy Spirit's sevenfold powers,
And make Thy rest and gladness ours."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DECALOGUE AND THE SABBATH.

"Both theirs and ours Thou art,
As we and they are Thine;
Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs—all have part
Along the sacred line."—KEBLE.

THE fact that the Ten Commandments, one of which formulates the Sabbath law, were promulgated in their present form to the Israelites, has been held by writers of considerable authority and irreproachable sincerity to favour the notion that the Sabbath is an exclusively Jewish institution.

It has been pointed out that, at the giving of the manna, the Israelites were already more or less familiar with the Sabbath, and therefore that it could not have been originated by the Sinaitic code. We shall now try to make it clear that the Fourth Commandment was enacted under such circumstances, and is of such a character, as to beget the conviction that it was intended by the Lord to be of world-wide and perpetual obligation.

This commandment is a portion of the Decalogue; it follows, therefore, that whatever may be the character of the Ten Commandments, and whatever the aspect of their precepts to humanity, the Sabbath law must be identified with the rest, and must stand or fall with them. Mons. Proudhon, in his pamphlet on

the Sabbath, lays it down that the Sabbath institution was conceived in the principles of an elevated political economy, and that it presupposes liberty, equality, the supremacy of religion and law, and the possession of executive power by the people, amongst which impressive arguments he affirms (p. 16): "*L'ordonnance sabbatique n'est qu'une section de la première loi, dont elle forme le quatrième paragraphe.*"¹

1. The Sinaitic code was enacted and promulgated amid circumstances of awful grandeur. Never before had the Israelites witnessed anything so imposing as the spectacle upon which they gazed in terror while standing around the mount which burned with fire. Even Moses, who had been more than once brought into close relationship with Jehovah, was so profoundly impressed that he exclaimed, "I exceedingly fear and quake." When the Divine Lawgiver had completed this part of His instructions to Moses, it is declared that "He added no more" (Deut. v. 22), indicating by the emphatic and deliberate pause that the "Ten Words" were to be considered as distinct from what was to follow, and of a more solemn nature.

The Ten Commandments were twice graven on tables of stone by the Almighty (Deut. v. 22), a figurative expression, no doubt, but one which certainly denoted perpetuity. Moses, on another occasion, inscribed the names of the tribes on two onyx stones for a memorial (Exod. xxviii. 9-12). And Job, desiring that his justification might be imperishable, exclaimed, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they

¹ "The Sabbath ordinance is only a section of the first law, of which it forms the fourth paragraph."

were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" (Job xix. 23, 24).

The tables of stone delivered to Moses were to be laid up in an ark of special construction, which was to be kept within the second veil in the Holy of Holies amid the mysterious symbols of the Divine presence, as if God would teach the Jews, and all after ages, that the laws inscribed on those tables were a part of His will, of His very Being, in fact. The ark was covered by the mercy-seat and the cherubim, signifying that all it contained was under the immediate care and supervision of God, whereas the ceremonial and other laws were laid alongside the ark. From all this it is impossible not to gather that Jehovah would have all men to feel the solemnity and permanency of these laws. To quote from the article on the Sabbath in Dr. Smith's Dictionary: "That the Decalogue had a rank and authority above the other enactments of the law is plain to the most cursory readers of the Old Testament."

2. Not only from the circumstances attendant upon the revelation of the Decalogue, but also from the nature of its laws and enactments, we are led to infer that its legislation was intended to have a distinctive and supremely solemn authority, and to be binding upon all who should be brought into any relation to it.

Laws may be regarded as of two kinds:—

(1.) Moral, natural, or essential, which are founded not on any changing or accidental circumstances, but in the eternal nature and constitution of things, and are necessarily binding always and everywhere.

(2.) Positive, that is, of an exceptional, transitory,

or arbitrary nature, emanating from some proper authority, but local and temporary in their intention; deriving the reason for their origin from circumstances external to the laws themselves.

These two classes of laws involve the distinctions of right and wrong in the case of moral laws, and of lawful and unlawful in the case of positive precepts. Not, of course, that what is legal may not also be morally right, but the distinctions adverted to are primarily determined by the classification of laws under these two categories.

Now all the precepts of the Decalogue are clearly and emphatically moral in their character. If there is a Supreme Deity, then it is eternally right that none other besides Himself should receive Divine worship, that no idolatry should be tolerated, that no irreverent use of His awful name should be permitted, and that a specified portion of time should be devoted by all His rational creatures to meditation upon His glories and to the ascertainment of His will. These are principles which must be admitted as fundamental and of universal obligation. And similarly with regard to the commandments of the second table, the laws which they embody are such as that no morality could be maintained without their observance and enforcement. Due reverence for the authority of parents, respect for human life, the restraint of lustful passions, honesty in act and word, and the government of all the natural desires and impulses of the heart—these lie at the base of all enlightened moral and political codes, and without them home, society, and the state could not survive. As Dean Stanley says, they are the granite foundation on which the world is built.

The Sinaitic laws were not given as an original legislation, but were merely the formulated expression of eternal moral precepts whose existence may be discovered in the habits and usages of anterior ages. The Jews, living under a theocracy, received all their laws by direct inspiration or revelation from heaven, but those which were of exclusively Jewish significance were sharply marked off both in their language and in the manner of their promulgation from those which were of universal and perpetual obligation. The Decalogue appealed to them, not as Jews, but as men, and was adapted to human requirements and relationships under all circumstances. The great eternal cardinal virtues were emphasised, and all that militated against the true interests of mankind was prohibited and denounced. The Sinaitic legislation was a re-echo of the Edenic revelation, in which God was declared to be supreme, and His nature and will the one perfect embodiment of morality and law. What was right or wrong to the Jews was right or wrong to Adam, and is to us. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life were the material or symbolical exposition of the first Mosaic table, and the relations between Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and all who should spring from them when they became fruitful and replenished the earth, were predetermined by those eternal principles which were solemnly and definitively promulgated in the laws of the second Mosaic table. And when Judaism had fulfilled its mission, and its glory dimmed before a glory greater than itself, these laws remained in force. The great immutable duties of man to his Creator and his fellow-man were unrepealed. The moral law, like its Author, is no respecter

of persons nor of times. Its sanctions are Divine and eternal, surviving the wreck of empires and the decay of dispensations. To use the happy figure of Bishop Wilson, "The moral law assumed, as it entered the Mosaic dispensation, her robes of emblematic and civil ceremony; each commandment was adorned with appendages; when that dispensation ceased, she put off her robes and re-assumed her original simplicity of attire, and now the queen of days approaches us with that native majesty and authority which was veiled during the figurative age—a majesty and authority which was derived from her first coronation in Paradise, which was augmented by the public proclamation of her rights on Mount Sinai, and which she retains with increased privileges and prerogatives in the New Testament." ¹

The Sabbath takes rank amongst the immutable rectitudes which no local or changing circumstances can effect. Edenic innocency, patriarchal simplicity, Levitical symbolism, Rabbinical subtleties, the spiritual liberty of Christianity, may reflect varying hues upon it, but the principle involved in Sabbath keeping is not abrogated by any æonial or dispensational transitions. Dr. Hessey admits that "the occurrence of a commandment to keep the Sabbath in a table generally moral implies that there is a moral element in that commandment." ² And again he says: "If the Church made the first day holy, she may make any other day holy instead. She may change the cycle, she may enlarge it indefinitely, she may get rid of it altogether." ³

Dr. Paley denies the moral character of the Sabbath law of the Decalogue on the ground that the distinction

¹ *Lord's Day*, p. 68.

² *Bampton Lecture*, p. 23.

³ *Idem*, p. 190.

between moral and positive was not understood by the Jews, and this he supposes to be proved by affirming that in the Old Testament both positive and moral duties are enumerated promiscuously together. To this it may be replied that Dr. Paley elsewhere endeavours to establish the positive and transitory nature of the Sabbath from the fact of its being mentioned in Leviticus xxiii. along with the Jewish festivals, which are, of course, positive and transitory regulations, and hence he is inconsistent with himself. But further, Dr. Paley is not by any means correct in his assertion, for the Jews were certainly familiar with the distinction, though as yet scientific jurisprudence had not invented the technical terms. In Isaiah i. there is a complete dissociation of the festivals from the duties of obedience and righteousness. Samuel declared that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). And the fiftieth Psalm furnishes another illustration of the fact that the Israelites perfectly well understood the difference between the positive or temporary and the eternal or moral in matters of duty, even though they had not the terms which are familiar to us. It is eminently unscientific for any one to require that there should be found modern technicalities in the Old Testament Scriptures. In other matters this principle is continually being insisted on by such theologians as Dr. Paley and Archbishop Whately. On what ground, then, do they require here what they declare to be impossible elsewhere? If we may not look for a compendium of geology in Genesis, neither ought we to demand a system of scientific jurisprudence in Exodus. Where moral conduct is concerned, God legislated for all ages,

and consequently His laws bearing upon moral duties were not to be defined or expressed in changing human nomenclatures, nor to derive any authority or sanction from the fact that they might harmonise with the codes of one nation rather than of another, or of one age to the exclusion of another.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTER AND PURPOSES OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“There, one by one, his spirit saw
Of things Divine the shadows bright,
The pageant of God's perfect law.”

—KEBLE.

THE universality and permanency of the Sabbath law, as contained in the Decalogue, are evidenced by the terms in which the Fourth Commandment is expressed, and also by the reasons for its promulgation, which are inferred from the language in which it is framed.

When the precise words of the commandment are considered, it will be clearly seen how complete is the absence of everything peculiarly Jewish. No regulations are attached to it which would have ultimately narrowed it down, or caused it to grow effete or out of date. It is as appropriate to the whole race of man as to the Jews, as exquisitely adapted to nineteenth century conditions as to those of the Mosaic age. Its clauses are introduced in a manner which, to say the least, is impressive. It may be that the word “remember” fairly implies a previous knowledge of the Sabbath; but whether that be so or not, it is a form of language which raises an expectation of something highly important. In other passages of Scripture,

where a command is similarly introduced, it is usually one which bears upon the relationship between Jehovah and His chosen people, and carries with it the appearance of great solemnity. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. v. 15).¹

Furthermore, there are terms used in the commandment which would have been utterly inexplicable had the Sabbath been an exclusively Jewish ordinance. The servants of the Jews were not to be deprived of their needed day of rest. The time was when they themselves were servants and bondmen of foreigners, galled by tyranny, and hindered by heartless impositions of labour from serving the Lord their God and from offering sacrifices to Him; but in the more prosperous days that were approaching, they would have servants and slaves in their own households, and they were to show more mercy towards them than they themselves had experienced at the brick-kilns of Egypt in the dark terrible days of their servitude. Their servants would in some instances be of foreign extraction, purchased or taken prisoners in battle, but their nationality was not to be taken as a reason for robbing them of that periodical rest which all mankind require, and which a beneficent Deity has ordained as the birthright of every human being. And this point is still further emphasised by the provision that the Sabbath privileges were to be extended also to the stranger, the alien or foreigner, who for purposes of trade and commerce,

¹ See also Exod. xiii. 3; Deut. xv. 15.

or for any other reason, might chance to be within the precincts of the Jewish family or state upon the Sabbath day. In regard to the Passover, which was distinctively and exclusively a Jewish festival, having no meaning whatever to any other nation, a man must become a Jew before he could be permitted to participate in its celebration. The foreigner must embrace Judaism and undergo the initial rite of circumcision in order to take part in that great national festival. There is nothing whatever corresponding to this in respect of the observance of the sacred seventh day. Everything that savours of Judaism is absent from the Fourth Commandment. It is true that the Septuagint has, instead of "the stranger that is within thy gates," the phrase "proselyte that is a stranger with thee;" but the Septuagint translation was made at a time when Rabbinical influences had begun to operate. The word *gar*, though used by the Talmudists to denote "proselyte," is never so used in the Old Testament, and neither the Samaritan text nor the Targum of Onkelos gives the slightest countenance to the Septuagint rendering.

If the Sabbath had been intended to be restricted to the Jews and not to be universally binding, then it is utterly unaccountable that in this, its most solemn and formal enactment, others besides Jews should be admitted to its benefits and declared to be subject to its requirements.

It must now be pointed out that the sublime purposes or reasons for which the Fourth Commandment was promulgated are of such a nature as to make it applicable to all mankind. These purposes may be regarded as of a twofold character:—

1. Those which relate to the duty of man towards God.

2. Those which have to do with the interests of the human race.

1. First, we wish to observe that there were motives for the promulgation of the Sabbath law of the Decalogue which relate to the rights of God.

The glory of God in creation is a theme for praise and adoration from "all that are about Him." There were some whom St. Paul charged with folly, "because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks," although "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). His skill, revealed in the verdure which carpets the earth and clothes the woods with blossoms that no artist could mould or paint; His power, divinely writ in stellar inscriptions on the skies; His watchful care, manifested in His solicitude for even the perishing sparrow and the fading lily; His wisdom, displayed in the sublime adaptations everywhere perceptible; His grace, set forth in the splendid faculties for spiritual growth and blessedness with which He endowed the last and greatest of His terrestrial creations—these all abide; in them the entire human race is perpetually interested, and hence they demand, and are worthy of, the wonder and praise of all generations of men. "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles?" "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting" (Isaiah lxiii. 16).

Every child of man may say as truthfully as could the Hebrew, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture." And hence it is the prime duty of every man to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise," on the day set apart for worship, and which God has sanctified as a memorial of creation.

The primitive Sabbath commemorated God's work in creation as well as His cessation from it, and the two things are collocated together in the Fourth Commandment; and so ought our whole time to be consecrated to God, that part of it which is necessarily devoted to the active duties of life, as well as that which is set apart for meditation and the exercises of piety. "It is important to remember that the Fourth Commandment is not limited to a mere enactment respecting one day, but prescribes the due distribution of a week, and enforces the six days' work as much as the seventh day's rest."¹ Work and worship are both commanded of God, and were "joined together" in the time of "man's innocency." Let no man put them asunder. "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." Nor can his worship be exalted. Work is manly; nay, it is Divine, for the "Father worketh hitherto," and they who regard it as drudgery, or who turn it into a tyrannous burden, are criminal before high Heaven.

Archbishop Whately, in his *Thoughts on the Sabbath*, founds an objection against regarding a specific day as a sacred day on the danger that such a course tends to make the other days too secular, and to mark off the

¹ Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. "Sabbath," p. 1068.

religious from the ordinary employments of life. But the truth is the reverse of this—that they who fain would keep the Sabbath best are those who likewise “provide things honest in the sight of all men,” and are “diligent in business.”

2. Secondly, there are reasons for the enactment of the Fourth Commandment which relate to the physical and moral welfare of all humanity. “In it thou shalt do no manner of work.” Rest is the central idea in this precept, and from that idea branch out many important considerations of universal human import. It is not pretended that the world-wide necessity for rest demonstrates the universality of Sabbath obligation, for in those festivals which are admittedly of Jewish scope and character the idea of rest is as prominent as in the Sabbath of the Decalogue; but what we affirm is, that this motive for the promulgation of the Fourth Commandment was not of exclusively Jewish reference. If there were never to be a break in the monotony of human toil; if its burden should never for a moment be lifted from the galled shoulders of unhappy man; if the artisan might never wash his begrimed hand, nor wipe the stain of sweat from his furrowed brow; if the noise of the craftsman’s hammer and the engine’s hum and clack were never to cease; if neither servant nor cattle might ever find a respite from the tyranny of greed and avarice; and if the sweeter, holier language of man’s spiritual nature should never be spoken, nor the aspirations of his soul, which, like the beams of the Star of Bethlehem, point Godwards, be followed, O how sad and pitiable would be the condition of our race, and how speedily would the earth bring forth nought else but thorns and briars, and man himself,

under his accumulated sorrows, sink beneath the restless waves of life—

“ With bubbling groan,
Without a grave—unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.”

It ought to be observed, however, that the Fourth Commandment does not forbid such work as is necessary for health and well-being. The word here translated “work”¹ signifies one's ordinary business or affairs, while there was quite another Hebrew word² to denote effort in the service of humanity, or such activity as was not of a commercial character. The word which occurs in the commandment is a very comprehensive one, and covers all servile toil, all drudgery, and whatever was done for gain. To add to it is to weaken it, and none must venture to take away from it. The Mishna, with that almost frivolous attention to details which marked the later and more degenerate ages of Judaism, enumerates thirty-nine kinds of work which might not be done on the Sabbath; but the classification is necessarily defective, and could only lead to vexatious and fruitless discussions. The terms of the command are clear and distinct, and the prohibition of all business, which it undoubtedly contains, is a well-defined and intelligible position.

The same need of rest applies to man in all his relationships, social, political, moral, and religious; but we need not pursue the argument, for the point has already been dealt with. It is sufficient to observe that domestic duties, social obligations, family religion, the proper training of the young, the satisfaction of those spiritual longings which are so conspicuous a

¹ מְלָאכָה—*melachah*.

² עֲבוּדָה—*avodah*.

factor of human nature, all demand for the Gentile as well as for the Jew that freedom from the engrossing secular pursuits of life which the Sabbath institution contemplates and insures. It was in the highest interests of man, therefore, that the Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue was given, and all its provisions are such as to display the Divine benevolence. The glory of Sinai anticipated the greater glory of Calvary, and the sublime utterances of the one as well as the tragical sacrifice of the other aimed at the welfare and salvation of our race. Even the writer of the article already quoted from in Dr. Smith's Dictionary makes the weighty observation: "It by no means follows that, even if the Sabbath were no older than Moses, its scope and obligation were limited to Israel, and that itself belongs only to the obsolete enactments of the Levitical law. That law contains two elements, the code of a particular nation, and commandments of a human and universal character." There will always be those, however, who are unable to perceive on what grounds the Decalogue is declared to retain its force, while the rest of the Levitical enactments with which this writer classes the Sabbath law have become obsolete. The only tenable position is the one occupied by those who maintain that the Sabbath law is distinct from all merely Levitical or ceremonial rites and ordinances, and that it dates from the beginning of man's existence on the earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SABBATH AND LEVITICAL LEGISLATION.

"Those feeble types and shadows old
Are all in Thee, the Truth, fulfilled :
We in Thy sacrifice behold
The substance of those rites revealed."

—WESLEY.

1. THE Sabbath law of the Fourth Commandment must be distinguished from those enactments of the Levitical system which relate to purely Jewish festivals and Sabbaths, or to temporary modes of Sabbath observance.

The festival Sabbaths of the Levitical economy are these :—

(1.) The first and seventh days of the Feast of the Passover, in which no servile work was to be performed (Lev. xxiii. 4-8).

(2.) The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, which was celebrated fifty days after the offering of the first-fruits, and was counted from the morrow of the Passover Sabbath (Lev. xxiii. 15-21).

(3.) The Feast of Trumpets, held on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. xxiii. 24, 25). This was the *Neomenia* or New Moon of Tisri, the beginning of the Jewish civil year.

(4.) The great Day of Atonement, on the tenth of the same month (Lev. xxiii. 27-32).

(5 and 6.) The Feast of Tabernacles, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and continuing seven days, the first of which was to be a Sabbath, as was also the day following the feast (Lev. xxiii. 34-36).

It is clear that these Sabbaths were not the ordinary weekly Sabbath, for in the chapter which gives instructions concerning them they are distinctly called "the feasts of the Lord." Moreover, the dates upon which they were ordered to be celebrated are so related that the festivals could not possibly all fall on the seventh day of the week. The Feast of Trumpets, for instance, or the first day of the civil year, and the great Day of Atonement, which fell on the tenth day of the same month, could not both occur on the weekly Sabbath.

Besides these annual festivals there were others which recurred periodically :—

(7.) The Sabbatic year (Lev. xxv. 2-6).

(8.) The Jubilee, or Sabbath of Sabbatical years, which recurred every fiftieth year (Lev. xxv. 8-24).

All these are distinctively and exclusively Jewish, are denoted by the same word as the weekly Sabbath, are all ordained by Divine authority, and all for the purposes of rest and worship. The Decalogue, containing the law of the weekly Sabbath, was promulgated before all other Sabbath regulations, save those which had to do with the Passover, an exception which is satisfactorily explained on the ground that it was founded on the escape from Egypt, and consequently before any formal legislation was necessary. The Decalogue was again and again appealed to by the rulers of Israel as of final authority, and it was emphasised by our Lord and interpreted by Him in even a more

strict and spiritual sense than by the Jews themselves.

It is of the utmost importance to bear these facts in mind in dealing with the relationship of the Sabbath to post-Judaic ages, for only those Sabbaths which were Levitical, whose existence depended upon what was temporary and typical of Christ's person and work, were abrogated by His coming; but the Sabbath, which was ordained to celebrate the six days' work and the seventh day's rest of the Creator, having no reference to anything Jewish, nor belonging to that ritual which symbolised the offices of Christ, could not be annulled by the abolition of the Levitical ceremonial.

2. The Sabbath law of the Fourth Commandment has also to be distinguished from those Levitical regulations concerning its modes of observance and the penalties attached to its neglect or profanation, which from the very nature of the case were only dispensational. Moses most consistently preserves the distinction between the essence of Sabbath obligation and the accidents of its modes of observance. It is with the former that the Fourth Commandment is concerned, while the latter are purely Levitical.

Archbishop Whately in his *Thoughts on the Sabbath*, written in defence of his note on *The Abolition of the Law*, subjoined to his *Essays On the Difficulties of St. Paul's Writings*, observes:—

“I do not see on what principle we can consistently admit the authority of the Fourth Commandment, and yet claim exemption from the prohibition of certain meats and of blood, the rite of circumcision, or indeed any part of the Levitical law” (p. 71).

If the Fourth Commandment were a part of the

Levitical code, and nothing more, there would be some force in the Archbishop's remark ; but the precepts of the Decalogue are not to be confounded with temporary or accidental details of ritual or of Sabbath observance. The Sabbath was made for man ; the modes of keeping it may be Jewish, English, and so on. The mere ceremonial of Sabbath observance, as prescribed in the Levitical system, may or may not apply to mankind in general ; in many particulars we are sure it could not. For example, the command that no fire should be kindled on the Sabbath was given at first in connection with the fall of manna, and related to the cooking of manna in the wilderness. It was repeated in *Exod.* xxxv. 3, where it probably refers to the fires used in the artificers' craft. But even if it had been more general, it could only apply to a people circumstanced as the Jews then were, and could not be meant to refer to those who are free from the Levitical law. Again, the prohibition of travelling beyond a certain distance on the Sabbath day (*Exod.* xvi. 29) was also connected with the gathering of the manna, and had reference to the going out after the manna ; teaching that not all travelling on the Sabbath is wrong, but that some travelling may be right, the distance being determined by the necessities of each case. The offering of lambs on the Sabbath morning and evening is another illustration of the difference between the principle of Sabbath observance and its temporary modes.

3. Further, there are in the Levitical code certain penalties attached to the neglect of the Sabbath which derived their origin and significance from circumstances exclusively Jewish, and hence were not intended to be perpetuated, but were to be abrogated when Judaism,

a preparatory or intermediate dispensation, passed away. The penalty of death was a legal punishment, better adapted than any of a milder nature to a nation which had only just emerged from serfdom. The enormity of the offence was aggravated by the fact that under a theocracy the neglect of God's claims on the obedience and worship of His people was really an act of rebellion against His sovereignty. The penalty was actually inflicted in the case of a man who on the Sabbath went out to gather sticks (Numb. xv. 35). The Sabbath was peculiarly the Lord's, consecrated to Him for the purpose of deepening man's trust and reverence towards Him. "Ye shall keep My Sabbath" (Exod. xxxi. 3). To deny God's right to human worship and love by robbing Him of the Sabbath was a greater evil than even to deny God's existence; for atheistical notions harm only the person who holds them, whereas Sabbath profanation usually makes work for others and involves them in the same condemnation.

The Sabbath law was not the only commandment of the Decalogue to which were attached penalties of a temporary or Jewish character, and yet of whose universality and permanency there can be no doubt. In Lev. xx. 2, 3, the offering of dishonour to the name of the Lord, an infringement of the Third Commandment, was declared to be punishable with death. With regard to the Eighth Commandment, also, there are many sorts of penalty, essentially of Jewish complexion, threatened against those who should violate it (Exod. xxii.).

4. The objection has been raised that some of the Jews themselves regarded the Sabbath as an institution belonging exclusively to their own nation. In the Commentary of Rabbi Solomon Yarki it is affirmed

that " God sanctified the seventh day and blessed it with manna, because on all other days of the week an omer of bread came down for each person, but on the sixth day double, and the seventh day He sanctified by manna, inasmuch as on that day it did not come down."

It is matter of history that the Jews in their later and more corrupt ages arrogated to themselves almost all the great blessings of God. The terms of the Abrahamic covenant were such as to make it applicable to all mankind, but they narrowed down the Divine grace and mercy to a few tribes. No wonder, then, that, in the frivolous days of Rabbinism, the Sabbath also should be interpreted as conferring its highest blessings solely upon the seed of Abraham. It was this pretentious and exclusive spirit, growing more and more intolerant as the years rolled by, that drove Jewry on to ultimate rejection and ruin. The testimony of the Jews as a God-serving people grew less effective as they encouraged the proud assumption that no other nation was acceptable to the Lord, and at length they threw off all responsibility for the enlightenment and salvation of the nations amongst whom they were placed. Boastful of their descent and history, they assumed a Pharisaic righteousness, which, in the sight of God, was but like the garniture of the sepulchre, wherein were dead men's bones. Dizzied by the loftiness of privilege to which they had been raised, they even set themselves against the laws of God, and made them void by their vain traditions.

It was not, however, universally believed, even in the more degenerate days of Judaism, that the Sabbath was distinctively and exclusively connected with the history of Israel. One of the most eminent and accomplished

Jews of his time was Philo, a man of high social rank and vast literary attainments, whose opinion, apart from his judiciousness and learning, has great weight from the fact that he enjoyed exceptional opportunities for intercourse with his co-religionists from all parts of the world. He thus writes: "All that the six days produced, the seventh day showed to be now made complete in full perfection. Therefore we duly hail it as the birthday of the world" (*De Septenario*, § 6).

5. Another objection to the statement that the Sabbath is not merely a Jewish institution is based upon the Scriptural references to it as a *sign* between Jehovah and His people, and as a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence. . . . Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. v. 15). "Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations" (Exod. xxxi. 13). And nine hundred years afterwards the Lord said: "Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them" (Ezek. xx. 12). "I am the Lord your God: walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God" (vers. 19, 20).

To this it may be answered in general, that it was the observance of the Sabbath, and not the institution itself, that is called the "sign," while the redemption of the Jews from slavery was appealed to simply as a motive to Sabbath-keeping. The mercy of God had been so marvellously displayed in their deliverance,

that it would be only natural for a legislator to use it again and again as a reason for urging obedience to God's laws on the part of the people.

The Sabbath law was not the only one that was enforced by such considerations. In Exodus xxiii. many other commands are urged upon the attention of the Israelites, and emphasised by the fact of God's compassion for them in the time of oppression and captivity. "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut. x. 19). Even duties that were not specifically mentioned in the Decalogue were enforced by the same motives. "And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage" (Deut. xiii. 5). Similar instances occur in Lev. xxii. 32, xxv. 42; Deut. xxiv. 22; whilst in Deut. vi. the whole of the commandments are associated with that critical event in their national history.

Then it should not be overlooked that there are other things besides the Sabbath which are referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures as "signs" between man and God, and which could have had no exclusive application to any individual or any particular nation. The rainbow was a token or sign "for perpetual generations" (Gen. ix. 12). The birth of Christ was a sign (Isa. vii. 14). The oracles of God and the resurrection of Christ are thus described (Rom. iii. 1, 2; Matt. xii. 39).

All that can be meant, therefore, by calling the Sabbath a "sign" and a "memorial" is, that it was a proof of God's benevolence towards His people, while the due and proper observance of it on their part would be a

sign that they gratefully embraced the Divine covenant of mercy, and acknowledged God's right to their love and obedience.

From all these considerations we think we are warranted in holding that the Sabbath as an institution has a significance and a bearing quite outside the range of Levitical legislation or exclusively Jewish history.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT STANDS UNREPEALED.

"The Sabbaths of eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide."

—TENNYSON'S *St. Agnes' Eve*.

THE Sabbath law of the Decalogue has never been repealed. All through the later developments of Jewish history it retained its vitality, and notwithstanding the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the Decalogue in general, and the Sabbath in particular, were adopted and sanctioned by Jesus Christ.

From the conquest of Canaan to the age of Samuel the Sabbath is not often mentioned, but the posthumous influence of Moses and Joshua would certainly be powerful enough during that period to prevent the Fourth Commandment from being forgotten. In 1 Chronicles xxiii. are given explicit instructions respecting the enthronisation of Solomon, among which are mentioned the Sabbath sacrifices. No doubt these regulations had already been acted upon, for Samuel had arranged all such matters even before David came to the throne (1 Chron. ix. 22). These were palmy days for Israel. This great seer, one of the world's most famous reformers, had established colleges or *cœnobias* at Ramah and other places, where religious instruction was regu-

larly given by prophets (2 Kings iv. 23). The Levites acted as chaplains in families, and children, with children's children, met together for worship (Deut. xii. 18, xiv. 27, xvi. 11, xviii. 6). We may presume, then, during the rule of those who inherited the traditions of Samuel the Sabbath would continue to be honoured.

But as time wore on, the echoes of this earnest teaching faded away, and the people turned to idols and profaned the Sabbaths of the Lord. The vineyard on a very fruitful hill, on which so much care had been bestowed, around which the wall of Jehovah's strength had been thrown, and in whose midst the tower of the Divine presence had been placed, brought forth nothing but wild grapes, and at length the hedges were broken down, the wall and tower removed, and the vine torn up by the roots. The people were carried captive to Babylon, and there they sat and wept when they remembered Zion (Ps. cxxxvii.). Their spirit was crushed by the tribulation, but the purity and fervour of their religion revived. On their return to Jerusalem, the Temple was restored and its services were reinstated by Nehemiah. Once more Jehovah was worshipped in sincerity and singleness of heart, and His Sabbaths were hallowed.

During the Maccabean wars the Jews were so devoted to the Sabbath that many of them allowed themselves to be slaughtered without resistance, thinking, no doubt wrongly, but at any rate with a zeal for God, that it would be a sin to perform even the necessary labours connected with self-defence (1 Macc. i.). When this question was more fully deliberated upon, it was decided that defence was not wrong on the Sabbath

day, and then the Jews, under the leadership of Mattathias, turned on their enemies and scattered them. Dio relates that Pompey sat three months before the citadel of the Temple, and would not have been able to take it then had not its defenders ceased from work on the Sabbath.

As Rabbinism grew in influence, the modes of Sabbath observance became more and more the subjects of discussion and controversy, and regulations were laid down which went far beyond the strictness required by the Mosaic laws. The Talmud affirms: "The Sabbath in importance is equal to the whole law." "He who openly profanes the Sabbath is like him who transgresses the whole law." Then came the period of frivolous and vain quibbling respecting details of secondary importance, and the Sabbath of the Jew seems at length to have become an object of derision and contempt. Unfortunately, as is often the case, the true and the essential principle was involved in the same fate as that which worthily befell the false and meretricious. Juvenal ridicules the Jew as one who is robbed by the piety of his fathers of the light, enjoyment, and earnings of every seventh day:

"Sed pater in causa, cui septima quæque fuit lux
Ignava et vitæ partem non attigit ullam."

—*Sat.* xiv. 105, 106.

And Horace, in the ninth Satire of his first book, refers to the great number of Jewish Sabbaths or festivals, and the "scrupulous whims" connected with the observance of them, describing them with a good deal of harmless humour.

Under the Gospel economy the Levitical ceremonial was abrogated, for all its purposes were fulfilled in

Christ, but the Sabbath law was never repealed. Its observance continued to be as binding on the Christian as we know it to have been on the Jew. The old prophecy declared that in Messianic times the Sabbath should retain its peculiar sanctity: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. lxvi. 22, 23). What the prophets foretold, history made good. The laws of the Decalogue, of which the Fourth Commandment was the centre, glorified by those which preceded it, and reflecting glory on those which followed it, were distinct from the ceremonial laws, and were adopted and re-enforced by Christ, as will be abundantly shown in more detail later on. It will be sufficient here to point out that our Lord referred to the perpetuity of the Sabbath ordinance no fewer than fifteen times, and on nine different occasions. (See Matt. v. 17, xxii. 40; Mark x. 19; Luke xvi. 17; John vii. 23, &c.) He vindicated it from Rabbinical perversions, swept off from it the fungus of tradition, which for so long a time had been sapping it of beauty and vitality, and redeemed it from the grievous burdens with which its observance had become overlaid. The Sabbath commandment is a part of that code which Christ so minutely expounded and so solemnly enforced in the Sermon on the Mount, and of which He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or

one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18).

Similarly the Apostles give no sign whatever of the abolition of the Sabbath, but by their teaching and example make it sufficiently plain that they did not regard the Decalogue or the Sabbath ordinance as Levitical or dispensational. The old leaven of Judaism was to pass away, but the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth was to remain (1 Cor. v. 7, 8). The first covenant was "faulty," that is, transitional and temporary, and therefore, having fulfilled its purposes, it must needs pass away. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. viii. 8).

Of all the Apostles, St. Paul deals the most fully with the inter-relations of the Law and the Gospel. He distinguishes between a law which is perpetually binding, and one which was fulfilled and abrogated in Christ. In Romans vii., viii., ix., where the true position and value of the law are fully set forth, there is no mention of the Sabbath. In Rom. xiii. 8-10 the law is declared to have been fulfilled by love. This, however, is not an abrogation of the Decalogue, and has no reference to the Fourth Commandment, but only to the second table, whose precepts are more perfectly obeyed by the spirit of brotherly love than under compulsion. In 2 Cor. iii. 6 it is said that the "new covenant" is most effectually preached, not in the letter, which killeth, but in the Spirit, which giveth life. The Apostle denotes his meaning very clearly, for in verse 17 he says that where the Spirit is there is liberty; and a little farther on declares that the

Lord is that Spirit. The "oldness of the letter" is the law apart from Christ, which condemns and kills when not obeyed, but the "newness of the Spirit" implies the condition of the believer in Christ, who keeps the law by the help of Christ's grace. And if these laws of the second table have thus to be kept, much more inviolable are those of the first table, which contains man's duties towards God. There are many other passages in St. Paul's writings which can only be interpreted as affirming the validity of the moral laws of the Decalogue (Eph. vi. 1-3; 1 Tim. i. 8-10; Gal. v. 14).

There are, however, several passages in the writings of St. Paul which have been interpreted by some in such a way as to militate against the sanctity of the Sabbath law and the strict observance of the Lord's Day. The most familiar of these passages is Rom. xiv. 5: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day." Not "every day *alike*," for the word *alike* was supplied by the translators of our Authorised Version without any corresponding word in the Greek, as is evidenced by its having been put in italics. No one ventures to say that the Apostle is here dealing with the Sabbath day, and he certainly does not mention it; and yet on this verse has been constructed a show of argument against the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and in favour of the idea that its observance should be regarded as a matter of individual taste or conscience. Even Dean Alford, in commenting on the verse, says: "I therefore infer that Sabbatical obligation to keep any day whatever, seventh or first, was not recognised in Apostolic times." It is a sufficient answer to all such inferences to point

out that St. Paul's object is merely to enforce the need of charity in non-essentials. He always refers to the law in terms of the deepest reverence, showing that we should "serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;" for "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. vii. 6, 12). St. Chrysostom declares in his Commentary on Romans: "The thing is not concerned with fundamentals; for what is requisite is that this person and the other should act for God's sake."

St. Paul lived in an age of transition. The old philosophical schools were broken up, and were being re-arranged on eclectic principles, and several of the Christian Churches even were hotbeds of disputatious hair-splitting. At Rome, as might be expected, where the old philosophical instincts were inherited without their grandeur, various subtleties of speculation were announced. Ascetics sought to enforce on others the eating of herbs, and ritualistic Judaizers desired to retain the antiquated Levitical festivals. Nothing but Apostolic energy and sagacity allayed these storm-breeding elements that so often clouded the atmosphere of the early Churches. It is astonishing that St. Paul, a Pharisee of the strictest sect, should have displayed such enlightenment and catholicity in these controversies, adjusting with perfect *finesse* the counter claims of the new and the old, and allowing to men of every shade of opinion a grand liberty in things not vital, while fearlessly enforcing all that was essential to the truth. Reformers have rarely resisted every temptation to adopt the expedient at the expense of the right. Arnold's *Light of Asia* shows that Buddha was not completely faultless in this respect. Mahomet

was a dismal failure; even Luther was unable to free himself from all the web of Popish sophistry. Paul, however, with a wisdom that must have been supernatural, always distinguishes between the substance and the shadow, the essential and the accidental, the eternal and the dispensational. But his whole writings testify to his firm faith in the inviolability of those great moral laws which were obeyed by Adam, Noah, Abraham, before the Decalogue was formulated, and are obligatory on all who would please God. Among these laws as framed for the Jewish code, but not then originated, shines the Sabbath commandment, re-enacting what had previously existed. Even Dr. Hessey admits in his Bampton Lecture that "the occurrence of a commandment to keep the Sabbath in a table generally moral implies that there is a moral element in that commandment" (p. 23). That which is moral is permanent, and it is unjust to St. Paul to suppose that his charitable counsels on such secondary matters as rites, feasts, and fasts are in contradiction of laws which he everywhere honours and maintains.

A kindred passage is Gal. iv. 10, 11: "Ye observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Does not this strike the death-blow against the custom of specially honouring the Lord's Day? Not at all. The Apostle is not thinking of the Sabbath institution in any way. He is dealing with difficulties which had arisen as the result of the former heathenism of the Galatians. "When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. . . . How turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye

observe days," &c. But these Galatian Christians had never been in bondage to Sabbath-keeping. They had worshipped Nature, the wind, the storm, the stars, as indicating the changes of seasons, months, and days, and now some of them were relapsing into these idolatrous customs. What possible reason can there be for applying the Apostle's censure to those who kept either the Jewish or the Christian Sabbath? Surely there is not the remotest reference to them, but merely to the heathenish habit of calculating lucky and unlucky days and auspicious seasons by the methods of astrology which they had given up on embracing Christianity. Commentators, with wearisome repetition, continue to interpret the word "days" as meaning the weekly Sabbath. Even so independent a theologian as Professor Beet commits the error of supposing the Sabbath is referred to. He says: "The prominent position in verse 10 of the word 'days' suggests that their observance of the weekly Sabbath was a chief mark of their apostasy" (*Commentary on Galatians*). No proof whatever is furnished that the Apostle refers to the Jewish Sabbath, and there is nothing to be gained, but very much to be lost, by perpetuating this venerable, but, as we are convinced, incorrect view.

One other passage from St. Paul's writings remains to be looked at. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (Col. ii. 16, 17, R.V.). It has been inferred from these verses that the weekly Sabbath of the Jews was a figure of the spiritual rest to be enjoyed in Christ, and that,

like other types and shadows, it was abolished at His coming, the Lord's Day being binding as a civil and ecclesiastical appointment. The Lutherans hold these views, as did the early Quakers. Dean Alford thought the Sabbath day of the Christian Church, as well as of the Jewish, was meant, and that the Apostle's words indicated, that to the Christian no one day need be regarded as holier than another. His comment on these verses is: "No answer can be given to this by the transparent special pleading that he is speaking only of that which was Jewish in such observances." But it is not "special pleading" to say that the only types or shadows of which "the body is Christ's" that are found in Judaism are those Levitical rites and sacrifices which prefigured something belonging to the Christian system. Now the Decalogue was not Levitical, nor was it a prototype or "shadow." Of what was the Eighth Commandment a type? What was prefigured by the First, the Ninth, or any of the Commandments? Why then should the Fourth be an exception? Such Sabbatical ordinances as those which we have already described—Pentecost, Tabernacles, New Moons, the Passover, the great Day of Atonement, the Seventh Year, and the Jubilee—were all typical or prophetic, and have no proper place in Christianity; but the weekly day of rest, sanctified in Eden, re-enacted on Sinai, adopted by Christ and His Apostles, could not be amongst such shadows. St. Paul no doubt had the language of Isaiah in his mind when he enumerated these "shadows" (Isa. i. 13, 14); but that prophet could certainly not have referred to the weekly Sabbath, for of this he elsewhere says: "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, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father" (Isa. lviii. 13, 14). The Apostle and the Prophet are at one. Religion does not consist in keeping festivals for their own sake; they are means of approaching Christ.

Even if the Apostle had been censuring those who contended for the observance of the seventh day alone, which we do not believe to have been the case, the principle of hallowing some one day in the seven would not be touched. The observing of one day rather than another may be a temporary or dispensational arrangement, but no such arrangement subverts the Sabbath law.

Nothing can be more certain, then, than that the first builders of the fabric of Christian doctrine, who wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of Whom Christ said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," distinguished between the moral duty of Sabbath-keeping and the effete ceremonial law of Judaism, and desired to hand on the institution free from all Jewish excrescences to succeeding generations. Hallowed by the blessing of Jehovah at creation, it now shines with the additional lustre of Christ's blessing, the Creator and Redeemer, Who ceased from His labours when He rose from the tomb.

We conclude, therefore, that just as the circum-

stances of the Edenic appointment of the Sabbath and of our Lord's association with that appointment are valid and weighty in their appeal to the Christian heart and conscience, so the character and purposes of the Fourth Commandment—solemnly enacted by the Almighty, adopted and enforced by Jesus Christ, destitute of anything that looks like a temporary or dispensational arrangement, and remaining without the least sign of abrogation—are such as to bind the Christian to an obedience to the requirements of that commandment as strict and loyal as was ever rendered by the pious Israelite. Let us who would honour and imitate Christ “remember” the sacred law He so scrupulously observed; “remember” it in all our preparations for the Sabbath, in the demands we make upon others, in the writing and posting of letters, in the despatching of goods, in the punctual cessation of the six days' labour, in the domestic and household arrangements, and in the distribution of the hours of the holy day itself.

“Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments” (Ps. cxix. 4-6).

CHAPTER X.

TRACES OF THE SABBATH AMONGST PRIMITIVE NATIONS.

“Seasons and months, and weeks and days,
Demand successive songs of praise ;
Still be the cheerful homage paid
With opening light and evening shade.”

—DODDRIDGE.

If the Sabbath dates from the creation of man, it is not unreasonable to say that there ought to be some evidences of its existence and observance amongst other peoples than the Jews and in pre-Sinaitic times.

When the families of Noah's sons had become numerous, they would seek new territory, thus laying the foundation of states and empires. They would, of course, carry with them the teaching of Noah and the rites of that religion which he had so faithfully observed. We should expect, then, to find amongst the relics of archaic life some vestiges at least of a sacred day. And this is precisely what we do find. Unmistakable evidences of the septenary arrangement of the days, of the periodical recurrence of sacred days, and of the dedication of one day to the sun-god, are discovered in abundance. It is of little significance that in some cases the first day, and in others the seventh day of the week, has been held

sacred. To Adam the Sabbath would be the first day, but according to the Mosaic enumeration of the "days" of creation it would be the seventh. The first day being the more general one observed by Gentiles, there might be grave reasons for having a sacred day distinct from that on which surrounding nations were in the habit of sacrificing to their idols. A change like this could have been effected at the Exodus without the slightest wrench at custom or sentiment; for it is quite certain that during their long sojourn in Egypt the Jews could not have enjoyed any regular Sabbath, or, if they did, it would have been the day on which their masters kept festival. But the point is unimportant. The Jews were aware that the succession of seventh days could not be traced back to creation; and if they could, it would probably be the first day of the Gentiles that would be found to have the best claims to be considered the first "seventh day" of the Mosaic narrative.

It will be necessary here to review briefly the results of modern research and archæological study, in order to obtain an idea of the extent to which Sabbath customs have prevailed amongst non-Jewish peoples in remote periods.

Some of the most valuable of these results are those which have been obtained by explorations amid the ruins and mounds that mark the site of Nineveh. From these ruins over 30,000 tablets have been exhumed, some of which reveal facts of the most interesting kind. The tablets were deposited at Nineveh 700 years B.C. by Assur-bani-pal, the Sardanapalus of the Greeks. Some of them contain copies of much

older inscriptions of Accadian origin, and dating back, according to Mr. George Smith, the prince of Assyriologists, to at least 2000 B.C., or even 2500 B.C. The city of Accad is mentioned in Gen. x. 10 as being, with Babylon and Erech, the beginning of the empire of Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, who drove out Asshur from Babylon, and so compelled him to build Nineveh. We are taken back, then, by these records to the very infancy of the oldest empires that have existed on the earth. Many of these inscriptions have not yet been thoroughly studied, but yet there are found amongst those which have been translated into modern languages several important references of quite an incidental character to the week and the sacred day. Professor Sayce has pointed out the sacredness of the number seven amongst the Accadians and Assyrians, and the existence of the week amongst the Babylonians; and the late Mr. George Smith drew attention to the fact that the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the month were termed *Sulum*, or "rest," on which certain kinds of work were prohibited, "and that the expression 'day of rest' was but the Assyrian translation of an older Accadian equivalent which signified *dies nefastus*." ¹

One of the tablets found at Nineveh is thus referred to by Mr. Smith:—"In 1869 I discovered, among other things, a common religious calendar of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks, and the seventh days, or Sabbaths, are marked out as days on which no work should be taken." ²

Another interesting tablet found by Mr. Smith is

¹ Rev. J. Johnston in the *Catholic Presbyterian*, January, 1881.
Assyrian Discoveries, p. 12.

one in which the king's duties are attached to the seventh day. Professor Sayce, of Oxford, translates the inscription thus: "The seventh day, the festival of Merodach (sun-god) and Tirpanitu; a holy day. A Sabbath for the ruler of great nations. Sodden flesh and cooked meat he may not eat. His clothes he may not change. (New) garments he may not put on. Sacrifices he may not offer. The king his chariot he may not drive. In royal fashion he may not legislate. A place of assembly for the judge he may not establish. Medicines for his ailments of body he may not apply. To make a measured square it is suitable. During the ensuing night, in the presence of Merodach and Istar, the king should erect his altar, make a sacrifice, and lifting up his hand, worship in the high place of the god." The same instructions are attached to the 14th, 21st, and 28th days, but they are dedicated to other divinities.

The fifth tablet of the creation series has by this time become tolerably familiar. After giving an account of the creation, agreeing in many points with the Mosaic narrative, it continues:

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

—*Records of the Past*, vol. ix. p. 118.

This is the translation of Mr. H. Fox Talbot. Others render the first line thus:

"On the seventh day a complete circle,"

leaving it an open question whether *aga* means holy day as well as circle. But even if it means only circle,

there is here a distinct reference to the week as instituted at creation, when, as the tablet says,—

“No men yet dwelt together :
None of the gods had yet been born ;
Their names were not spoken, their attributes were
not known.”

The most remarkable of these discoveries, however, is that by Mr. Boscawen, who found the very name *Sabbatu* in the Accadian form, the most ancient language yet discovered, spoken in the very age of Noah. Here the day is called a day of rest for the beast ; those burdensome restrictions to which we have just adverted had not yet been devised.

In these extracts the septiform arrangement of the days is referred to as a familiar and established usage. On this point all modern authorities are agreed. Professor Sayce, in the *Academy* for November, 1875, wrote: “It is now some time since first M. Oppert, and then more fully Dr. Schrader, in the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1873, pointed out the Babylonian origin of the week. Seven was a sacred number among the Accadians, and their lunar months were at an early epoch divided into periods of seven days each.” And in Dr. Eadie’s *Cyclopædia* it is said, “In all the countries of the East among ancient nations, before they had any knowledge of Scripture history, . . . this division is recognised, and the days of the week named.”

Another point made clear by these tablets is the fact that the day dedicated to the sun-god or principal divinity was in those early ages a day of rest from toil, and given up to religious exercises.

The first form of idolatry would naturally be the worship of the sun. The Noachian theology, fading

from men's minds, would at least leave behind it some impression of a Supreme Being; and what would be more likely than that the great mysterious orb hanging in the heavens, as the most glorious object visible to the human eye, the apparent fountain of light and warmth and life, not yet measured and weighed by the exact calculations of astronomy, should be regarded as divine? Sabæism and Chaldeeism were doubtless the earliest types of idolatry; and as the heavenly bodies were distinguished from each other, it is easy to see how the sacred day would be dedicated to the sun, and the other days to the moon and the planets. In Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*, a book published in 1672, this custom is dated back to a period not long after Noah's death. "The Sabbath, or seventh day's rest, which the holy seed of Noah observed as holy to God, the idolatrous seed consecrated to the sun, their supreme god, and thence called it Dies Solis" (Sunday). Hence we have days dedicated to Merodach, the Accadian sun-god; to Samas, the Assyrian sun-god of later times; to the Egyptian Amen and Ra, and to corresponding divinities amongst the gods of modern heathens. So natural to uninstructed man is sun-worship, that even the Israelites in their degenerate days were prone to fall into it. Part of Josiah's work of reformation consisted in putting down "the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. . . . And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, . . . and

burned the chariots of the sun with fire" (2 Kings xxiii. 5, 11).¹

As Monotheism became debased into Polytheism, the day dedicated to the sun still retained its pre-eminence over the days devoted to other divinities. Baal, the chief of the Babylonian idols, was a sun-god, and the day given to his worship was called the Lord's day.

Here, then, in the cradle of the human family, where the eldest son of Noah and his seed permanently settled, are discovered the traces of a sacred day, pointing back to that Edenic hallowing of the seventh day whereon Jehovah rested from all His works which He had created and made.

Turning our attention now to Egypt, another fascinating field of modern archæological research, there are indubitable proofs of the existence of the week and of a sacred day on which the sun was worshipped.

The Egyptians named the days of the week after the heavenly bodies of the solar system, borrowing the idea, no doubt, from the Babylonians, directly or indirectly. In the ancient mythologies these celestial objects were supposed to preside over one day each. This, however, was not the first collocation of the days into series of sevens, but was merely another mode of distinguishing an order which was already recognised.

Another vestige of the Egyptian week is found in the custom of celebrating a seven-days' festival in honour of the goddess Apis, the original of the Israelitish molten calf. Now this period of a week was entirely arbitrary. The Egyptians used the solar year, and there is nothing whatever in this to suggest a

¹ The same sin is alluded to in Deut. iv. 19; Deut. xvii. 3; and Ezek. viii. 16.

division of time containing seven days. No transitions of the sun, nor any phases of the other heavenly bodies, correspond with such a period. The year was divided into twelve months of thirty days each, five days being added to the last month. This usage is at least as old as Noah; for we are told in Gen. vii. 11 that he entered into the ark on the seventeenth day of the second month; and since the ark rested on Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, a period of exactly five months had elapsed, which we are informed was 150 days (Gen. viii. 3, 4).

By this method of dividing the year a quarter of a day was lost every twelve months, which does not seem to have been regularly rectified, save that in the cycle of about 1460 years it would right itself by the loss of a whole year. The solar year was not generally adopted till the time of the Romans, when Julius Cæsar reformed the calendar. The vague and wandering year was then replaced by the exact period ordained by Cæsar, modified somewhat in after times by Gregory XIII. But none of the changes affected the established succession of the days in the week, nor altered the relation of the first day to the rest.

The Egyptians, like the Chaldeans, had their sacred day, on which the sun was worshipped. Amen and Kheper represented the invisible and self-produced god, who was identified with the sun, while Ra symbolised the meridian splendour.¹

Turning now to the Sanskrit literature of India, we meet there also weighty evidences for the early exist-

¹ Osiris, according to some mythologists, is also identified with the sun; but he was one of the legendary divine kings, and did not become a universal Egyptian deity till somewhat later times.

ence of the week and of a primitive day of rest corresponding with the Sunday of other lands. The precise arrangement of the week as it now exists was of course introduced into the Indian system from Greece after the Christian era; but long before this there was current a septenary arrangement of the days. Bailly's *Astronomie Indienne* states that the week of seven days was fully recognised in ancient Brahminism, and that the names of the days were derived by the peoples of those remote ages from the same planets as by the Greeks, the Romans, and our Saxon ancestors. But the Brahminical week commenced with Soucravaram, or day of Venus, and Sunday was consecrated to the sacred fowl Guruda. In the older Vedic ages the month was divided into fortnights, to suit the Durshā and Purnamasa sacrifices. The Rev. Spence Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, to which we are indebted for most of the facts here referred to, states that there are four days in each month called *poya*, on which religion is specially attended to, and on which the cooking of food is suspended. The Indian Aditivar, which corresponds with Sunday, is consecrated to the principal deity; and in Ceylon, where the Buddhists were driven, the same custom prevails. Dr. Hessey hazards the conjecture that the existence of the week in the early Hindoo ages may be accounted for by Egyptian expeditions into Scythia, the cradle of the Hindoo and Persian nations. But it is hardly likely that the incursions of the Egyptians, which never ripened into real conquest and settlement, would influence to such an extent nations not yet born. Moreover, this idea is quite inconsistent with Dr. Hessey's view that the Egyptians had adopted the week from the Jews, for the Hindoos had emigrated

from Central Asia long before Egypt had entered into anything like close intercourse with the Jewish nation. The only adequate explanation of such remarkable coincidences between the early institutions of peoples so widely separated is, that these institutions sprang out of the same root in ages still more remote.

The Canaanites seem to have kept a seventh-day festival in honour of Kevan or Saturn, this being about the only exception to the general rule in those primeval times of consecrating the sacred day to the sun; but it is accounted for by the fact that Saturn was their tutelary divinity.¹

The Phœnicians too, according to Porphyry, who would not be likely to make such an admission without strong evidence, were accustomed to consecrate one day in seven as holy.

There are many passages in the earliest Greek fragments which, though they are of a somewhat vague character, yet clearly point to the septiform arrangement of the days, and the existence of a sacred day. In the *Præparatio Evangelica*² of Eusebius are given several quotations of this character, from which the following are taken:—

Linus, B.C. 1280, furnishes two very significant lines:—

Ἐβδόμη εἰν ἀγαθοῖσι καὶ ἐβδόμη ἐστὶ γενέθλη
Ἐβδόμη ἐν πρώτοισι καὶ ἐβδόμη ἐστὶ τελείη.

“The seventh day is observed among the pious, and the seventh day is the festival of the world’s nativity; the seventh day was kept by our forefathers, and the seventh day is the perfect day.”

¹ Michaëlis, *Commentary on the Laws of Moses*, art. 248.

² Lib. xiii. chap. 13.

Homer, B.C. 1000, wrote :¹—

Ἑβδομον ἡμαρ ἔην καὶ τῶ τετέλεστο ἅπαντα.

“The seventh day was, and all things were completed.”

Ἑβδομάτῃ δ' ἔπειτα κατήλθεν ἱερὸν ἡμαρ.

“The seventh, and then the sacred day came round.”

Hesiod in *Works and Days* says :—

Αἶδε γὰρ ἡμέραι εἰσὶ Διὸς παρὰ μῆτιόντος
Πρῶτον ἔνη τετράς τε, καὶ ἑβδόμη ἱερὸν ἡμαρ.

“For these days are from Jupiter the discerning ;

First the day (of the new moon), also the fourth, and the seventh, a sacred day.”

Callimachus, B.C. 230, also calls the seventh day holy.

Clemens Alexandrinus quotes from Homer to show he spoke of the seventh day as holy, and adds : “The elegies of Solon also intensely deify the seventh day.”

These passages do not, it may be, establish it as a fact that the week was used amongst the early Greeks, but they certainly indicate the probability of it, and they clearly show that there was a certain sacredness about the seventh day. This idea was so deep rooted that the seventh day of the seventh month was celebrated as the birthday of Apollos, and it strengthened and spread, till, by the time of Josephus, it could be said that there was no Grecian city and no foreign nation to which the Sabbath had not penetrated ; and Philo

¹ Homer continually refers to events as occurring in a series of six days, followed by a seventh different from the rest, as if such an arrangement of the days had taken hold of his memory and imagination. *Od.* x. 80, xii. 399, xiv. 249, xv. 476.

went so far as to call the Sabbath *ἑορτὴ πάνδημος*, a general festival belonging to all people.

The Romans did not adopt the week till early in the Christian era, or possibly when Julius Cæsar reformed the calendar. Previously to this the *nundinæ* or eight-day periods were ordinarily used. It is curious that this august power should set aside the customs of Italy out of which she grew, and of Greece by whom she had been taught her arts and refinements, to adopt the system of the Egyptians. May it not be that in this, as in so many of her acts, Rome was being used as an unconscious agent in preparing the way for the general adoption of Christianity?

The Romans, however, were familiar with sacred days and believed in the antiquity of the festivals. Tibullus wrote:—

“Aut ego sum causatus aves, aut omina dira,
Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem.”

—*Carm.* Bk. i. Eleg. 3.

“I pretended that either birds or direful omens or the sacred day of Saturn detained me.”

On the *feriæ* freeborn Romans suspended all political and legal business, and even the slaves enjoyed a respite from their exacting toil; the people frequented the temples, and the *rex sacrorum* and *flamens* who were connected with the religious rites were not even allowed to see work done. The *Saturnalia* were connected with the sacred day of Saturn, and during that season presents were made, the senate and the schools were closed, and the slaves were permitted to rest. These usages had come down from the earliest times; hence we find Seneca declaring that “the founders of laws

did institute festival days, that men should publicly be constrained to cheerfulness" (*De Tranq. An.*).

The custom of naming the days of the week was adopted by the Romans from the Egyptians, and the names then given to them are now used by most European nations; the English names, as is well known, being of Saxon origin.¹

There is scarcely any part of the world, in which relics of primeval times have come to light, that does not furnish some monuments or traditions of the week and of a sacred day. The abode of Shem, where mighty empires grew and left in their vast mounds the terra-cotta tablets which have only recently been deciphered, the tents of Ham, whose swarthy multitudes traced their myths and stories on the papyri which have come to our knowledge during the present century, and the dwelling-place of Japhet's descendants in Eastern Asia, whose annals stretch back into an antiquity as remote as that reached by any of their brethren, all furnish their quota of evidence for the existence of a primeval day of rest and worship. Even amongst smaller and more obscure tribes which continue to exist, curious and unexpected facts are continually being discovered which bear on this subject. For example, there is

¹ The following table presents a view of the different names by which the days of the week have been known :—

	Hebrew.	Greek.	Latin.	French.	German.
Sunday	חַמָּה (<i>chama</i>)	Ἡλῖος	Solis (dies)	Dimanche	Sonntag
Monday	לְבָנָה (<i>libana</i>)	Σελήνη	Lunæ	Luudi	Montag
Tuesday	מַאֲדִי (<i>madei</i>)	Ἄρης	Martis	Mardi	Dienstag *
Wednesday	כּוֹכַב (<i>chochav</i>)	Ἑρμῆς	Mercurii	Mercredi	Mittwoch
Thursday	צֶדֶק (<i>tsedek</i>)	Ζεὺς	Jovis	Joudi	Donnerstag †
Friday	נוֹגַהּ (<i>nogah</i>)	Ἀφροδίτη	Veneris	Vendredi	Freitag
Saturday	שַׁבְּתָאִי (<i>sabbathai</i>)	Κρόνος	Saturni	Samedi	Samstag

* *Tiw* and *Dienstag* are related.

† Thor = thunder (Jove being the god of thunder.)

a race of men inhabiting a portion of Eastern Asia who practise circumcision and keep the Sabbath, but yet are idolaters. And so in other parts of the globe, amid religious debasement there are yet faint reminiscences of the purer form of faith which brightened the golden ages of the past, and these, like the fossils of the geologist or the crumbled capitals and broken arches of the archæologist, open up many an interesting chapter of ancient life and habits.

The very few exceptions to this combined testimony in favour of the antiquity of the week and the early existence of Sunday, or the idolatrous modification of the still more ancient Sabbath, are so exceedingly insignificant as not in the least to break the force of our argument, and are of such a nature as to admit of an easy and satisfactory explanation. The Peruvians have used the nine-days' division, and others have adopted the eight-days' and the ten-days' period; but in these cases the peoples concerned had so fearfully degenerated from the religious condition of their ancestors as to have lost all idea of the meaning of the septiform arrangement of days, and hence as a matter of convenience at the time have originated a different custom.

Till very recently China has seemed to present a great and remarkable exception to the general consensus of testimony on behalf of a common primeval Sabbath and the worship of the sun on the first day of the week. Naturally it was to be expected that a nation whose annals stretch back into the very twilight of the post-diluvian world should afford some vestiges of these customs if they ever existed; and it is not surprising, therefore, that opponents of the Edenic

appointment of the Sabbath should lay great stress on this exception, or that advocates of the primeval sacred day should use all possible efforts to discover in the Chinese literatures some records that might throw light on the subject.

Dr. Morrison accounted for the absence of a Sabbath amongst the Chinese by the supposition that they had become a separate nation before the Sabbath was instituted; but then he only examined the customs of the modern Chinese, and, being a disciple of Paley, he naturally interpreted his facts in harmony with the belief in the Jewish origin of the Sabbath. It is to the ancient classics of China that we must go for the weightiest evidence on a matter of this sort, and the learned inquiries of the last decade have not been fruitless. It is believed that China now adds her voice in favour of the antiquity and universality of the first-day Sabbath. Some very interesting facts bearing on this point are presented in a pamphlet by the Rev. J. Johnston, to whom we are mainly indebted for what is here adduced.

1. In the burial rites of China there is a distinct recognition of the week, and as these, like all the religious customs of that country, have been handed down from time immemorial, their evidential value in an inquiry into the ideas and usages of antiquity is very great. When the dead are interred, it is usual to inscribe the names and titles of the departed on a wooden tablet, in front of which incense and tapers are burned, and the children of the deceased prostrate themselves for seven days in succession, after which they do the same on each seventh day for seven weeks. This may be the survival of a custom similar to that

which prevailed amongst the Egyptians, and certainly indicates the existence of the week in the earliest stages of Chinese history.

2. There is a very ancient cycle of twenty-eight days named after twenty-eight constellations, which is an attempt to combine the measurement of time by the moon with the hebdomadal method; and our missionaries have only to tell the natives that the four characters named *Fang*, *Heu*, *Maou*, and *Sing* stand for our Sunday, and they can calculate it for all time past and future.

3. Certain passages from the Chinese classics seem to imply the existence of the week as well as the observance of a sacred day in very early times. The most ancient and venerated of these classics is the Book of Changes, or *Yih King*, compiled by Prince Wan or Twan, about B.C. 1150. Some of the fragments which he preserved were old even in his days, and were attributed to Fuh-hi, who lived three or four hundred years after the Flood, and embodied his rules or doctrines under a certain number of diagrams. Under the figure or diagram *Fuh* this early teacher says: "This law goes and returns, and in seven days it comes again; wherever it influences, advantages follow." And Prince Wan adds that on that day the gate of the great road should be shut, indicating that those kings who were ancient even twelve centuries before the Christian era allowed no traffic or merchandise on every seventh day. Difficult to interpret, it is true, are these hoary fragments, but they strongly favour the view that at the time when they were written the week and the day of rest were known.

4. In the Foh-Kien "Imperial Almanac," which is

issued yearly under the direction of the Government, there is a character called *Bit*. It has been handed down from the most remote antiquity, and no Chinese scholar has ever definitely explained its origin and meaning. Mr. Wylie found evidence which he thought showed that the planetary week had been introduced into China from India, and that the *Bit* of the Foh-Kien dialect was equivalent to *Mih* of the Mandarin, a phonetical form of *Mitra*, one of the Persian names for the sun-god Mithra. He believes, however, that there are traces of the week in China even before the introduction of the planetary week from India, at about the time when it was adopted by Rome, although the Chinese now follow the decimal mode of reckoning the days. This character, *Bit*, is not now in use, and no one knows how it first got into the almanac; and yet there it stands against the day which corresponds with the English Sunday, and it recurs every seventh day. What can this denote but that when that character was commonly used the arrangement of days into weeks was the ordinary method of computing time, and that one day in every seven, the day on which we keep the Sabbath, was distinguished in some way from the rest? It is almost certain, then, that in these records, which go back far beyond the enactment of the Jewish Sabbath law, we have intimations of a first-day Sabbath, the representative of that holy day wherein the Creator viewed His works and designs with delight, and bestowed on man one further gift in addition to all the rich possessions which he had in Nature and in the noble faculties of body and soul with which he was endowed—a gift which heightened the value of the rest and enabled him to enjoy them

with an intenser appreciation both of the gifts and the Giver.

From these multifarious sources to which allusion has been made, there come to us, in one form or another, attestations to the fact that throughout the whole world the week has at one time or another been a familiar method of computing time, and a sacred day has been observed, dedicated to the principal deity or to the sun, the predecessors of those divisions of time and of that hallowed day which, both from our barbarian ancestors and from Christian sources, we in this country have inherited in common with so many other peoples. The cuneiform inscriptions of early Assyria, the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt and of China, the Vedic books of the Hindoos, the classics of Greece, Rome, and Arabia, the less polished literatures of Scandinavia and Germany, as well as the fragmentary records of once magnificent empires, amid whose ruins barbaric peoples now dwell, all add their testimony to the truth of the Mosaic history of the Sabbath institution and the Sabbath law.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST'S DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

“That blessed day,
Named in the breast-laws of each starry orb,
Wherein Eternity entwines with Time
Its golden strands, and weds the world to heaven.”

—BAILEY'S *Festus*.

THE teaching and example of Jesus Christ in respect of duty is of course final where Christians are concerned. Then let us try to ascertain what Christ really taught in regard to the Sabbath.

1. First, in regard to the time of its original appointment, it is not an unfair inference from some of His utterances that our Lord accepted its Edenic establishment. He gave His sanction and seal to the Mosaic narrative. In one instance he referred to marriage as ordained “at the beginning” (Matt. xix. 4, 5), when God made male and female, the record of which in the Mosaic writings is essentially associated with the account of the sanctification of the Sabbath. He re-enforced the Decalogue and declared its precepts to be binding (Matt. xix. 16-19); and when He asserted His lordship over the Sabbath day (Mark ii. 27, 28, &c.), and declared that it was made for man, He indicated by adopting the Messianic title “Son of Man,” that His sovereignty was Divine, and that in virtue of that

supremacy He had made the Sabbath for man when man was made by Him.

2. The sacredness of the Sabbath, and the obligation resting upon all mankind to observe it, are distinctly manifested by the example of Christ. He who thought it became Him to be baptized of John, in order "to fulfil all righteousness," subjected Himself also to the Sabbath law. He frequently entered the synagogue and taught on the Sabbath,¹ and it was in connection with these visits that He performed several of His miracles of healing.² The Synagogue was a later development of Judaism, being commonly used for Sabbath assemblies; the Temple being visited by those who lived near it, and, by those who were at a distance, at the three great festivals. When Jehoshaphat sent a mission of princes and priests through the land to teach the law, there was no trace of any synagogue proper, nor do they seem to have been originated until the return from the Babylonian Captivity. It is true that it is said in Ps. lxxiv. 8, referring to the invasion of Palestine by Shishak, king of Egypt, in the reign of Rehoboam, "they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land;" but the word properly means the "high places," some of which were then used in the worship of Jehovah.³ The growth of population was a sufficient reason for multiplying synagogues, and their chief object was that the Scriptures might be taught to the people, especially on the Sabbath. We are told in Acts xiii. 27 that the Prophets were read every Sabbath

¹ Matt. xii. 9, xiii. 54; Mark i. 21, vi. 2; Luke iv. 16, &c.

² Matt. xii. 9-13; Mark i. 23, iii. 1-6; Luke iv. 16-40, vi. 6-11, xiii. 10-17.

³ 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26.

day, though possibly the synagogue may not be referred to here ; and we are further informed that Moses had "in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day" (Acts xv. 21). In the time of Christ it is said there were about four hundred of them in Jerusalem alone. The ordinary manner of synagogue worship seems to have been followed by our Lord (Luke iv. 16-20), thus teaching us how binding is the duty and how exalted the privilege of waiting upon God in His holy house on the Sabbath. The saints of the Old Testament Church, the Apostles of Christ, and all that followed their teaching, have loved the tabernacles of the Lord, and the courts of the Most High. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house ; they will be still praising Thee. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. lxxxiv.). God can be worshipped in other places than the church and on other days than the Sabbath, but the duty of assembling themselves together is frequently inculcated upon believers by the inspired writers ; and the Apostles honoured the Lord's day more than any other by devoting it to such gatherings. It was on the first Lord's Day that the disciples were made glad by the presence of their newly-risen Saviour, and it was in consequence of his absence from that little assembly that Thomas remained another long week in the agony of doubt into which he had been crushed by the great sorrow of the cross. Nothing more unerringly indicates the lofty spiritual character

of the saint than the unquenchable desire for communion with God which burns within him, like the thirst of the panting hart for the water-brooks; and what can be more appropriate than to seek the enjoyment of this communion on the day which God has consecrated to that purpose, and amongst those who meet together where the Divine name is recorded and the Shekinah of God's presence shines upon His worshippers? Those who from a supposed independence of public worship, or in assumed ability to interpret all truth for themselves, neglect to keep holy day with the people of God; those who think that religious reading in private, which, however, is often light and unspiritual, can replace the worship of God in the sanctuary; as well as those who fritter away the golden hours of the Sabbath in more censurable occupations, are guilty of disobedience to the Divine commands, and must therefore necessarily come short of the favour and benediction of God. It is not, of course, mere contact with ecclesiastical buildings, nor association with holy persons, that makes men holy; but to obey from sincere motives the express decrees of the Lord must be productive of happy results.

3. Our Lord, however, observed the Sabbath day in such a manner as vindicated the benevolence of its character and design, and redeemed it from the Jewish traditions and corruptions by which it had become perverted. It had become so debased by the subtleties and restrictions of the later Jews, that it had grown into a profane mockery, a ludicrous absurdity, a grievous burden, rather than what God had intended it to be, "holy, honourable, and a delight;" and hence Christ threw Himself into conflict with this monstrous

evil. He Who purged His Father's house purified His Father's Sabbath. As the result of His attitude towards this question, the Pharisees proclaimed Him to be guilty of Sabbath profanation.

We will examine each case where this false charge was hurled against Him.

One Sabbath day Christ and His disciples were passing through a cornfield on their way to the synagogue, and being hungry, they plucked a few ears of corn, and rubbing off the husks with their hands, they ate the grains. There was no theft committed, for the law allowed the needy to pluck ears of corn with the hand from a neighbour's field (Deut. xxiii. 25). But the Pharisees had some trifling regulations in this matter which they thought of more importance than feeding the hungry. The Rabbis had what they called primary and secondary works, or fathers and descendants.¹ Of the former there were forty kinds save one, and the latter were arranged under them. It was by no means a scientific or exhaustive classification, but it served as well as any other for vexatious and frivolous discussion, and for the purpose of ruining a rival. Reaping and threshing were among the *abhôth*, of which pulling ears of corn and rubbing off the chaff were considered to be subdivisions. Even treading on grass might become threshing, if the seeds should chance to be crushed out. An enormous breach of the Sabbath law therefore had been committed by these hungry men, to whom God's mercy had given the same liberty that the fowls of the air enjoyed. In answer to the Pharisees, our Lord declared that the Sabbath was made for man, to be helpful to him, and

¹ *Abhôth* and *toledôth*.

not as a joke ; to raise and ennoble him, not to crush him into despair. And He, the Son of Man, the guardian of man's interests and the embodiment of humanity without its defects, was Lord also of the Sabbath day (Matt. xii. 8 ; Mark ii. 27, 28 ; Luke vi. 5). The Jews well understood the claim involved in the use of the title " Son of Man," for their own prophet Daniel had spoken of one like the Son of Man who came with the clouds of heaven, and to whom there was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him, an everlasting kingdom, which should not pass away nor be destroyed (Dan. vii. 13, 14 ; Matt. xxv. 31). In this character He claimed exemption on man's behalf from all those human traditions which made the Sabbath of no effect, and placed this holy institution once more upon the right foundation.

Our Lord certainly gave no countenance to laxity as regards Sabbath observance in this instance. It is an error as great as that which His accusers perpetrated to quote His words in defence of pleasure-taking on the Sabbath. It was for man, for mankind in general, *διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον*,¹ where the article gives the idea of universality, that the Sabbath was made, and not for any individual interests or gratification ; for the sake of the whole race, in order that the end of our creation and redemption might be attained. To pursue pleasure at the expense of others, robbing them of their needful rest and lawful rights, is a crime against humanity and a violation of this very principle which is absurdly quoted in self-defence. Mankind is a

¹.So in John ii. 25 : " He knew what was in man," *ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ*, i.e., in human nature.

brotherhood, the members of which have mutual claims upon each other's sympathy and aid, and only that can be permitted on the Sabbath which promotes the welfare of others and enables all to serve and glorify God.

And further, Christ vindicated the character of the Sabbath as a Divine institution, and cleared it from all vexatious human additions, which, under pretence of protecting it, stifled it. He was Lord of the Sabbath day ; it was His creation ; and He therefore, in the exercise of His just prerogative, declared the true motive of Sabbath-keeping. This motive was the elevation and salvation of man. Those Jewish frivolities He condemned as being opposed to real Sabbath-keeping. They had no sort of Scriptural authority, many of them, and only began to be invented after the Maccabean age. Such as bear upon the New Testament incidents to which we shall have to refer are contained in the Mishnah, compiled about A.D. 150, from materials that existed before the time of Christ's advent. The compiler of the title "Shabbat" has brought together a number of regulations and precepts, from which a few are selected in order that the question between Christ and the Pharisees may be properly appreciated. In this section two men are represented as standing, the one, a poor man, outside a house, and the other, a rich man, inside. The latter is condemned for stretching out his hand in order to offer bread to the other. A tailor must not walk out with a needle just prior to sunset, lest he be caught carrying the burden on the Sabbath. It was sinful to write a letter of the alphabet, to look into a mirror, or to clap the hands on the Sabbath.

Such were the trivial follies with which the Pharisees burdened the conscience, and from which Christ purged the Sabbath institution. He reminded them of the fact that David in the days of Abiathar the high priest took the shewbread out of the sanctuary, which ordinarily the priests alone might do, since it was better to save life than to observe a minor Levitical rubric (1 Sam. xxi. 1-6; Lev. xxiv. 5-9; Exod. xxix. 33).

Another instance in which the Jews charged our Lord with Sabbath-desecration was when He cured the impotent man at Bethesda (John v.). To them it was insufferable that a man should heal, or that another should carry his bed, on the Sabbath day. But He Who could say whether a man should die or live could certainly decide what might be done on the Sabbath. And so reasoned the healed man, for he replied to the cavillers, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." Was a trifling Pharisaic regulation to stand in the way of the poor sufferer's restoration to health and joy? When the Pharisees, unable to answer the man, turned their attention to Jesus and reproached Him for performing this act of compassion on the Sabbath day, our Lord plainly asserted what the restored man had discerned and implied, and what they also would have perceived had not their hearts been veiled by unbelief, and their judgment blinded by prejudice—that He was the Son of God and greater than the Sabbath. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," He said. In God's long Sabbath He has still continued the processes and laws of Nature, and bestowed on man the gifts of His providence. This godlike work Christ came to do, and

wherever He saw the poor and the sick and the penitent, He was ready to bless and save them. They who will do good on the Sabbath, either to men's bodies or souls, have in the example of Christ, the Prince of philanthropists, a clear indication of the lawfulness of their ministry of mercy.

The restoration of sight to the blind beggar whose eyes Christ anointed with clay made with spittle was effected on the Sabbath day. The judgment of the Pharisees on the case was that Christ could not be of God because He kept not the Sabbath. To anoint the eyes on the Sabbath was a very gross sin according to the harsh precepts of the Pharisees. The man, however, thought justly that He who could give sight to one born blind must be a prophet and have come from God. The marvel was that those Pharisees did not know whence He was ; so dark, amid the blaze of truth, were the minds that were sealed up by envy and pride. "Are we blind also ?" they asked, and Jesus with terrible force replied, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth" (John ix.). Ignorance is often pardonable, but to sin against light and knowledge is inexcusable.

On another Sabbath Christ was in the synagogue where was a man with a withered hand. The Jews, who by this time understood that Christ was not to be bound down by their precepts, watched Him suspiciously and with evil purpose.¹ The Traditionists said it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day unless the disease was likely to prove fatal from delay. If the sufferer had the earache, the wise men were to

¹ *παρετήρουν*. Cf. Gal. iv. 10, where this is evidently the meaning of the word.

hold a consultation on the case, in order to decide whether it might be treated or not. The patient who had toothache might apply vinegar, but he must be careful to eject it, for it would be a sin to swallow it. If the pain was in the loins, oil might be used as an unguent, but not mixed with vinegar. It was allowable to help cattle in their difficulties, but a man was of less account than a Pharisaical rubric. The glory of Christianity is that it puts man into his true position and declares his value. It regards a man as of more value than a sheep. He is worthy of being saved even at the cost of a few insignificant regulations concerning Sabbath observance. Great principles are given to the Christian, by which he may guide his conduct in details. He is not to be harassed by harsh inexorable bye-laws on matters that are indifferent, but he is to rejoice in the glorious liberty of the children of God (Matt. xii. 9-13; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11).

The woman who was loosed from an infirmity which had bowed her down for eighteen years was also healed in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke xiii. 10-17). The ruler of the synagogue was indignant at such a violation of Pharisaic rules. Grave discussions had been held between the rival schools of Hillel and Shammaï for the very purpose of settling all difficulties in the matter of Sabbath-keeping, and it was decided that a camel might walk out with a muzzle, the ass with a bit, the horse with a chain, to wash in the water, and might even have a saddle on, provided it were made fast to the animal. No wonder that these men, ordinarily so shameless, were at last put to shame when Christ quoted their own precepts in justification of His act; for if an ass or an ox might be loosed from the

stall on the Sabbath and led away to watering, ought not a daughter of Abraham to be loosed from her bond on the day of the Sabbath?

On another occasion Christ went to the house of a chief Pharisee to eat bread on the Sabbath day (Luke xiv. 1-6). The foxes had holes and the birds had nests, but the Son of man was poor and almost homeless. It was well, therefore, that He should accept proffered hospitality at all times, even on the Sabbath. Moreover, He went to do holy work. There were many things He had to say to the vain, proud Pharisees, and here was an opportunity of doing them good. At this repast there was a man with the dropsy. The poor were not neglected by the Jews, and still their conduct in this respect is admirable. The satire of Martial, in an epigram on one Bassa, could only have been written by one who was ignorant of the habits of the Jews; for there was no warrant whatever in their customs for referring to the "fastings of Sabbatarians" in the passage—

"Quod jejunia Sabbatariorum,
Maestorum quod anhelitus reorum."

Nor was the line of Juvenal accurate when he described their kings as going barefoot to the scanty Sabbath feast—

"Observant ubi festa mero pede Sabbata reges."
—*Sat.* vi. 159.

The Jews did not ordinarily fast on the Sabbath, as is plain from Neh. viii. 1-12, where the custom seems to have originated of giving meals to the poor on the Sabbath by the wealthier members of society. Probably this repast of which the Saviour partook was of this character, and though Sabbath feasting is blam-

able, yet where the object is a charitable and pious one, it is sometimes legitimate.

The Pharisees quite expected that Christ would heal the sick man, and they had already turned the matter over in their minds, when Jesus, reading their thoughts, asked whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. But they held their peace, and so the Great Physician answered the question Himself by curing the man and letting him go. The law of mercy is greater than the law of the Sabbath (Hos. vi. 6), and the enlightened conscience of the sincere praying Christian will not be allowed to err when the two seem to clash. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James i. 5).

4. Another inference which may be drawn from the teaching of our Lord in regard to the Sabbath is, that He foresaw and recognised that it would be perpetuated after His ascension. It is inconceivable that He should have displayed such zeal or have given so many valuable principles to guide the conduct of His people on behalf of an institution which in a few months was to become obsolete. And, moreover, if in the economy of Christianity so solemn a law as the Sabbatic law of Sinai was to have no place, surely He would have given some clear and definite announcement of its abrogation—a point that we have already insisted on.

There is one expression of Christ's in particular which can only be interpreted as showing that He intended the Sabbath to be observed in after-days. When describing those awful calamities that were to befall Jerusalem during its besiegement and destruction by Titus,

He bids His disciples pray that their flight might not be in the winter nor on the Sabbath day (Matt. xxiv. 20). The suggestion is that their scruples in regard to travelling on the Sabbath day would prevent them from trying to escape from the Roman arms. The Jews had more than once suffered on account of their inactivity on the Sabbath day in time of warfare; and even Christians would for many years yet be influenced by Jewish traditions and customs.

The Sabbath day's journey was a distance about which there were some differences of opinion amongst the Jews, and the Scripture references to it do not absolutely settle the question. In Acts i. 12, Mount Olivet is said to be a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. More definitely, the distance is stated to be 2000 cubits. This was the distance, about three-quarters of a mile, which separated the ark from the people when crossing the Jordan (Josh. iii. 4), and it was also the measurement of the suburbs of the Levitical cities (Num. xxxv. 5). The Rabbis associated the distance with the gathering of the manna (Exod. xvi. 29), "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day"—a phrase which evidently meant that none were to go forth to collect manna on that day, and, by inference, to do any other kind of toil. The mode of measurement was discussed in the Talmud (Eirubin v. 8, 9), and the entire matter had assumed an altogether fictitious importance even by the time of Christ's advent.

Our Lord in this utterance about flight on the Sabbath day gives no instruction whatever respecting Sunday travelling. He merely indicates that the Roman cruelty would be so relentless that suffering or death would be the certain fate of those who failed to

flee. He could not have intended to lay down in this vague way any rule as to how far to a cubit or two we might travel on the Sabbath. Limitations and definitions of this kind are in the main opposed to the spirit of Christianity, and lead to endless quibbling. Travelling on the Lord's Day, like many other things, has to be judged by great principles. It may be far more blamable to travel one mile under some circumstances than to go twenty miles under others. Christ's government of His Church is enlightened and free, and proceeds upon a few simple laws. It does not sap sincerity and self-reliance by its minutiae and detailed regulations; for these do but breed restlessness under them, and encourage ingenious devices by which they may be escaped. But outside those incidental suggestions that come from the passage we are considering there is the very important fact that in it our Lord recognised the continuance of the Sabbath.

It appears, then, that our Lord recognised the Sabbath as an important and a solemn ordinance. He showed by His conduct that He regarded it as valid during His life on the earth as man; He never uttered one word in the direction of teaching that it was to become obsolete; He foresaw that it would be continued after His departure; for in referring to the tribulation of the Roman siege He urged His disciples to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day, well knowing that the scruples of some would lead them to prefer capture rather than commit what they would regard as Sabbath desecration; and He further hallowed it by making it the day on which He burst from the bonds of death. We have no right, therefore, to misquote any of His utterances in a way that would make them

inconsistent with these plainly taught principles, while at the same time we have every reason for urging that our Lord's example furnishes a complete justification of all works of piety, benevolence, and necessity on the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XII.

ROME'S PERVERSIONS OF THE SABBATH LAW.

“Sure sign, whenever seen,
That holiness is dying in a land :
The Sabbath was profaned and set at nought.”

—POLLOCK'S *Course of Time*.

WHEN the Roman emperors became Christian, their edicts, even in matters of religious doctrine and practice, naturally exercised great influence; for the Scriptures, until the invention of printing, were known but to few. Constantine put the Lord's Day in the list of festivals, but in his later days he understood its nature and its claims far better. The Bishops of Rome, however, and not the emperors, must be held as mainly responsible for the growth of the opinion that the Sabbath was an ecclesiastical or a political rather than a Divine institution, an error which has led to those lamentable distortions of the Fourth Commandment and that grievous desecration of the Sabbath which for so long have been a standing reproach to the Romish Church.

In the more western parts of Europe, where the influence of Rome was insignificant until the Middle Ages, there survived the purity of Apostolic practice. Charlemagne interdicted the worship of images and prohibited servile work on the Lord's Day. The writings of the Venerable Bede show that in England the Bible was familiar to very many in his days, and

Spelman's collected documents make it clear that for 800 years before the Reformation the Sabbath was duly honoured in this country. The Code of Ina, A.D. 693, decrees that "if a bondman works on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall be free, and his lord shall pay thirty shillings for a fine; but if the slave works without the lord's knowledge, his hide shall pay for it, or the price of his hide. But if a free servant works on that day without his lord's command, he shall pay for it with his freedom or sixty shillings; and if a priest does it, he is twice guilty." Alfred the Great placed the Ten Commandments in the very forefront of his code of laws, and Athelstane "forbade merchandising on Sunday under very severe penalties."¹ But after the Norman Conquest Romish influences began to operate in this country, and it became customary to class the Sabbath with the holidays, and to regard it as merely an ecclesiastical institution.

The Waldenses of the Piedmontese Valleys, who

"Kept the truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,"

were strict observers of the Sabbath, and spoke thus of it: "Those who will sanctify the day of the Lord must be careful of four things: first, to cease from worldly and earthly labours; second, to abstain from sin; third, not to be slothful in regard to good works; and fourth, to do those things which are for the good of the soul." The eighth article of their Confession of Faith, A.D. 1120, lays it down "that on Sundays we ought to cease from our earthly labours, and that we may apply ourselves to hearing the Word of God."

¹ Blackstone's Commentaries, book iv. chap. iv

The Eastern Church also kept itself fairly pure on the subject of Sabbath observance until the patriarchate of Constantinople was subjected to the Bishopric of Rome, and it is known that Leo the Philosopher, Emperor of the East, A.D. 886, prohibited all work on the Sabbath.

It was not long, however, after the seat of the Empire was removed from Rome that the Bishops of that city began to assume extraordinary prerogatives. The Scriptures were dethroned, and the doctrine of Tradition, which had wrought such evils in the Jewish Church, was introduced into Christianity to repeat its malarious work. Our Lord and the Apostles were credited with teachings which they could never have uttered, and Decretals expressed in the vulgar Latin of the ninth century were attributed to the age of the elegant Tacitus in order to give authority to the preposterous claims of the Roman hierarchy.

The manner in which Rome has dealt with the Fourth Commandment is either to omit it altogether, or so to mutilate it as to make it teach what is foreign to its whole spirit and meaning and in direct opposition to Christian doctrine. The holy Sabbath, sanctified in Eden, enforced at Sinai, declared throughout the Old Testament to be a sign between the Lord and His people, observed by Christ and His Apostles, and embodied in the institutions of the early Christian Church, was at length dishonoured by those who professed to be the authorised guardians of the oracles of God, the vicegerents of Christ, the successors of the Apostles, and the fount of doctrine, and was by them degraded to the level of a saint's day. The Second Council of Nice, A.D. 787, having decreed that the images

of Christ and His saints are to be venerated and adored,¹ a decree which was adopted by no less an authority than the Council of Trent,² it was of course inconvenient to retain the Second Commandment, and so the Tenth was split into two, while, the principle of tampering with the Decalogue once being admitted, the task became an easy one to substitute for the Fourth Commandment the unworthy parody, "Keep the festivals."

As early as the twelfth century Pope Alexander III. coolly declared, that although the Old and New Testaments gave the Lord's Day for rest, yet it was lawful to catch herrings on Sunday, provided always that a suitable proportion was given to the Church! All the Canonists agree in slighting Scripture testimony on the subject, and the Lord's Day is treated of by them under the title "*De Feriis*," as if it were a mere holiday. Bellarmine's Catechism gives as the Fourth Commandment the following corruption:—"Remember the festivals to keep them holy," placing every Church festival on an equality with the Lord's Day.

In matters of faith and morals the decrees of the Council of Trent and the Catechism based thereon are invested with a peculiar sanctity and authority for the orthodox Roman Catholic. The question of the Sabbath was dealt with in Sessions XXIV. and XXV. of the Council, and it was ordained that the people should be instructed to attend the parish church on the Lord's Day; an ordinance which was unfortunately largely counteracted by the false teaching of the Catechism as to the origin and authority

¹ Mosheim, book iii. part ii. chap. 3.

² Conc. Trid., Sess. xxv.

of the Sabbath. According to this standard, the difference between the Fourth Commandment and the rest of the Decalogue "appears evident in that the other commandments of the Decalogue are precepts of the natural and perpetual law, under all circumstances unalterable, whereas this commandment, teaching the sanctification of the Sabbath, if considered as to the time of its observance, is not fixed and unalterable, but susceptible of change, and belongs not to the moral, but ceremonial law."¹ Then the Catechism goes on to explain that the Israelites after the Exodus kept the Sabbath, but as it was an image of Christian light and truth, it was abrogated with all other Jewish rites, which were to disappear at the coming of Jesus Christ. But, says the Catechism, it agrees with the other commandments in that it comprises something that appertains to the moral and natural law, for the worship of God has natural law for its basis, and it is natural to us to give some time to worship; therefore the Apostles "resolved to consecrate the first day of the seven to Divine worship, and called it the Lord's Day." As to the sanctification of the Sabbath, it is not only a cessation from bodily labour, for in Deuteronomy v. it is said, "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it," which proves that the Sabbath is a day sacred to religion.²

From this strange admixture of truth and error we perceive that the Catechism taught:—

- (1.) That the Fourth Commandment is authorised simply by its agreement with Nature that God should be worshipped.

¹ *Catechismus ad Parochos*, part iv.

² *Ibid.*, part iii. chap. iv.

The Scriptures, however, declare it possesses a Divine sanction, and that sanction is needed ; for although it may be only natural to render worship to God, yet the bulk of men do not read Nature, for want of leisure, or capacity, or inclination, and even of those who read her volume, few admit the obligation to obey her commands.

- (2.) That feast days are worthy of equal honour with that paid to the Sabbath.

Even the Jews gave greater honour to the Sabbath law than Rome does, for their Levitical festivals, although divinely ordained, were never ranked on an equality with the sacred seventh day. In the Roman Calendar are literally hundreds of these saints' days, some of them receiving even greater honour than the Lord's Day, and all are regarded as equal with it.

- (3.) That the time for Sabbath observance is not fixed and constant, but may be changed.

The notion that such changes may be made by ecclesiastical authority derives no countenance or support from Scripture, for the only alterations it records are those which took place at the Exodus and at the establishment of Christianity, both of them by Divine sanction.

- (4.) That the Fourth Commandment is not moral in its entirety, but ceremonial ; for we are neither led nor taught by Nature to worship God on one day any more than another.

We have already shown that the assertion, that the Sabbath commandment is of a different nature from the rest of the Ten Commandments, is illogical, inaccurate, and mischievous. It rests

on no valid authority, and is fraught with the gravest perils to morals, to law, and to religion. We have sufficient reasons for honouring one day above another, but even if we did not understand why we should obey the Divine command, we are not thereby exonerated from obedience. If we were gods, we should understand the motives of all God's laws; but we are mortal. The human cannot fully comprehend the Divine any more than the universe can be spanned by the fingers of a child.

- (5.) That the people of Israel began to keep Sabbath after they were freed from Egyptian bondage.

But the Patriarchs kept Sabbath, even if the Israelites in Egypt did not. And there is no proof that during the government of Joseph, and for some time after his death, the Sabbath was not kept. The people certainly remembered that they ought to worship God, even though their taskmasters refused them the leisure necessary for observing a periodical Sabbath; for the burden of Moses was that Pharaoh should let the people go into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord, and Pharaoh's reply seems to have had some reference to Sabbath-keeping when he said, "Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest¹ from their burdens." Moreover, the references to the holy convocations and the cessation of work on the seventh day in connection with the Passover, as well as the incidental allusion to the Sabbath at the giving of the manna, clearly imply that the Israelites were aware of

¹ Exod. v. 5, הִשְׁכַּחֵם (Hiphil), to rest or keep Sabbath. So in Lev. xxiii. 32, xxv. 2.

the duty of observing the Sabbath, whatever might have been their practice.¹

- (6.) That on the death of Christ the Sabbath law, with all other Hebrew observances, became obsolete.

It is quite certain, however, that the Sabbath was observed by Christ and His Apostles in a way that distinctly showed it to differ altogether from the Levitical rites, which faded away before the greater glory of the Gospel.

- (7.) That the Apostles determined to consecrate the first day of the week to Divine worship.

This may be so, but would they have done so without some direct intimation from Christ that this would be in harmony with His will? Such strict Jews as they were would never have dreamed of introducing so huge an innovation on their own responsibility.

These are the errors of Rome in regard to the Sabbath and the Fourth Commandment; their disastrous results are everywhere manifest. The commandments of the Lord being tampered with, the morals of Roman Catholic peoples have grown corrupt. A dishonoured Sabbath has been followed up by the dethronement of Christ and the substitution of human edicts and fluctuating traditions for His infallible truth. The one Edenic institution of the Sabbath having for ages been debased, the other, that of marriage, has been robbed of its honour. That grand word Home, the pride of Saxon races, conjuring up the holiest images that linger in the memory of the grey-headed, hardly exists

¹ Exod. xii. 15, 16; xvi. Jeremy Taylor conceived that the Song of Moses in Exod. xv., in which all the congregation joined, was part of a Sabbath solemnity. *Duct. Dub.*, book ii. chap. ii. § 6.

in the language of purely Romish countries. The *chez-nous* of the French, the *casa* of the Italians, have but little of the rhythm and music of the German *daheim* and the English *home*. The ties of family are loosened and the tender endearments of the home circle are replaced by the extravagance of the club, the looseness of the *café*, the excesses of the carnival and *fête*. These are topics too disagreeable to be amplified unnecessarily; we will therefore only venture to refer to some statistics which were printed in the *Examiner* for October, 1868, from which it appears that the laxity of morals in Romish lands is incredibly great. For every hundred lawfully born children there are in London only four born out of wedlock, while in Paris there are forty-eight, and in Rome, the citadel of Sabbath desecration and festivals, there is a much higher total.

The general habits and condition of these two classes of peoples are so markedly different as to constitute a criterion almost invariably reliable of their religious persuasion. The late Charles Dickens, who will not be suspected of any prejudice in this matter, said in reference to Switzerland: "Where the Protestant Canton ends and a Catholic Canton begins, you might separate two perfectly distinct and different divisions of humanity by drawing a line with your stick in the dust of the ground. On the Protestant side, neatness, cheerfulness, industry, continued aspiration at least after better things; on the Catholic side, dirt, disease, squalor and misery." And one of their own most intelligent countrymen says of the French, that among the upper classes the Sabbath is no longer known, and hence their vices and impieties are incurable.¹

¹ Proudhon's *De la Célébration du Dimanche*, p. 52.

Genuine spiritual religion, it is hardly needful to say, has grievously suffered amongst Roman Catholics for the want of a pure and hallowed Sabbath, on which the people could be set free from life's carking cares and secular distractions to enjoy quiet meditation upon heavenly things. Symbolism and priestcraft, the inanities of formalism, the absurdities of superstition, the monstrous perversions of sublime doctrines, these are the sure accompaniments of neglected or degraded Sabbaths. Where the soul has no respite from the tyranny of the world's fever and ambition in order to the cultivation of an elevated spirituality by converse with its God, it is sure to seek the opiate of mere rites and vain ceremonies, wherewith at least to numb the yearnings and emotions which crave for food, but are not fed. And such will always place devotion in unmeaning externalism,—

“ In meats, in drinks, in robes of certain shape,
In bodily abasements, bended knees,
Days, numbers, places, vestments, words, and names ;
Absurdly in their hearts imagining
That God, like men, is pleased with outward show.” ¹

Nothing more surely destroys spiritual religion and lulls to slumber the moral sense of a people than the anæsthetics of formality. Great questions of right and wrong degenerate into quibbling casuistry, and the ecstatic outbursts of praise and adoration languish into the feeble lisplings of insincerity. Against these dire calamities the strict and spiritual worship of the Lord's Day is the most impregnable, perhaps the only effectual, bulwark. Voltaire wrote to Diderot,

¹ R. Pollok's *Course of Time*.

"I despair of crushing Christianity while Sunday by Sunday millions meet together to worship."

But apart from those more exclusively moral and religious aspects of the question which we have just been considering, there are social and economical evils, resulting from the perversion of the Sabbath in Roman Catholic countries, which make it painfully evident that the real well-being of a people is seriously interfered with by the loss of the proper and rational enjoyment of the Lord's Day. The Sabbath is "the poor man's birthright and his balm." It is the safeguard of the rights of labour; the barrier against the restless surging of greed and selfishness. The alternative between rest and toil is concerned quite as much as that between pleasure-taking and worship; and the working man who demands from others that Sabbath labour which he is not himself willing to give, must expect that others in their turn will rob him of his rightful rest if it should be to their interest to do so. Hence we find that the *ouvriers* who must enjoy their theatres and races and *les grandes eaux* at Versailles on Sunday are condemned to give a great part of that weekly rest which ought to be wholly theirs in order to perform the tasks imposed by the employers of labour. Mr. Charles Hill, secretary of the Working Men's Lord's Day Observance Society, in several interesting Essays, has given a great deal of information that bears on this point, and that deserves the sober consideration of all those whose only capital is their labour. In the Rue Royale and all the principal streets of Paris the shops are mostly open, while in the faubourgs the mechanics are at their usual toil on Sunday. There are more shops closed and more outward religion observable on the

festivals of the Madonna, the Annunciation, Assumption, or Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, than on the Lord's Day. The roar of traffic and hum of commerce are as loud on Sunday as on any other day. The washerwomen are at their barges in the Seine, and the booksellers' stalls are displayed along the Quais. The activity of the cafés, the amusements of the Champs Elysées, the fêtes at Versailles, the crowded railway stations, the heavily-laden boats, the swarms of rattling fiacres, the thronged Chantilly racecourse, the blazing theatres—these are the melancholy features of the Parisian Sunday, the emblazonment of her shame by that Church which, in the days of her supremacy, when she was "alone in the earth," proved unfaithful to her trust, and, making the Word of God of none effect by the traditions of men, has now to look upon the degradation and misery of her children.

So completely has the French Sunday become secularised, that the Rev. Mr. M'All, the well-known evangelist of Paris, was obliged to submit to having workmen in his house on the Lord's Day while it was undergoing some repairs, the sanctity and quiet of its holy hours being broken in upon by the noise of the craftsman's hammer and saw; and his religious meetings have mostly to be held after three o'clock on Sunday, so that the working men may be able to attend. Mr. Thomas, a deceased Wesleyan minister, in a very able treatise on the Lord's Day, relates that when the British Embassy was repaired, the workmen returned to their task on the Sabbath, and although the British Ambassador tried to put a stop to their work, he could not. At the time of arranging the contract for the new Methodist Church in the Rue Roquépine, a clause

was inserted for the purpose of preventing Sunday work. The contractor objected, but it was retained; and when the Rev. W. Arthur assured him that he would be none the poorer for honouring the Lord's Day, he replied, "Ah! Monsieur, je voudrais bien que le dimanche fut observé de tous! Mais que voulez-vous? C'est une vilaine clause pour nous." These poor toilers, who are ruthlessly despoiled of what Christianity offers them by a perverted form of Christianity, are worn out long before their time, and their muscle and brain, deprived of needful repose, refuse to do, even with painful effort, what otherwise might be done with gladsome ease. Hence it happens that it actually pays contractors to take English workmen across the Channel, who do more and better work in six days than the Frenchman can perform in seven.

There is, it is true, a certain glamour around the French Sunday as we look at it from this distance, but no one who has grown familiar with it can have failed to discover its darker side. Even in the light and airy descriptions of its pleasures, tripped off the pen of the imaginative journalist, there are duller, sadder traits which crop out here and there amid the lines. The following extracts from an article by the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, which appeared in that journal for June 3, 1884, fairly well illustrates the conception which many on this side the Straits of Dover entertain with regard to the Parisian Sunday; and yet, notwithstanding the desire of the writer to give the most favourable portraiture possible, there are hints here and there that the reality is not agreeable to the English mind, even though the main desire be personal gratification. The writer says:—

"I pined to revel in the unbridled licence of the Continental Sunday, which to me means not much more than the privilege of sitting at a little table outside a café on the boulevards over a *bavaroise* or a *mazagran* from eight in the morning until long past midnight, if I so please, without the fear of the Middlesex magistrates and the licensing laws being perpetually before my eyes. Yes, I had an unriely longing for the Concert des Champs Elysées and a hankering after the flesh-pots of the Café Anglais on Sunday. How large the asparagus and the strawberries would be at the Paris restaurants on Sunday; and how unconscionably you would be robbed by the purveyor of those delicacies at the boulevard restaurants! And the picture-galleries that would be open, and the trim *demoiselles de magasin* that would be afoot, luxuriating in the sinful recreation of the *promenade*. And the facilities for buying newspapers all day long, and the theatres and balls that would be open in the evening. And the grimly humorous pleasure of watching crowds of English people, who at home wear the conventional down-hearted and dolorous look, and who seem to be thinking of nothing—between church and chapel hours—less than of the dire necessity that will arise for the hanging of their cat on Monday for killing a mouse on Sunday; of watching these worthy folk crowding the *perron* and the courtyard of the Grand Hôtel, gossiping and flirting in the vestibules of the Continental, dashing forth in barouches on their way to Vincennes or St. Cloud, and, in fine, entering into all the spirit of the Continental Sunday, for all the world as though they were rational beings. 'I will go over to Paris,' I said. . . .

“It is just a quarter to six A.M., and upon my word here is a young damsel of some eighteen summers, with her hair faultlessly adjusted, with collar and cuffs immaculately snowy and irreproachably starched, and whose neatness about the feet and ankles should be a pride to herself, who in front of an establishment for the sale of *denrées coloniales* is apparently taking a spell of penal toil on the crank. Hard labour, and by one of the softer sex, so close upon sunrise, and upon a Sunday morning too! There was shame in the very thought of such an outrage. But she is only winding up the iron shutters. Presently the stock-in-trade of the *magasin* is revealed in all its varied richness. Adolphe the shop-boy, who ought to have wound up the shutters, has gone round to a neighbouring *coiffeur* to have his hair curled; for Adolphe, you may rest assured, is bound to be a visitor at a surburban ball this afternoon. As to Mademoiselle, the trim damsel, she sits down in front of the shop in the Rue de la Fayette to read the last number of *Le Voleur* or *La Vie Populaire*. As the customers drop in, she will sell to them such articles as they need; then she will go to mass. She will return to the mid-day meal, and if it be her Sunday *de sortie*, she will go for a walk with her young man, dine at a barrier *guinguette*, and go to the play or a ball in the evening. If it be not her ‘Sunday out,’ she will continue during the whole afternoon, and until eight or nine in the evening, to serve behind the counter, or to occupy the stool outside the shop, reading cheap periodicals or gossiping. . . . What, I wonder, would the Metropolitan Shop Hours League say to this kind of thing? I fancy that the Parisians themselves, were they interrogated on the

subject, would answer with a shrug, 'C'est comme ça.' They do as their fathers and grandfathers did before them. As with the grocer, so it is with the *charcutier*, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker. . . . But whatever can the bookseller, the goldsmith and jeweller, and the old curiosity dealer want with their shutters down before seven o'clock on a Sunday morning? I pass scores of such shops. . . . The great shopkeepers of the foreigners' quarter of the Rue de la Paix, &c., forswear trading on Sunday, because on the first day of the week their clients, who are chiefly aliens, desert them; and so the shutters are hermetically sealed, and the shopkeepers and their assistants betake themselves—whither? Why, to the pursuit of pleasure, to be sure. M. le Patron before eleven has struck will be smoking his cigar and sipping something alcoholic in front of a café, or playing dominoes or piquet in the interior thereof. Madame la Patronne between mass and breakfast-time will be visiting her female acquaintances, or bedizening herself in view of the entertainments of the afternoon. The young *calicots* or assistants are scattered about the *estaminets* and *brasseries* of the quarter, and the clicking of billiard balls and the puffing of cigarettes or of pipes are incessant. To-day everybody who has any money—and you must be a good many days in Paris before you begin to light upon the people who have no money—means to go to the races at Chantilly."

It was no purpose of the writer of this holiday sketch to give the other side of the picture, and yet it is suggested by the incessant toil and activity here and there hinted at. The completion of the portraiture is

found in the unrest and excitability which are such marked features of that great city.

The Parisian Sunday has not been selected for description because it is exceptional, for any of the large cities of Romanist countries would present us with not very different facts, and even some of those lands which have left the Romish fold, but retain something of the old leaven, afford lamentable proofs of the sorrow and weariness, the disquiet and discontent, which follow in the train of wholesale Sabbath profanation. England, Scotland, America, and Protestant Switzerland, the Sabbath-keeping peoples of the globe, alone enjoy real popular freedom, an open Bible, and a worthy religion. In Italy, before the rise of Garibaldi, the Bible was a prohibited book and the Sabbath was practically obliterated. No wonder that the people had lost all independence of spirit and had deteriorated into the helpless victims of despotism. At Rome, to which we must briefly allude in this connection as being the head and heart of Popery, Sabbath desecration is as prevalent as ever, and presents a more lamentable spectacle of the evils produced by systematic Sabbath-breaking than does even Paris. The Rev. H. J. Piggott, who has vigorously carried on the work of a Protestant missionary in the city of Rome for many years, says of the Sunday there, "That it is the usual day for the holding of national festivals and for the excursions of antiquarian clubs; it is the day on which the theatres are opened in greatest numbers and reap their largest harvest. Among the lower orders there is a great deal of coarse sensuality on the Lord's Day. The taverns are crowded, especially in the suburbs of the city. Convivial parties are formed, at which

artisans waste the greater part of the week's wages. On these occasions there is a great deal of drunkenness, and under the excitement of wine the hot Italian blood breaks out into strife. By far the greater number of cases of stabbing occur on the Sabbath. The festivals of the Madonna, and, in general, those appointed by the Church, without sanction in the Scripture, are far more religiously observed than the Lord's Day. The Church of Rome gives a great deal of sanction to Sabbath desecration, and frequently there are placards on the church doors of Rome announcing on a certain Sabbath the fête-day of some village church in the neighbourhood, and that there will be mass and a procession, and after that horse-racing and fireworks!"

The Protestant Churches of the Continent of Europe afford further evidence of the evils wrought by Rome's long debasement of the Sabbath.

The position of Luther with regard to this question was most unfortunate, and it shows how deeply ingrained in his nature were the beliefs and habits of his early life, that, notwithstanding his irrevocable breach with Rome, he yet retained so much of her erroneous teaching on the subject of the Sabbath. It is quite clear, however, that Luther perceived a difference between the Lord's Day and the festivals; for in 1520 he addressed a letter to the Emperor Charles V. and the nobility, in which he asked that the saints' days and festivals should be abolished and only Sunday kept, or, if the great Christian feasts must be kept, that it might be during the morning only, so that the remaining part of the day might be considered working time.¹

But he retained too much of the Romanist method

¹ D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, book vi. chap. iii.

of dealing with the Sabbath, and in the Lutheran Churches the Fourth Commandment still stands as their founder adopted it from the Romish formula: "Keep the festivals." Melancthon, with all his theological acumen, was equally at fault. The Augsburg Confession says in reference to the Sabbath: "It is lawful for the bishops and pastors to appoint ordinances whereby things may be done in order in the church; not that by them we should merit remission or satisfy for sins, or that men's consciences should be bound to esteem them as necessary services, and think that they sin when they violate any one of them, though it be without offence to others. Of this sort is the observation of the Lord's Day, of Easter, of Pentecost, and such-like holy days and rites. For they that think that the observation of the Lord's Day was appointed by the authority of the Church instead of the Sabbath as *necessary* are greatly deceived. The Scripture requireth that the observation of it should now be free; for it teacheth that the Mosaical ceremonies are not needful after the Gospel is revealed. Yet because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when to come together, the Church appointed for that purpose the Lord's Day: which seemed the more agreeable to the Church as an example of Christian liberty, and to show that neither the observation of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, was of necessity."

Zwinglius and Calvin followed along the same lines as Luther, and all these great men seemed so absorbed in the great fight concerning Papal supremacy and Justification, that the nature of the Sabbath was not really discerned by them.

Even the Reformed Church of England, for a long time after its formal separation from Rome, retained much of the leaven of that doctrine on the Sabbath which had for centuries dominated Christendom.

At first there seemed to be a danger lest, in casting away Popery, the observance of Sunday, which was regarded as a purely ecclesiastical ordinance, should be thrown aside altogether. The Homily on the Place and Time of Prayer says, "God was more dishonoured and the devil was better served on the Sunday than upon all the days of the week beside." Throughout the reign of Elizabeth, Sunday is classed with the other holidays, and one of the Canons of 1603 refers to "the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, and other holydays." This Princess did much to encourage dramatic performances on Sunday; and when Mr. Smith, in a sermon preached in 1585 before the University of Cambridge, maintained the unlawfulness of this, he was summoned before the Vice-Chancellor and censured.

At this time, however, there were men who had begun to give independent attention to the subject of the Sabbath, and, instead of examining the standards of Rome exclusively, went to the fountain-head of religious truth. In 1595 Dr. Nicholas Bownd published a book on the teaching of the Old and New Testaments respecting the Sabbath. The clergy raised a great clamour against it, and charged Bownd with having asserted that the Church had substituted her festivals for the Sabbath. The book was called in by Archbishop Whitgift, and it was declared by Chief Justice Popham to be against the peace and order of both Church and State. The public conscience, however, was awakened, and the matter attracted increased notice.

In the reign of James I. John Thraske published opinions of an advanced character, teaching that the Lord's Day ought to be observed as strictly as the Jews had kept the Sabbath. The Romanising party in this country endeavoured to stem the gathering tide of thought and study, and to lead the Church back to the old stagnant waters of ecclesiasticism, out of which she seemed prepared to escape. The Star Chamber condemned Thraske, and the Declaration of James I. known as the notorious Book of Sports was issued at the instigation of Laud, who had already become the established favourite of the King. It was supported by a pamphlet written by Dr. Heylin, who endeavoured to show that the Fourth Commandment was no longer in force.

Ten years after this action of the King, in 1628, Theophilus Bradborne, a Suffolk minister, published a book in which he urged a reversion to the seventh-day Sabbath of the Jews. The Court of High Commission compelled him to retract, and the Bishop of Ely was appointed to refute him, which he did so completely to the satisfaction of the King, that not only the Fourth Commandment, but all the others were set at nought. Nothing but the strenuous and self-denying efforts of the noble Puritanical party now hindered the destruction of all morals and religion. Notwithstanding the slanders which have been heaped upon those brave men, they were undoubtedly the chief conservators of Scriptural truth amid the general corruptions of their times, and it was they who, at the cost of much suffering, wrested from the grasp of tyrants the political liberties and the enlightened institutions which to this day are the pride of Britons and the envy and admira-

tion of the world. They well deserved the praise which Erasmus virtually accorded to them when he said, "*Sit anima mea cum Puritanis.*" Their lofty spirituality by no means deserves the stigma involved in the hackneyed charge of "puritanical rigidity." Many of the precepts and regulations which have been ascribed to them were in reality the base inventions of their enemies. The famous Blue Laws of Newhaven, for example, gravely quoted by Dr. Hessey, are known to have been put together in 1681 by Dr. Peters, a fugitive Royalist. The nature of this literary exploit may be gathered from one or two extracts:—

"You must not read or write by candle-light, lest you should be tempted to snuff the candle."

"In leading a horse, the bridle must not hang down, because it would seem as if you were carrying the bridle."

"You must not walk through water on stilts, because, though they seem to carry you, in reality you carry them."

"Dirt on the hands may be wiped on the hair of a horse or of a cow, but not on a towel."

The Puritans may perhaps have occasionally gone into the extreme of asceticism, but their dogged adherence to the plain declarations of Scripture, and their heroic opposition against tyranny and priestcraft, ought to earn for them the grateful reverence and admiration of all who enjoy that freedom from political and ecclesiastical thralldom which is the heritage of every subject of the British Crown.

There had always been a few in England who held better views concerning the Sabbath than those which prevailed on the Continent. Wickliffe taught that "all saints' days ought to be abolished, in order to celebrate none but the festival of Jesus Christ; because then the

memory of Jesus Christ would be always recent, and the devotion of the people would not be parcelled out between Jesus Christ and His members.”¹ Hooper, in his Exposition of the Ten Commandments, admits the specific day to be of Jewish appointment, but declares that the Fourth Commandment is no more ceremonial than the rest. Cranmer held similar views, and protested against labour and Popish ceremonies on the Lord’s Day. And it was in consequence of the efforts of these and like-minded men that the standards of the Church of England assumed that purity of doctrine as regards the Sabbath which they retain to this day. The Catechism of the Established Church contains the Ten Commandments as they are found in the Scriptures, and the Rubric of Edward VI. (1552) still stands with unimportant modifications, in which the Fourth Commandment with the rest is appointed to be read, and a petition for help to keep it to be offered. And Article XXXV. declares the Homilies to contain godly and wholesome doctrine, one of which rests the obligation of observing Sunday on the Fourth Commandment, and calls the first day of the week the Christian Sabbath, “which by God’s express commandment we must be careful to keep.” There is no warrant, therefore, for those who belong to the communion of that Church to practise or encourage laxity in regard to the Lord’s Day, nor is it easy to see how such devoted Churchmen as Paley, Whately, Alford, and Robertson could justify the position which they occupied on this question.

But although we owe much to the influence of those great men who for a time had most to do with the

¹ Gilfillan’s *Sabbath*, p. 25.

framing of the Articles of the Church of England, their work would have perished during the apostasies of the Stuart epoch, had it not been for the piety and courage of the Puritans, the Covenanters, and the Nonconforming divines, whose fame has often been blackened, but who were really the founders of our modern liberties and the architects of the British Constitution. The Marian persecution had swept away many of the noblest Reformers, and the fawning flatterers of James I. were ready to let all that was dear to a nation be sacrificed at the bidding of their vain sovereign. But the sons of Knox in Scotland and the Puritans in England stood together against the evils that threatened the Church and the people. Knox and four others in 1560, at the first meeting of the Scottish Assembly, originated the Confession of Faith and the Book of Discipline, founding the Sabbath institution on the Word of God, which even Luther and Calvin had failed to do; and that position was firmly maintained until the General Assembly of 1647 declared the Sabbath to be "from the beginning of the world, and now as the Lord's Day will continue to the end of the world." At the same time the growing Puritan party resisted with all their might that iniquitous Book of Sports, which declared, in opposition to God's commands, that dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, and morris-dances were lawful on the holy Sabbath.

The conflict between these two opposite beliefs, the one of which is based on the Divine appointment of the Sabbath, and the other on its human authority, has continued with more or less of fierceness to our own day; but now that all the standards of those Churches

which have sprung from the British Reformation are distinctly on the side of those who trace the Sabbath back to Eden, and who regard the Fourth Commandment as embodying an eternal and immutable principle of moral and necessary law, there is hope that a purer faith and a worthier practice, as well as a more enlightened legislation, will henceforth characterise the Churches and governments of Christian countries. (See Appendix.)

CHAPTER XIII.

SABBATH LEGISLATION.

“Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest ;
Pastime and business both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude,
Nobly distinguished above all the six
By deeds in which the world must never mix.”

—COWPER.

IN the Mosaic system the Sabbath was a prominent subject of legislation. Its observance was enforced by strict laws and severe judicial penalties, for this was regarded as a duty to God, while it involved to a grave extent the welfare of the nation at large. In Christian times also, as soon as the Church had acquired sufficient political influence, the State took cognisance of the Sabbath and its due celebration. In the earlier periods of Christianity there were naturally difficulties which arose from the reaction which took place against Jewish ceremonialism. The Council of Laodicea, following along the lines of prudent compromise laid down by Paul, Ignatius, and Origen, decreed that “Christians ought not to Judaize and be idle on the Sabbath day, but should work for themselves on that day, preferring to rest on the Lord’s Day, if they can, as Christians” (Can. 29). Others were more fierce and iconoclastic. Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century declared that

the Jewish Sabbath ought to be utterly abandoned (*Catecheses*, iv. 23). Hence it became almost necessary for the State, under Christian emperors, to enact laws on the subject of Sabbath observance. In this country, also, the observance of the Lord's Day has received considerable attention from the State. Some doubt whether legislation could be of any service in a matter of this kind, and it has become quite hackneyed to say that it is impossible to make men religious by Act of Parliament. It is true that mere law cannot touch the fountain of thought and feeling, but it can guide and restrict action. It cannot purify the conscience, but it can educate it. It can remove temptation and silence those who might hurt the religious susceptibilities of others. And it can put a stop to the continuous and shameless desecration of the Lord's Day.

1. Legislation in a Christian country ought to seek the honour of God and to aim at the defence and propagation of morality. For both these reasons, then, the Ten Commandments should be guarded and enforced. At any rate, no Act of Parliament ought to be tolerated which should legalise the wholesale disregard of one of the most solemn of these commandments.

All history shows that the happiness and prosperity of a nation are determined mainly by the piety of its people. The old Scripture promises and threatenings are vindicated by the logic of facts. "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30). "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. lx. 12). The decline and fall of great empires in the past furnish comment enough on the unchangeable truth of these

words. Wealth and military prowess, flourishing commerce, literary, artistic, and philosophic brilliance, have ever failed to save from extinction states that have violated God's commands and yielded to profanity and profligacy. And what is to save England from eclipse if her conscience becomes perverted, and if she hides from herself the glory and righteousness of God? Her affluence will be of no avail if she be poor in noble, godly men; her military forces and naval armaments will not uphold her in the scale of nations if she should throw off the suzerainty of God; her arts and manufactures, her trade and commerce, filling every market and crowding the highways of all lands and seas, will but make her fall the more conspicuous and stupendous should she forget God and despise His laws. Like other faded civilisations, she must sink into oblivion if she sets the Almighty at nought and refuses to render to Him the homage and obedience which are His due.

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England!"

with all its natural and religious advantages, can only retain her proud pre-eminence by obeying those laws which are justified and enforced by the teachings of Nature and the Word of God. And especially must the Sabbath law, fraught with such vast issues for woe or weal to the bodies and souls of men, be observed, if God's favour is to be enjoyed and the nation continue in its prosperous career. Amongst the most plaintive laments and the most awful denunciations contained in Scripture are those which God has uttered against

those who have profaned the Sabbath. "They polluted My Sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness" (Ezek. xx. 21).

Without tracing the entire history of Sabbath legislation in England, we may show that such legislation has always been held by our statesmen and rulers as coming within the legitimate province of enlightened government. The Saxon kings, as we have already seen, issued frequent edicts on the question. Henry VI. forbade fairs and markets on Sunday save in harvest. By 1 Eliz. c. 2 a fine of twelve pence was imposed upon absentees from church. Even the Stuarts evinced some feeling of responsibility in this matter, and 1 Chas. I. c. 1 prohibited bull-baiting and interludes on the Sabbath, while 29 Chas. II. c. 7¹ forbade all trade and business on Sunday. In the eye of British law, Sunday is *dies non juridicus*, and does not count as an ordinary business day. It is entirely out of harmony with the English constitution to regard the Lord's Day as beyond the proper domain of legislation. It is true that some of our statutes have not greatly helped Sabbath observance, but others have exercised a very beneficial influence on the morals and religion of the nation. The Forbes-Mackenzie Act of 1854 has been found of great value in Scotland, and would be even more effective if something could be done to prevent the wholesale evasion of the law under cover of the *bond-fide*-traveller clause. In 1878 a Sunday Closing Act for Ireland was passed. Wales has obtained a similar boon, and England, in the face

¹ This is still the law of the country, though modified by the Mackerel Act and the Beer Act. It forbids worldly business on the Sabbath.

of recent votes in the House of Commons, cannot long be deprived of it.

It is incumbent upon this country to take a firm and decided stand before the world on this question, for the example of Britain in respect of Sabbath-keeping must be fraught with world-wide influence. Admiral Sir W. King Hall said, at a public meeting in 1879, that when he was in command of the *Calcutta* at Hong-Kong, he was observing a number of masons and labourers one Sunday as they were wearily pursuing their toil, when one of them came up to him and said, "Your God is kinder than ours, for He gives you rest one day in seven, but we only get one day's rest in the year." The Christian Sabbath is a standing witness to the clemency and humanity of the Christian religion. Quite recently, at a general meeting of the shareholders of the Paris-Lyons Railway, under the presidency of M. Charles Mallet, the advisability of allowing the railway servants a Sunday rest was discussed, and the importance of doing this from a social and Christian standpoint was emphasised by the example of England. The habits of the French townspeople were held to be an insuperable obstacle to the reduction of traffic, but the manager announced that every possible step would be taken to give more rest to the officials. To have influence of this kind amongst other nations is infinitely better than to be able to dictate terms at the point of the sword. But if it should become known throughout the world that England no longer had a Sabbath, that the hum of her machinery and the roar of her traffic were never again to cease on that holy day which for so many ages has brought the weekly meed of peace and rest to her panting, toiling millions, how effective an argument

in favour of our Christianity would be lost, and what grave cause would be given for "the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles!" (Rom. ii. 24.)¹

2. It is sometimes objected that legislation in favour of the observance of the Lord's Day is an infringement on "the liberties of the subject." An objection like this comes with very bad grace from those who are doing all they can to compel by statute hundreds of thousands of librarians, curators, clerks, policemen, and shopkeepers to labour on the Sabbath for the gratification of the comparatively few who would care to visit our science and art galleries on the Lord's Day. If it is held to be no interference with personal liberty to force postmen to tramp many weary miles on Sunday; to oblige publicans, some of whom, at any rate, are pious men, to supply refreshment to crowds of "*bonâ fide* travellers," who for the most part are not far from home, and were under no necessity to leave it at all; or to give the countenance of the law to those multitudinous forms of Sabbath-breaking for which a few theorising Utilitarians are contending; then it is certainly no infringement upon popular rights to use the machinery of Government for the purpose of protecting myriads of our unhappy countrymen from the tyranny of those who would rob them of their weekly rest and the privileges of public worship. Legislation may certainly not be used for the purpose of setting aside one of God's solemn commands, but it may be invoked in order to prevent wholesale neglect of that command, especially when such neglect would threaten to sap the foundations of national health and happiness. But whether the defences of the Sabbath be strength-

¹ See Appendix.

ened by legislation or not, it is the duty of all patriotic and Christian men to see to it that the State be not permitted to countenance and legalise the destruction of such defences as do exist, and to give the appearance of righteousness to Sabbath desecration. Too many of those who are giving utterance to a misguided cry for liberty as regards the Lord's Day do really demand the illiberal and tyrannical deprivation of the rights which belong to others. Let us have Christian liberty by all means, but not the liberty to trample upon the claims of humanity, to ignore the principles of justice, and to rob God of His prerogatives, by substituting for the just and equal laws of Heaven the merciless licence of avarice and profligacy. It would be as just to legalise theft as to enact laws which shall compel many to violate their conscience and profane that day which they have been accustomed to venerate, unless, to escape their sad condition, they should resign their means of livelihood. If some, professing to be wise, have become fools, and in their own practice have broken down the barriers between the sacred and the profane, let them not be armed with the invincible weapon of the law with which to combat those who still hold to the distinctions of holy and unholy, of heavenly and earthly, of divine and human.

Moreover, a Sunday such as those seek who are trying to secularise it, and who demand what they call "a free Sunday," would in reality become an intolerable injustice to the vast majority of the population of our land. The devotions of the reverent would be fearfully disturbed by the tramp of armies of pleasure-seekers and the noise of bands of music; the union of families for domestic exercises of piety would be prevented in

order that the excursion train might be manned and the museum guarded ; in short, the most sober, reliable, and moral part of society would be sacrificed and trodden upon by the few frivolous pleasure-seekers who do not know how to restrain their desire for indulgence even when it robs others of their just rights. Now it must be pointed out once more that this question of compelling by law a large number of our fellow-countrymen to labour on Sunday for the gratification of others is one which might lead to the most lamentable consequences in the case of those who are continually agitating it. If the aid of the law may be had recourse to in order to deprive public officials of their rightful rest, what guarantee is there that the great body of working men in this country, just as is the case in other countries where the Lord's Day is set at nought, will not in time be driven to labour on Sunday by those upon whom they depend for daily bread ? Lord Chancellor Cairns, in his speech against Lord Thurlow's motion to open museums on Sunday, pointed out this danger with great emphasis. He said, "If the State once enters upon a course of this kind, the only point at which it would stop short is the point which has been reached in foreign capitals, where there is absolutely no protection to the working man in the observance of the Sabbath. Nothing could be more injurious to the intellectual, the moral, and the physical welfare of the country than that anything should be done by the State which would lend countenance to the idea that we are anxious to get rid of the observance of the Sabbath as now enjoyed." And the late Sir Charles Reed, whose deep and untiring interest in the industrial classes claims their hearing, has similarly said, "The

defence of the Sabbath is a patriotic duty. Those who would remove the ancient landmarks are not the working man's true friends." If the rights of God are tampered with, the rights of man will soon be disregarded, and those who would override both God's laws and man's liberties for the sake of a few crotchets or for their own gratification are men against whom the labouring classes should be upon their guard. There are good reasons for believing that working men feel the force of all this. When Mr. Broadhurst brought forward his amendment in the House of Commons in 1882, opposing the opening of museums on Sunday, it was ascertained that out of about 2500 labour organisations, over 2400 were in his favour. Those who think otherwise should ponder well the following words of the late Lord Shaftesbury, than whom the working classes never had a truer friend:—"The transition from labour for the amusement of others to labour for the profit of others is easy and natural. And the operatives see it, for they justly apprehend that seven days' work may ultimately be compensated by six days' wages. . . . In days of stagnation of commerce, and with an immense competition for employment, they must earn their wages on any conditions; and the legal and exclusive character of the Sunday being taken away, it would fall into the general number of days, and become altogether subservient to the imperious and irresistible requirements of capital. . . . The British example has not been lost on the foreign workman. What we are endeavouring to defend, many of them are endeavouring to obtain. There are in Geneva, and in Paris even, a not insignificant number

who desire to be emancipated from their Sabbatical drudgery.”¹

3. The grounds on which modern anti-Sabbatarians proceed are professedly philanthropic. They affirm that the study of Art, the graces of Literature, the wonders of Nature in museums and zoological gardens, would counteract the temptations to grosser indulgences. That is to say, one evil is to be cured by another; Satan is to cast out Satan.

This whole reasoning, however, we contend, is based upon false assumptions. There is a ready and effective mode of banishing Sunday-drinking and gambling. Let the public-houses be closed on the Lord's Day, as many engaged in the trade desire; let the saloon be prohibited, as a disgrace to any day of the week. Appetites like these will never be extinguished by gazing at fossils and mummies, nor even by visiting the *chefs d'œuvre* of Frith or Raphael. The majority of people do not care to go to our scientific collections or art galleries oftener than two or three times in the course of a year, and in these days of many holidays there are opportunities enough for that. And there is sufficient evidence available to show that, so far from public-houses and similar resorts being emptied, they would be more frequented than ever, if large numbers of persons were induced to visit such places as the South Kensington Museum, the National Gallery, or the Westminster Aquarium on the Lord's Day. Already those refreshment saloons and beer-shops which are near the Parks are a standing nuisance to the more respectable inhabitants who live in the

¹ Introduction to Mr. Charles Hill's *Continental Sunday Labour*.

neighbourhood. In France it is well known that the Sunday concerts lead to a great deal of drinking, although, from the light character of the beverages, there is not quite so much drunkenness in that country as in our own. The surest method of diminishing Sunday debauchery is to close up places which encourage it. In Scotland, Sunday closing has prevailed for thirty years, in Ireland for five years, and in Wales for a shorter period, and the results are of a most gratifying character. Why then should England be excluded from such beneficial legislation? It is intolerable that a Bill like that for which Mr. Stevenson has so nobly striven, and which has the sentiment of the country in its favour, should be any longer prevented from becoming law by the wanton artifices of obstruction.

But to return. The fact is that this whole talk about refining and elevating the people by the study of art and literature and science proceeds upon a fundamental fallacy. It is the moral nature of man that needs to be appealed to and affected before he can be truly regenerated and ennobled. *Æsthetics* are not morals. Michael Angelo declared that the love of beauty had no influence over the conscience; and Guizot said, "I have drunk at the chalice of science, but it cannot satisfy the thirst of the soul." Art flourished amongst the poltroons of Athens who had not enough of patriotism to resist the Macedonian. Genius may make a Bacon worthy to be called "a soaring angel," while in morals he may become "a creeping snake." Byron's splendid endowments were all in vain for want of proper morals, and perhaps the saddest of his lines are those in his *Childe Harold*,

which are doubtless the expression of his own bitter experience:—

“Untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned.”

The Stuarts, who were adepts in the arts of tyranny, understood well what would be the effect of the Book of Sports. They knew it would be easy to enslave a pleasure-loving people. Those who vaulted and danced round the Maypole on Sunday would never muster up courage to resist despotism. The Ironsides of Cromwell were at least religious men, honouring God and His Sabbath, and it was they who rose up with lion-like strength to wrest the sceptre from the mailed hand of tyranny. The Sabbath-keeping Presbyterians of Scotland have always been strong-minded and clear-headed champions of political and religious liberty, and the peasantry of that land are amongst the most provident and reliable in the world. If they had only possessed greater climatal and physical advantages as regards their country, if their mines and navigable rivers and other modes of transit had been more commensurate with the shrewdness and industry of the people, Scotland would have become one of the richest, as it is one of the most contented and enlightened, countries of Europe. These admirable national characteristics have been acquired not by spending Sunday amid the woods and fields, nor even in the Halls of Science or the lecture-room, but by living in harmony with the eternal laws of God and keeping holy the Sabbath day. Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, all had their arts, which are still admired and imitated, but those splendid civilisations decayed morally, and then fell into ruin.

Italy has generations of painters and sculptors to study but yet superstition like fungus drains the sap of her strength and greatness. France displays in the galleries of the Louvre the art treasures of the whole world, yet her people dwell perpetually under the shadow of the red spectre of revolution. All who are able to read the lessons of history must feel the truth of what Hallam, *facile princeps* in this realm of literature, has written:—"European despots have for many years perceived and acted on the principle that it is the policy of Government to encourage a love of pastime and recreation in the people, both because it keeps them from speculating on religious and political matters, and because it renders them more cheerful and less sensible to the evils of their condition." There is a great deal that is sentimental and ideal in much that is said about Sunday recreation and study, which only needs the touch of the Ithuriel spear of common-sense to show its true character. Mr. G. J. Holyoake in his discussion with Mr. Brewin Grant gave an illustration of this when he said: "Secularism would take, when necessary, the poor factory-jaded Sunday-scholars into the fields, that school-room of Nature! It would throw open the Clyde on the Sunday to the steamer, that the poor Glasgow weaver might gaze on Ben Lomond on the Lord's Day. It would give the mechanic access to museums and botanical gardens, and even to the theatre on that day." Mr. Holyoake has perhaps not observed the "poor jaded" creatures who have returned from their Sabbath holiday so weary, and, in too many instances, so debauched, as to be unfit for their work the next day, while those who have cheerfully given up their rest for the sake of teaching others and trying to make

society a little happier, have risen next morning with the lark, and gone to their business carolling like it. Besides, has Mr. Holyoake no pity for the "poor jaded" railway officials, and public-house keepers, and cab-drivers, and others, who have been robbed of their rights to gratify a giddy, selfish crowd? Are they not flesh and blood, and do they never grow weary? It is surprising that such illogical sentimental rubbish can be uttered by a man of Mr. Holyoake's ability, albeit he is a Secularist.

It is the duty, then, of every Christian to bring to bear upon those in high stations, and those who are mainly responsible for the making and execution of laws, all the pressure they can in favour of a just and due national observance of the Lord's Day. Statesmen may be reminded that national affairs are not often so grave as to require them to be at their offices on Sunday, for even during Nelson's wars Sir C. Middleton, First Lord of the Admiralty, allowed no Sabbath work at the dockyards. Even princes should be taught that it is far more agreeable to this nation that Her Majesty's example in not signing documents on Sunday should be followed, than that the sons of our Royal House should be seen on Continental race-courses on the Lord's Day. And all possible measures ought to be urged by Christian men and women in order to prevent the Sunday receptions, the political séances, the meetings for talk on science and art, the musical recitals, and the opening of places of amusement on the Sabbath, all which are formidable dangers to that venerable institution, which is so indispensable to man, so adapted to the wants of society, and so sacred to the people of God. For if it should ever come to pass

in this country that the study of politics, art, or literature should take the place of worship, if Shakespeare should supplant the Bible, if the museum should take the place of the church, then what can we hope for but moral debasement, political turbulence, social strife, and national decay? Let that day on which the interests of the soul are permitted to come into prominence, and thoughts of God steal like sunlight on the turbid atmosphere of life, be left to us; let it be exempt from the irreverent spirit that would befoul every image of the true and heavenly that flits before the mind of man; let it be guarded against the rough grasp of that iconoclasm which seeks to break down every shrine where the soul does homage to God; and let it still stand as a pillar of light amid the gloom of the surrounding desert, the symbol of the Divine presence and the radiation of God's love and grace, undimmed by any human folly or ingratitude, uneclipsed by the shadows of worldliness and greed, until it shall brighten into the pure splendours of the Sabbath that will never end.¹

¹ See Appendix on English Sabbath-Breaking in Foreign Ports.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTIAN SABBATH-KEEPING.

"O day of rest! How beautiful, how fair,
How welcome to the weary and the old!
Day of the Lord, and truce to earthly care!
Day of the Lord, as all our days should be."

—LONGFELLOW'S *Christus*.

WE now leave the domain of history and economics to enter into a more spiritual realm. Not that the secular and religious are mutually exclusive, for they are twin-stars rather, which blend together and seem but one, being distinguished from each other only by close inspection for a special purpose. A true political philosophy ought to be transfused with the light of reverential piety. No sociology is complete unless, to borrow the Spencerian term, the spiritual "organism" is recognised. Every science which deals with human nature is defective unless it rises into a sunnier realm than the earthly and takes account of the soul's relationship to God, harmonising its doctrines or theories with those eternal, immutable principles which shine out of the Divine character and revelation.

God's intention and purposes concerning the Sabbath ought, then, to be eagerly sought out by the devout Christian. They are easily ascertained, and are distinctly and solemnly expressed. They are graven on

the Sinaitic table and incorporated in every code which God has enjoined on mankind. Amongst the most impressive of the Divine commands are those which relate to the observance of the Sabbath, and some of God's most gracious promises are connected with obedience to these commands. "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary" (Lev. xix. 30). "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, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. lviii. 13, 14). Rest from the drudgeries of worldly toil and care, meditation on spiritual things, joyful worship of God in the sanctuary, and doing whatever will benefit our fellow-men and win the approbation of the Lord, these are the prime and essential elements of proper Sabbath observance.

1. The fundamental idea in Sabbath observance is rest. This is the very meaning of the word.¹ Rest is a Divine conception, born in the ever-rolling sea of God's thoughts, exemplified and sanctioned by the Creator's repose at the beginning, and by the cessation of Christ from the toils and sufferings connected with His atoning work. It is spiritualised in the freedom from sin which believers in Christ enjoy, and it is to find its most glorious interpretation in the Sabbatism which remains to the people of God. "There the wicked

¹ שָׁבַת—*Shabbath*.

cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest" (Job iii. 17). "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13).

This idea of Sabbath rest, however, does not imply mere freedom from ordinary labour for the purpose of pleasurable holiday-making. The 20th Homily describes some who "will not rest in holiness as God commanded, but they rest in ungodliness and filthiness, prancing in their pride, pointing and painting themselves to be gorgeous and gay; they rest in excess and superfluity, in gluttony and drunkenness, like rats and swine; they rest in brawling and railing, in quarrelling and fighting, they rest in wantonness, in toyish talking, in filthy fleshliness." Sensual delights of this kind are wrong at any time; they are doubly evil on the Lord's Day. To give freedom from work and yet to multiply the sources of temptation to sin is to bestow a curse, and not a blessing; it is to give a stone instead of bread; nay, a serpent for fish. A thousand times better would it be for a people to have no periodical respite from their heavy tasks, no lull in the rattle and hum of their machinery, no deliverance from their daily secular cares, than that the liberty of the Sabbath should degenerate into the licence of idle amusement or the excesses of vice and profligacy. Let the law of a country establish or permit those fascinating delights which appeal so effectively, alas! to our carnal appetites, to meet us when our minds are not preoccupied with serious thoughts, and who can tell how long the most self-reliant would stand untainted and incorrupt? And especially where virtuous habits have not been culti-

vated, nor more refined tastes and pursuits been followed, would the consequences be lamentable and ruinous, were the public-house to be permitted to invite, the theatre to glare, and the blandishments of the music-hall and the assembly-room to obtrude without limit or restraint at a time when unoccupied leisure would make such seductions more alluring. But if the peaceful Sabbath be guarded, so far as the defences of law can be utilised for such a purpose, from the evils to which man is more fiercely exposed in his hours of vacation, then will it minister to his highest necessities and lead him on to noblest realisations; then will its heaven-born light be laden with choicest blessings for the cottage of the peasant and the villa of the rich; and then will its holy presence gladden the wearied toiler of the fields and factories, as well as refresh the tired thinker in the study and the school.

Again, Sabbath rest is not simply indolent inactivity. A stagnant world, in which every channel of life, both good and evil, should be closed, would grow intolerable to all, and the monotony of such a Sabbath would become man's heaviest affliction. A temporary Buddhist Nirvana, or the Quietism, even, of a Madame Guyon, does not enter into the Scriptural doctrine of Sabbatic rest. Even such strict Sabbatarians as the Jews were permitted to put forth some forms of activity, and indeed were commanded to continue all the necessary operations of religion and the State on the seventh day. Works of mercy and charity, the sacrifices and services connected with the Temple worship, and of course all that was necessary to the life and well-being of men, were attended to without offence. Even the necessary functions of government

were exercised during the Sabbath day. The king's guard, for example, was relieved on the seventh day, and it was in connection with this military operation that Jehoiada the priest, having engaged the help of the "rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard," ordered them to detain both detachments, and to surround the young prince Joash, in order to make him king, and by his influence to restore the worship of the Lord (2 Kings xi. 4-16).

As regards lawful Sabbath activity, however, the danger of our time is that the door should be opened too wide, not that it should be made too strait. The rigidity of morose Sabbatarians is far less operative than the false liberty of irreverent latitudinarianism. Almost every form of modern Sabbath desecration in this country has been justified on the ground of necessity, or mercy, or a specious religion. The employment of 300,000 men on railways, of 25,000 by the Post Office, of 300,000 in connection with the liquor traffic, of many thousands on the public press, of large numbers in keeping up fires at gasworks and in factories, in refitting and cleansing machinery, in purveying various articles of food, and in the maintenance of popular exhibitions in museums and picture-galleries, and even in providing musical concerts, dramatic readings, and theatrical entertainments, all these multitudinous forms of activity have been at different times recommended as appropriate to Sunday on the ground of their high public utility. In all those sixty miles of shops which in London streets are open on the Lord's Day, probably there would not be found one for which something might not be said on the same ground; and of the many hundred thousands of our fellow-countrymen who are

robbed of their Sabbath, perhaps there could not be found one for whose employment some such pretext might not be urged. Hence arises the necessity for laying down a few principles, for which we think we have the authority of God's Word, which shall guide us in determining what may, and what may not, be considered as legitimate Sabbath employment.

(1.) It would not be prudent to dogmatise on such a subject as this, but it is perfectly safe to lay it down as our first general rule that the Christian ought carefully to abstain from all occupations which appertain to his secular calling where the object is merely gain or profit. There are a few professions which have to do with public health and morals; of these we say nothing at this point. He who pursues his ordinary business on the Lord's Day for the purpose of enriching himself is guilty of flat and defiant rebellion against God. He may increase in goods, but as God measures men, he will be a pauper when all for which he has striven shall fall from his death-stiffened fingers. And it is doubtful whether he really does enrich himself by robbing God of that proportion of time which He claims. On this matter, Sir Matthew Hale, the well-known Lord Chief Justice, long ago uttered some weighty sentiments:—"I have by long and sound experience found that the due observance of the Sabbath and of the duties of it has been of great advantage to me. As God Almighty is the Lord of our time and lends it to us, and as it is but just we should consecrate this part of that time to Him, so I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that

hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And on the other side, when I had been negligent of this day, the rest of the week has been unhappy and unsuccessful to my own secular employments." "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Deut. v. 12-14). Upon those ancient despisers of Jehovah's supremacy who asked, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?"¹ the Divine condemnation has been sufficiently expressed. How then shall they be justified who do not even bridle their unholy cupidity, but profane the Sabbath with their avaricious pursuits?

(2.) Still more culpable is it to permit any sort of labour, or to indulge in any kind of gratification, which would rob others of the opportunity of attending to their moral and spiritual necessities. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). There is a great deal of Sabbath labour, as we all know, which might be left undone without any inconvenience, and the gigantic system of Sunday recreation which in this and other countries robs so many of their day of rest is totally unnecessary. To employ servants, postmen, cabmen, or others, more than is absolutely unavoidable, cannot be reconciled with humanity, and far less with professions of religion. Under the present conditions of society, it is not easy so to act as that others shall be secured in their enjoyment of the Sabbath, but the Christian, at any rate, will do his best to

¹ Amos viii. 5.

alleviate ills which he cannot remedy. In some cases, for instance, it may help the postman to relieve him from the necessity of bringing letters to a certain house, while in other cases it may cost him more labour to keep them back, in consequence of his having to sort them and endorse them, than to deliver them on his usual Sunday round. In some cases, too, where it is understood that letters are delivered on Sunday morning, great inconvenience might be caused by allowing letters to remain unopened till Monday. The sin is in their being allowed to be taken round, and the Church ought to do her utmost to put an end to this iniquitous burden which galls our country postmen. Surely, if London, the very heart of trade and commerce, can wait for its letters till Monday, the less important outlying districts might do the same.¹

The greater part of the railway traffic on Sunday is quite unjustifiable. It is calculated that about 2000 trains run in England and Wales every Sunday, representing 50,000 arrivals and departures. Excursions on the Lord's Day are increasing every summer at a great ratio. The extra toil which this Sabbath pleasure-taking involves is quite incalculable, for it affects vast numbers of people who have to cater for the travellers, as well as the 300,000 who are employed in connection with the railways. The *Times* of 25th January, 1865, attributed the accidents which happened about that time to the overworking of the drivers and signalmen, and there can be no doubt that the country

¹ Any person can have his letters retained in the Post Office on Sundays, by sending a request to the postmaster to that effect. Printed forms can be obtained from Mr. Charles Hill, Secretary of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association, Bedford Row, London.

suffers great loss in life and limb, and the railway companies immense sums of money in damages, in consequence of the loss of regular periodical rest on the part of those who work our trains.

In all these cases where the Lord's Day is desecrated by unnecessary work and recreation, there are vast numbers who are thereby shut off to a great extent from the enjoyment of public worship and the exercises of family religion; and this consideration, though it will not appeal to the great majority of Sunday excursionists, yet ought to incite all godly men and women to use their influence to diminish the iniquity.

And now, turning from the negative side of this question, we will inquire what kind of activity is permissible on the Sabbath.

(3.) Everything which tends to the moral and spiritual welfare of our fellow-creatures and to the evangelisation of society, is not only lawful, but is obligatory on those who profess to be the people of God. The hundreds of thousands of pastors and preachers, the millions of Sunday-school teachers, and all the rest of the great living noble army of those who are endeavouring to invade the kingdom of darkness and sin, and to carry Gospel tidings to all that are fast bound in Satan's thralldom, are doing legitimate Sabbath work, and indeed they alone have discovered the secret of true Sabbath observance and of genuine Christianity. There are also some labours that may properly be performed on the Lord's Day from motives of humanity. The doctor and the chemist have the sanction of Christ's own example for their healing work. But it is not altogether unnecessary to remind these benefactors of mankind that our Lord did not permit His

healing power to be so exercised as to prevent Him from attending the synagogue and engaging in public worship.

It must be admitted, too, that some kinds of food have necessarily to be purveyed and prepared for eating on the Lord's Day. Milk and other perishable articles of diet ought not to be wasted because it is Sunday, but care ought to be exercised that necessary services of this kind do not interfere with the interests of the soul.

Cattle have to be fed and "led away to watering" and cared for on Sunday as well as on other days, and for this kind of work we have not only the justification of necessity and kindness, but also the sanction of our Lord's own teaching.

(4.) But between the two extremes of philanthropic and selfish Sabbath activity, concerning which we can safely and instantly pronounce judgment, there will always remain a debatable territory, made up of employments upon which it is not easy to decide without much deliberation, and which for the most part have to be left to the individual conscience and judgment. In such details, to our own Master we stand or fall, and "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Shall a minister use a public vehicle in order to preach to those who could not otherwise be reached, and shall a congregation expect a preacher to do this? Ought not that people to afford entertainment for the night, or at least pay for a private conveyance? Would it be right to travel a long distance on the Lord's Day in cases where some relative or friend was dying? May repasts be given to the poor on Sunday when they cannot be reached on any other day?

Should a public bakery be used on the Sabbath to prevent any of the family from having to remain at home, or would it be better to cook on Saturday? These and a number of such questions are sure to arise in our attempt to distinguish works of necessity, mercy, and piety, according to the usual but indefinite classification of lawful Sabbath activities, and to some of them different answers will be given in all honesty and sincerity by different persons. We have thought, however, that some godly persons, in considering matters of this kind, have not given sufficient weight to the grand Pauline canon of *expediency*. They have shaped their conduct and formed their judgment in the light of the lawful, and have quite forgotten that there are many lawful things which are not expedient. It is inexpedient for any Christian to appear before the public in the character of a Sabbath-breaker, even though it may seem to his own judgment that he is only doing what is perfectly lawful. How it must grieve godly persons, and furnish grounds for cavilling to the ungodly, when a professing Christian is seen in a railway train on the Lord's Day, even though his presence there may seem to be a necessity! "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." "It is good to do nothing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. xiv.).

2. Having endeavoured to show how far the Sabbath rest or cessation from toil, which is its central idea, is consistent with Sabbath occupation in works of humanity and piety, we shall, in conclusion, indicate the nature of that more spiritual employment of the

Lord's Day to which we are urged by Scriptural injunctions and attracted by the fitness of such uses of its holy hours and lofty privileges. The sublimest mode of Sabbath observance is undoubtedly the worship of God, which we take to include all religious exercises of meditation, prayer, and praise. This is the true signification of such commands as that of the Decalogue, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and that contained in Deut. v. 12, "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God commanded thee." To sanctify the Sabbath day was to consecrate it to God, to devote it to holy spiritual thought and activity.

To do this aright is in some instances difficult, and well-nigh impossible, for lack of proper forethought and preparation the day before. The idea of the Jewish preparation was a good one, though perhaps it was carried too far. It is not well—where it can be avoided it is wrong—to permit the business or the pleasure of Saturday to stretch on to midnight, inducing that physical languor and that nervous prostration which too often dim the Sabbath joy and cloud its worship. Why should not the cheerful Sabbath chimes find us bright and glad, with all our faculties fresh and vigorous for God's service, and with our spiritual perceptions keen and penetrating for the understanding and relish of Divine truth? Dr. Pye Smith, though not holding those views on the original institution of the Sabbath which we believe to be Scriptural, was yet in the habit of absenting himself, at a very great sacrifice of enjoyment, from the Saturday soirées of the Royal Society, of which he was a Fellow, for fear of trespassing on the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

The eve of the Sabbath growing in seriousness and unworldliness would lead on to a day of heavenly delight. Public worship, prayer, and meditation, would not be irksome and vigorous, but manna to the soul. Some there are, no doubt, who keep Sunday by going through a heavy round of religious duties in order to escape the prickings of conscience; others go to church merely to save themselves from being thought heathenish, or because they like the ritual, the music, or the raciness of the preacher, or because certain persons of distinction go; but "children of the light," who love and honour God, regard the Sabbath and all its exercises and privileges as priceless blessings.

"Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise Thy name, give thanks and sing,
To show Thy love by morning light,
And talk of all Thy truth at night."

The cultivation of family religion is also an important element in the spiritual employment of the Lord's Day. Nothing makes home so happy as religion. Parental love and social friendships when sweetened by piety develop and mature the better instincts of our nature. There is no heavenlier picture on this side the stars than a home where love to God fills every heart, where, as it was at Bethany, all the waiting and serving are done with Martha's zeal, and where the costliest gifts are laid ungrudgingly at Jesus' feet with Mary's devotion. Here indeed is a spot where Eden's blessedness combines with heaven's Sabbatic joy. It is here that virtue and philanthropy, ay, and patriotism too, find their birthplace and their

home. Here it is that religion roots itself in soil that will prove productive of the noblest spiritual fruits. What madness it is, then, to strike a deadly blow at this nursery of all that gives hope for the future happiness and prosperity of our country and the perpetuity of morality and piety! Let the home be broken up on Sunday, and what guarantee have we that our children will not grow up to be scornful, sceptical worldlings?

Christian parents should regard it as a vital part of their duty to give some portion of the Lord's Day to the religious training of their children. In patriarchal times the father was priest and teacher to the household, and it is the glory of the Christian dispensation that all believers in Christ are "kings and priests unto God." The Jews, too, cultivated family religion most diligently, and spared no pains to instruct their children in the Scriptures. The domestic priesthood of Israel was maintained and exercised by the Levites, who are often referred to as being connected with the household.¹

Sunday should be made as bright and attractive as possible both in the home and in the church. It is to be feared that early experiences too often beget a disrelish for the Sabbath which many years do not wholly eradicate. Hard and weary tasks, prolonged confinement, unnecessary restrictions, lugubrious silence, monotonous routine, these are a bugbear to the lively, imaginative nature of youth. Let hymns and spiritual

¹ See Deut. xii. 18, xiv. 27, xvi. 11, xviii. 6.

Josephus says: "The seventh day we set apart from labour; it is dedicated to the learning of our customs and laws; for we think it proper to reflect on them, as well as on any good thing else in order to our avoiding sin."—*Antiq.*, xvi. 2, 3.

songs, homely talk upon Divine truth, pleasant reading of books and periodicals of a good moral description, exercises of charity, rational outdoor recreation in walking, and attendance at Sunday-school, Bible-classes, and especially at public worship, fill up the Sabbath hours, and it will become a day of sunshine to the young, the light of which will never fade and whose music will ring on to the days of grey hairs.

3. The Sabbath, moreover, is a fit time for doing whatever is possible to enlarge and consolidate Christ's kingdom in the earth, and thus spread righteousness amongst men. How great a part of the world yet lieth in wickedness ! what masses of our fellow-creatures are living in utter unconcern about their duty towards God and their own spiritual interests ! Disregarding the heathen for the moment, it is deplorable to observe how vast a proportion of the population even of this professedly Christian country is non-church-going and what multitudes are without the helps and restraints of religion. Eighteen centuries has our Saviour waited for the fruition of His gracious purposes and His vicarious sufferings, but how far the world is still from being saved ! The needs of mankind demand that all the Lord's people should become prophets. The rams' horns as well as the silver trumpets must be blown if the ramparts of evil are to fall. The Sabbath is a magnificent opportunity given to the Church for seeking to promote the spiritual welfare of men. Then the roar of busy life is hushed, and men's consciences are better able to hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit and the monitions of God's Word. Such an opportunity the Church cannot afford to neglect. The plough and the seed-basket ought then to be put on one side in order

that the Lord's vineyard may be tilled with more of concentration than is easy amid the distractions of secular work; the vision of heavenly things is for awhile to be contemplated, so as to clear the film of earthliness from human eyes; the heart, made hard by contact with the falsity and selfishness of the world, is to be sensitised by converse with spiritual things; the soul, ever prone to fly off from God into the shadows of unbelief or materialism, is to be quickened into a keener perception of Divine verities by means of the friendly mediation of Christ's people. Here is the Church's mission, and she will find in the faithful prosecution of it that human nature still responds to sympathy and to truth, and that the Gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." She is not, of course, restricted to one day for the prosecution of her duty, but it is on the Sabbath that there is less to counteract her efforts, and it is then that she can utilise her resources with more of facility and persistence.

These, then, are the sublime uses to which the holy hours of the Lord's Day may be put. Rest, worship, works of philanthropy, such are the rightful modes of Christian Sabbath observance. In proportion as the day is devoted to these objects, it will be a safeguard of religion, a bond of human fraternity linking hearts together, the prop of the Church and the foundation of national greatness.

CHAPTER XV.

THE POSITION OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH.

"Come, let us with our Lord arise,
Our Lord, Who made both earth and skies ;
Who died to save the world He made,
And rose triumphant from the dead ;
He rose, the Prince of life and peace,
And stamped the day for ever His."

—CHARLES WESLEY.

WITHOUT venturing upon the question, so frequently and hotly discussed, of the relationship of the Wesleys to the Established Church, we may say with perfect safety that all the cardinal doctrines of that Church were earnestly and unreservedly accepted by the original founders of the Methodist Societies. It need create no surprise, therefore, to find that in what are usually regarded as the Wesleyan Methodist standards there is no formal or technical exposition of the nature and claims of the Sabbath. It is evident, however, from a careful examination of Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*, that he held those views respecting the Edenic origin of the Sabbath and the universality and perpetuity of its claims, which we have already shown to be maintained in the Articles and Creeds of the Church of England. Moreover, there are scattered through the writings of John Wesley numerous references to the sanctity of the Lord's Day, as well as such

enforcements of its Divine authority, and of the obligation resting upon believers to keep it holy, as make it clear that he took his stand upon those principles which we have endeavoured to vindicate in this volume. Let any one read his faithful denunciations of Sabbath-breaking in his *Word to a Sabbath-Breaker*,¹ which is really an exposition and enforcement of the Fourth Commandment, and it will be impossible to remain in any doubt as to Wesley's beliefs in regard to this subject. We need only extract a few sentences from this little tractate. "'Six days shalt thou do all manner of work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.' It is not thine, but God's day. He claims it for His own. He always did claim it for His own, even from the beginning of the world. 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' He 'hallowed' it, that is, He made it holy; He reserved it for His own service. He appointed that, as long as the sun or the moon, the heavens and the earth, should endure, the children of men should spend this day in the worship of Him Who 'gave them life, and breath, and all things.'"

That magnificent series of sermons constituting an exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and setting forth the relations in which faith and the law stand towards each other, is familiar to all readers of Wesleyan literature. From this series, as well as from other sermons, we are able easily to gather that Mr. Wesley was deeply convinced of the immutable char-

¹ Wesley's Works, vol. xi. pp. 157-160. See also, on the evils of Sabbath-profanation, vol. viii. p. 155, and vol. xiii. p. 143.

acter of the Decalogue. And in his comments on those passages of Scripture to which we have had occasion to allude already as having been interpreted in a way that is unfriendly to the supremacy and universality of the Sabbath, we observe how careful are his distinctions between the transitional and the immutable, the ceremonial and the moral. Under Rom. xiv. 5 he writes: "As New Moons and other Jewish festivals." His note on Gal. iv. 10 is: "Jewish Sabbaths, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles." And similarly in the case of Col. ii. 16. In all these instances he discriminates between the Jewish or Levitical festivals and Sabbaths, and the eternal Sabbath law binding upon all men, and under every dispensation.

Next to Mr. Wesley himself, the most trusted theologian of Methodism is still the Rev. Richard Watson, whose *Theological Institutes* are, and must ever be, amongst the classics of divinity. In Part III. of this work, treating upon *The Morals of Christianity*, there is an extended account of the Sabbath institution. Mr. Watson says: "The seventh day was hallowed at the close of creation; its sanctity was afterwards marked by the withholding of the manna on that day, and the provision of a double supply on the sixth, and that previous to the giving of the law from Sinai: it was then made a part of that great epitome of religious and moral duty which God wrote with His own finger on tables of stone; it was a part of the public political law of the only people to whom Almighty God ever made Himself a political Head and Ruler; its observance is connected throughout the prophetic age with the highest promises, its violations with the severest

maledictions; it was among the Jews of our Lord's time a day of solemn religious assembling, and was so observed by Him. When changed to the first day of the week, it was the day on which the first Christians assembled; it was called by way of eminence 'the Lord's Day;' and we have inspired authority to say that, both under the Old and New Testament dispensations, it is used as an expressive type of the heavenly and eternal rest."¹ In regard to the change of day the following extract will be sufficient: "Though there is not on record any Divine command issued to the Apostles to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews to the first day of the week; yet, when we see that this was done in the Apostolic age, and that St. Paul speaks of the Jewish Sabbaths as not being obligatory upon Christians, whilst he yet contends that the whole moral law is obligatory upon them, the fair inference is that this change of the day was made by Divine direction."²

Amongst general readers and theological students belonging to the Methodist Churches, the Rev. Benjamin Field's *Handbook of Christian Theology* is held in wide and well-deserved esteem. Here it is laid down that the Sabbath institution is coeval with the existence of man; that it is incorporated in the moral law and is of universal and perpetual obligation; that the permanence of the Sabbatic law is not in the least degree affected by Rom. xiv. 5, 6, or Col. ii. 16, 17; and that there is sufficient authority for the transference of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. All these points are treated of with a lucidity and

¹ Watson's *Theol. Inst.*, iv. 229, 230.

² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

terseness which are admirable, and Mr. Field's chapter on the Sabbath could not easily be surpassed as a brief and yet thorough exposition of the Scriptural teaching respecting this subject.

Precisely the same principles are put forward by Dr. Pope in his scholarly and well-known works,¹ by the late revered John Farrar in his *Biblical and Theological Dictionary*,² and by Dr. Rigg,³ one of the stoutest living champions of Methodist doctrine.

There is, then, practical unanimity amongst the leaders of Methodist thought in regard to the origin and claims of the Sabbath, and there have never been any internal dissensions in the Churches that have sprung from the labours of the Wesleys concerning the teaching of the Bible on this question. (See Appendix on Wes. Polity.)

Reference has already been made to a slight divergence of opinion on one of the minor points of the Sabbath controversy on the part of Professor Beet. It is because of our high estimate of Mr. Beet as a scholar and commentator that we venture, with deep regret, to point out what we consider to be his errors concerning the Sabbath, and what we fear may be the consequences of such errors. Mr. Beet has not published a systematic treatise on the Sabbath—it could be wished that he would do so, and thus give us the benefit of more extensive and definite inquiries—but in his Commentaries on Romans and Galatians, which are amongst the most valuable contributions to the

¹ *Compendium of Christian Theology*, pp. 644–646.

² *Art. Sabbath*, p. 550.

³ *The Sabbath and the Sabbath Law*, by Rev. Dr. Rigg.

I mention these as being of easy access. It is matter for regret that the Rev. J. W. Thomas' scholarly treatise on the Lord's Day is out of print.

Methodist literature of our time, he had to make incidental allusions to some aspects of the question.

In his *Commentary on Galatians*, Professor Beet gives an elaborate note on the Sabbath, which seems, to say the least, somewhat disappointing. As if the writer himself were not quite satisfied with it, he returns to the subject in the Preface—written, we presume, after the volume was in type—modifying one or two of his observations. After interpreting Gal. iv. 10 as dealing with the weekly Sabbath, an opinion which we have already tried to show is open to question,¹ Mr. Beet goes on to describe the weekly Sabbath as being “a special sign of the Mosaic covenant,” thus taking “in some sense the place of circumcision (Gen. xvii. 10–14) in the covenant with Abraham.”² No strong objection could have been raised to this putting of the matter if Mr. Beet had said “Sabbath-keeping,” instead of “the Sabbath,” thus avoiding the misconception that the Sabbath as an institution was exclusively Jewish and on a level with circumcision. The real point of the parallel, which we think Mr. Beet fails to bring out, is that their observance of the Sabbath, like their submission to the rite of circumcision, was a sign of their loyalty to God on the part of His chosen people.

Mr. Beet also says (p. 115): “The week itself was unknown to the early Greeks and Romans, and apparently to the heathen world generally.” He partly refutes this himself, for, with curious inconsistency, he proceeds to give traces of what he has already denied the existence of. He appears, however, to have entirely overlooked those numerous passages from Homer, Hesiod,

¹ See chap. ix.

² Beet on Galatians, p. 114.

as well as the very remarkable one from Linus, written B.C. 1280, pointing to the tradition of the week, which we have previously cited. In regard to the Romans, it is enough to point out that they abrogated their own laws and adopted the Egyptian custom of naming the days of the week. We have given in a former chapter (chap. x.) ample evidence of the primeval existence of the week.

Mr. Beet then affirms that the early Christian writers assume that the Sabbath did not exist before Moses (p. 116). This sweeping assertion is buttressed by only two extracts from Justin and Irenæus, who were both dealing with opponents of Christianity. Neither of these extracts contains more than the assumption that Abraham and the other patriarchs enjoyed the righteousness of faith, and not of the law of circumcision or of the Sabbath. The passage from Irenæus distinctly implies this. "Without circumcision and without observance of the Sabbath, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." As we know that Abraham did practise circumcision, we are forbidden to interpret Irenæus as Mr. Beet does. In regard to Justin Martyr, there is another passage which Mr. Beet does not quote, in which the Lord's Day is associated with creation.¹

We fear, too, that the classing of the Sabbath with the Mosaic ritual by Mr. Beet, in order to invest it with a symbolic significance, constitutes a source of danger. It cannot be too often or too emphatically pointed out that the Sabbath law is older than the Mosaic; it is more absolute and universal, and it is more permanent, as containing an eternal moral principle.

¹ See *supra*, p. 56.

Again, Mr. Beet states that "not until the Council of Macon, in A.D. 585, have we any hint of a transfer of the sacred rest from the seventh to the first day" (p. 122). Probably he means that it was not till then regarded as a substitute for, or an exact counterpart of, the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment. But the language, surely, is infelicitous. To most it would convey the idea that not until the sixth century had the Lord's Day attained pre-eminence. This, as Mr. Beet well knows, could not be maintained for a moment. The matter was settled by law as early as A.D. 321, when the customs of centuries were formulated in the decree of Constantine.

There are some other expressions in Mr. Beet's note which seem to be too much tinged with the views of Dr. Hessey, but we must now only examine one further statement, containing, as we think, a very serious error. On page 115 he writes:—"That the weekly rest was ordained before Moses, is not proved by Gen. ii. 3; for even after a lapse of time an institution may have been ordained to commemorate a bygone event." This is Paley's proleptical or anticipatory theory, which we have sufficiently dealt with already. What we wish to call attention to here is the inconsistency of Mr. Beet with himself. In his Preface he observes: "In my view, the statement in Gen. ii. 3, taken in connection with the traces, casual and scanty though they are, of a septenary division of time earlier than the Exodus or away from Israel, points towards the institution of the Sabbath at the creation." It is evident that Mr. Beet inclines to the belief that the Sabbath is of Edenic origin, and we can only regret that a work so fresh and scholarly, and one that is so

likely to be widely read, should contain a few expressions that appear to us to be quite irreconcilable with that belief. But, as we have indicated, Mr. Beet's mind is evidently not yet made up on this important subject.

We have not space for any detailed reference to the opinions of Methodist theologians belonging to those numerous and influential offshoots of the Wesleyan Church which occupy conspicuous positions in America, the Colonies, and other lands beyond the boundaries of Britain. Nor, indeed, is it at all necessary to do so, for on the Sabbath question there is complete unanimity amongst them. As a demonstration of this, we may draw attention to the position taken up at the recent Methodist Ecumenical Conference,¹ which, more than any other assembly that has met during our time, may be regarded as representing world-wide Methodism. We refer to this Conference, moreover, because of the publication of a pamphlet criticising the discussion on the Sabbath.

The Rev. John Baker, M.A., read an essay which is printed in the official Report of the Conference.² It contains in a brief form a summary of the arguments in favour of the primeval appointment of the Sabbath, the permanency of the Fourth Commandment, and of the Divine authority for the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Such prominent men as Dr. Newman, William Arthur, Dr. W. Cooke, Bishop Simpson, and others spoke, and all agreed that Mr. Baker had presented in a most accu-

¹ This Conference met at City Road Chapel, London, in September, 1881, and was attended by Methodists of every shade of opinion from all parts of the world.

² Pages 189-203.

rate and masterly manner the prevalent views of Methodism.

This discussion has led to the publication of a tractate by Mr. J. E. Bythway, B.A., to which we allude on account of its having been widely distributed by the author. He complains that he was not permitted to state his views in our Connexional organs; but that is an unreasonable complaint, for the Magazine to which he sent his paper in the first instance does not concern itself with the dissemination of opinions that are held by the bulk of Methodists to be unscriptural. Mr. Bythway, however, will find that his tenets are expounded in various numbers of the Magazine referred to, and the refutation of them is also there.

There is absolutely nothing in Mr. Bythway's pamphlet that has not been fully examined in the foregoing pages. He takes his stand on Dr. Hessey's Bampton Lecture. So far as the history of the Sabbath and the Sabbath controversy is concerned, the pamphlet is exceedingly interesting and instructive, but there are many inferences from the historical facts that we regard as false and perilous. The author prefers to call himself an anti-Sabbatarian, and objects to the Lord's Day being called the Sabbath. "Those who hold the anti-Sabbatarian view," he writes, "believe that the Sunday or Lord's Day, though in some respects like the Jewish Sabbath, is yet in other respects essentially different from it. It is *not* that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh day to the first, but that a *new day*, distinct from the Sabbath as regards the grounds and the manner of its observance and the feelings with which it was regarded, was instituted by

the early Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”¹

The chief peril of such opinions is the one that can be best expressed in Mr. Bythway's own words: “We find in Scripture no command or instruction to keep the Lord's Day in the same way as the Sabbath had been kept” (p. 5). That is to say, let the connection between the Jewish and Christian Sabbath be severed, and we have no Divine authority for a Sabbath at all. Interpret the Fourth Commandment as having no reference to the Lord's Day, and we have no Sabbath law in the Christian code. So intense is Mr. Bythway's dislike of the Fourth Commandment, that he even protests against the Decalogue having been incorporated in the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI., supposing that the intention was to favour the use of the Confessional by those who were conscious of having broken the commandments. How Mr. Bythway discovered that Edward VI. and Cranmer were anxious to bolster up the Romish Confessional surpasses our ingenuity to surmise. But we can quite understand why he objects to hearing the Fourth Commandment read solemnly in God's house, when we ascertain that he would fain open public libraries, museums, and picture-galleries on the Lord's Day.² The question is, Where will you stop? Once begin such a course as this, and you cannot stop short of a total abolition of the Sabbath. Set the people travelling to public resorts, and you must provide for their wants. Let some be robbed of their day of rest for the amusement of others, and it

¹ *Facts on the Sunday Question*, by J. E. Bythway, B.A., p. 3.

² Page 37.

will soon happen that all will be required to labour for the selfish and the powerful.

Mr. Bythway thinks that the day of rest can be sufficiently safeguarded by legislative enactments; and yet he would violate those enactments by opening institutions which would rob thousands of the rest he declares they ought to have. But surely an Act of Parliament is no more binding than a law of the Decalogue. Does Mr. Bythway imagine that a law passed from mere motives of expediency, and which might be abrogated at any moment when personal interest or profit, or the transitions of popular whims, shall demand it, would constitute a safer bulwark for the sanctity and universality of the Lord's Day than may be found in the Divine appointment and commands? The purposes for which the Sabbath was ordained and for which the Lord's Day is upheld are highly utilitarian in their character, but if they are to be realised in all their fulness, they must be guarded by stronger sanctions than those of mere utilitarianism. Paley long ago put it that the resting from secular work during the whole of the Lord's Day is an ordinance of human institution, "binding nevertheless upon the conscience of every individual of a country in which a weekly Sabbath is established for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes."¹ But it needs very little knowledge of human nature to perceive that more efficient motives to Sabbath observance are required than arise from the fitness of things and the benefits accruing to society. These motives spring from the fact that the Sabbath of the Christian, as of the Jew,

¹ *Moral and Political Philosophy*, chap. vii.

is a Divine appointment; make it a merely human institution, and you degrade it and take the surest step for its subversion. Some of the instances of over-rigid Sabbatarianism which Mr. Bythway cites are only indications of human defect and infirmity. Christ has redeemed not only the Sabbath, but all Christian institutions, from the bondage of the law. Let the Sabbath be kept as Christ kept it, and it can never be a yoke too grievous to be borne. No intelligent reader of the New Testament need long remain in any doubt as to how far Christ has purged Sabbath-keeping from the ceremonial details of exclusively Jewish character. In this, as in all other moral duties, the Christian has a glorious liberty—a liberty which has its responsibilities, a liberty which may not be abused, but a liberty which all may safely exercise whose desire it is to glorify and please God. “But if ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. v. 18). As the Seventh Article of the Church of England expresses it, and as every Methodist theologian holds: “The law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, does not bind Christian men.” But the moral law involved in Sabbath observance has never been, can never be, abrogated, for it was confirmed by our Lord and stamped with His approval and blessing. The true follower of Jesus Christ, therefore, will not seek to throw off any restraint that may lead to the depriving of others of their rightful Sabbath rest merely for his own gratification, nor will he sap that beneficent institution of its brightness and joy by any overstraining of obsolete Jewish regulations. The Sabbath rest was made for man, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, master and servant, that all might escape for a while the

sordid cares and corroding influences of secular occupations, and enjoy intercourse with their Maker in their private retreats, amid the glad surroundings of the home, and in the sacred courts of the sanctuary. It ought, consequently, to be impossible for any Christian or any philanthropist to countenance any trifling with so sublime, so beneficent an institution ; and we reckon it a cause for pardonable pride that it can be truthfully said, as Mr. Bythway says, " that the anti-Sabbatarian view is one which no Methodist, or at least no Methodist minister, holds or could hold." Every candidate for the ministry of the Wesleyan Church has to give a satisfactory answer to the question, " Do you believe the Christian Sabbath to be a Divine institution, of perpetual and universal obligation in the Christian Church ?" and thus, as Mr. Baker expresses it, " Methodism, generic universal Methodism, has the high distinction of being the only Christian Church that exacts from all candidates for its pulpits a distinct declaration of faith in the Divine origin and authority of the Sabbath. This is one of our distinctive peculiarities of which we need not be ashamed, in which we may well make our boast and glorying." God forbid that we should ever prove unfaithful to our trust. May He guard us from that blight of latitudinarian laxity which, alas ! has settled on some other branches of Christ's Church, and keep us true to what we regard as our glorious mission of continuing and perfecting the work of the Protestant Reformation.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN APPEAL TO THE CHURCHES.

“Where now the beauty of the Sabbath, kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the Almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest ? ”—WORDSWORTH.

WE have already stated our conviction that it is a prime and solemn duty of every Christian to give earnest and serious attention to the history and claims of the Sabbath institution.¹ Having now done our best to show the sanctity of the day of rest, the Divine authority and universal and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath law, and the vital relation of Sabbath-keeping to the maintenance of morality and the spread of Christianity, nothing remains for us to do but to make a final appeal to the judgment and conscience of the Churches.

We have unbounded confidence in the ultimate triumph and universality of the truth—*Magna est veritas et prævalebit*. The old prophecies, so wondrously fulfilled and justified in many instances, will, we believe, be all made good. “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”

¹ See Introduction.

Appearances, in some particulars, may seem to be unpromising ; fierce conflicts and discussions may here and there prevail ; vast corruptions may dominate some lands and some Churches ; a dead weight of lethargy may for the moment lie upon the popular mind in regard to the subject, but all these features of the controversy we regard as only the common conditions of every beneficent reform and the ordinary concomitants of human progress, and, looked at aright, they do but furnish additional incentives to thoughtful and zealous effort.

There is certainly no room and no need for despair, but there is a loud call to action. And when we consider what momentous issues are at stake, moral, social, national, and religious, when we remember that the happiness of millions in this world and the eternal destinies of generations of our fellow-creatures are dependent upon the right observance of the Sabbath, can any man making a profession of religion remain unmoved and unconcerned ?

It is not necessary to recapitulate what we have advanced in regard to the duty of Sabbath observance on the part of Christians, but we feel constrained to indicate some methods by which the weight of Christian opinion may be brought to bear upon the subject with more effect than is now the case.

We have long thought that this and some other burning questions of public morals ought to receive far greater consideration than they do in municipal and political elections. Evils that threaten to sap the very foundations of the national weal are surely of vaster importance than those which affect but sections of the community or portions of the empire, and consequently

are deserving of special attention in the choice of men who are to frame and execute our laws. It may or may not be true that the people cannot be made moral or religious by Act of Parliament, but the laws of the country and the regulations of the governing bodies of the land have a very powerful influence in removing obstacles out of the way of moral and religious progress. There can be no doubt whatever that if the Christian sentiment of this country were united on any specific reform, it would speedily be brought about. Let all Christians at one single general election forget that they are Whigs or Tories, Conservatives or Radicals, and remember only that they are servants of Christ and responsible for the defences of Truth, and what vast and glorious changes would soon transpire! In a quiet and unobtrusive way these principles, we know, are happily being followed out, and with most encouraging results. We could instance the cases of several large towns where ambitious and misguided men have been effectually silenced in their advocacy of popular Sabbath entertainments by the united and persistent opposition of those who foresaw the terrible consequences of such ungodly agitation. Why should not the Churches everywhere set their face like flint against all similar projects? and why should not the whole force of the Christian sentiment of this land assert itself in all such discussions? Much may be done by individual fidelity, we are aware, and we are thankful to recognise that much is being thus accomplished; but the work is too stupendous, the dangers too awful, to be successfully coped with by anything short of general and concerted action. We do not ask for Pharisaical rigidity of Sabbath observance, but we do demand that myriads

of our fellow-creatures shall not be robbed of that needed alleviation of their drudgery which the benevolence of God has ordained to be their birthright, and this merely that the minority may have a few pleasures the more, or make a little extra gain, or be enabled to while away a few tedious hours which they ought to spend in contemplation of infinitely more momentous things. Can it be right that men and women, or even cattle, apart altogether from consideration of spiritual interests, should be cheated out of what happiness may light up their dreary, toilsome life, and be wasted to death prematurely for purposes which are of doubtful utility, or are even distinctly prejudicial to the well-being of our race? That brotherly love of which Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment, and which Christianity still professes to constitute the foundation of her mission and the supreme motive of her activities, forbids that any one should claim to be a Christian who views with indifference or scorn the questions that are involved in this controversy. The Sabbath law has been lifted up into an altogether higher plane than that which is occupied by mere legal enactments, and has been made an essential element of true philanthropy by the new commandment of Christ, "Love one another" (John xiii. 34).

These considerations ought to have even greater weight, if that were possible, with those who hold any position of influence in the Church, and especially with Christian pastors, who, in a sense, are the leaders of thought in matters of this kind. It would be presumptuous, and, we trust, superfluous, to do more than refer to those solemn declarations of Holy Writ concerning the responsibility of the ministry for the Church's

purity of doctrine and holiness of life which so often recur.

There is a constant temptation presented to men whose comfort and success seem so largely determined by popular sympathy and admiration to catch up with plausible cries for liberty of thought, freedom from antiquated and ascetic bonds, and so forth. But the men we are presuming to address ought to be able to look dispassionately upon all such public agitations and to discriminate between honest thought and licentious thought. It is theirs not to follow the hue and cry, but to raise their voice in the crisis, that others may be arrested and guided. In the presence of moral and spiritual danger "the watchman" must not fail to deliver his own soul by a thorough examination of the peril and by faithful warnings to those over whom he is set in the Lord. And although some, no doubt, will remain unmoved by his most solemn entreaties, yet others will be helped and saved; whereas, if any perish through false or imperfect doctrine, the teacher and the taught will be overwhelmed in the same ruin; the blind and the leaders of the blind will fall into the same ditch. "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand" (Ezek. xxxiii. 6).

Some unpopularity may be amongst the results of standing in the old paths, but the more intelligent and pious will hold up the hands of those who practise an inflexible consistency and display an unflinching heroism, while even the objector will not be wholly unimpressed.

But beyond all such minor considerations, there will be the reward of a satisfied conscience and the knowledge of God's approval and favour. What man standing in the same relationship to the Church as that which St. Paul so magnificently sustained would not covet the fearless confidence with which he appealed to the Ephesian elders: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"? (Acts xx. 26, 27).

APPENDIX.

SIR J. W. DAWSON ON THE DAYS OF CREATION.

(CHAP. II.)

I AM glad to be able to fortify the views advanced in this essay on the subject of the days of creation by the following extract from the admirable pamphlet of Sir J. W. Dawson on *The Day of Rest in Relation to the World that Now is and that which is to Come*, one of the series of "Present Day Tracts."

"It has long appeared to the writer that the proper significance of this command (the Fourth Commandment) is reached only when we bear in mind that the creative days of the first chapter of Genesis are really days of God, Divine periods—*olamim*, or ages, as they are elsewhere called (Ps. xc.)—or, which amounts to the same thing, that they are intended to represent or to indicate such ages of God's working. . . . The writer of the introduction to Genesis sees no incongruity in those early days which passed before natural days were instituted—'ineffable days,' as Augustine well calls them. He does not represent the seventh day as having an evening and morning like the others, nor does he hint that God resumed His work on the eighth day. In chapter ii. he represents the world as produced in one day, evidently using the word in an indefinite sense. Further, in the succeeding literature of the Old Testament, while we have no actual statement that

the creative days were natural days, or that the world was made in a short period, we find the term *olam* or age applied to God's periods of working; and in the 104th Psalm, which is a poetical narrative of creation, the idea conveyed is that of lapse of time without division into days. . . . God, Who is the dwelling-place of man from generation to generation, Who existed before the mountains were brought forth, with Whom a thousand years are as a watch in the night, is said to be from *olam* to *olam*, 'from everlasting to everlasting,' as the English version has it, but more properly from age to age of those long cosmic ages in which He creates and furnishes successive worlds. . . . The same thought is taken up and amplified in the New Testament. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who treats very specially of the relations of the Old Testament to the New, speaks of Christ as God's Son, 'Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds,' more literally, 'constituted the *aiōns* or ages,' . . . the successive ages of this world in which it was being gradually prepared and fitted up for man."

THE TESTIMONY OF PÈRE HYACINTHE.

(CHAP. XII.)

The following testimony of M. Loyson is of peculiar value, as coming from one practically acquainted with the evils of the Romish Sunday. It appeared in the *Daily News*, September 27, 1867:—

"Often on Sunday, passing through our great towns, whither I am called to bear the Word of God, I see the smoking pavements, the dust that rises, I hear the thousand noises of toil, and I say to myself, 'It is France that least observes the Sabbath.' They reply to me, 'Respect liberty, respect conscience.' I will say no harm of liberty, I love

it, but I do not confound it with licence. . . . No, we do not desire to impair liberty. But there is another objection—the interest of industry. Let us examine two industrial powers which are fully our equals, if they do not surpass us—England and the United States. In London, in the great city, where floods of busy men fill the streets, in the midst of the repeated and incessant sound of all the echoes of labour, there occurs every week a day which recalls to me those of my childhood. The gigantic machine which, on the eve of that day, put all in movement, stops: everywhere repose and silence; the bells alone—Protestant bells, I know, but . . . they send their sweet melodies heavenwards. It seems as if the very fogs of the Thames and of the ocean had grown lighter. Let me not be told that the Sunday rest in England is a remnant of feudality and aristocracy, soon to be swept away by the breath of Liberty. Behold in America that strong and young Anglo-Saxon race, which certainly is not of the Middle Ages, and which has in its constitution the most complete liberty. It also observes the Sunday . . . and sends us across the ocean the same answer as England—the silence of God at the blasphemies of men. No; we do not ask that the Sunday should be imposed upon the people by laws of which the application would offer more inconvenience than advantage. We ask the liberty of the Sunday, and Sunday by liberty. We only ask that the public works shall scrupulously respect the Sunday, and force the individual to blush before the State; that the princes of industry, of thought, of eloquence, shall act in concert; that they shall create fruitful currents in the public mind; and, little by little, things will change their aspect, noise will die away, work will be suspended, and God will have His day, and the people likewise.”

ENGLISH SABBATH-BREAKING IN FOREIGN
PORTS.

(CHAP. XIII.)

It is matter of common experience to those who have visited the ports of Europe to see the Lord's Day utterly set at naught in the discharging and loading of vessels on that day. In French ports I was not surprised to find this to be the case, but I had hoped that it was otherwise in German and Russian docks. It seems, however, that all the world over the character of England as a religious and Sabbath-keeping country is injured by the eager commercial spirit of the age. During a recent tour through Russia, I was painfully impressed with the serious harm that was being done to English influence by the merchants and seamen of our own land. Again and again I was made to feel deeply ashamed of my country. At St. Petersburg, Cronstadt, and Riga, the loading of vessels proceeded on Sunday just as on any other day. Even at Copenhagen, with all its advantages of Lutheran influence, there was work done which I thought could well have waited, though the Danish Sunday certainly forms a pleasing contrast to the French and Russian. During my stay at Cronstadt, a captain of one of the vessels had actually to get his clearance papers prepared and signed by the English Consul on Sunday morning, in the hope that the ship might be ready for sailing before night. The loading could not be completed, and the Consul's Sabbath was disturbed for nothing. At Riga the English Sunday was dishonoured on British ships, but the very men who had spent the day in hard toil for the English refused to work on the Monday, because it was a German holiday!

Surely commerce is not so exacting as to demand that the Sabbath should be entirely ignored. So far as I could gather, there seemed to be no desire on the part of British

shipowners that Sunday should be respected. It is true some of the English sailors resented the loss of the day's rest, but they were powerless to prevent the continuance of labour. I could not help picturing to myself the merchant at home, with all his Sabbath privileges and blessings, his quiet home, his restful hours, his peaceful worship in the sanctuary, his prayers for the conversion of the world, while these men in his pay, pursuing their arduous task for his profit, were bearing witness to the very people for whom they at home were praying, that markets and gold were of more importance to commercial England than the sanctity of "the day which the Lord hath made."

What an impressive spectacle it would be to the foreigner, what a powerful testimony to the reality of our religion and the genuineness of our sympathy for those less happily circumstanced, if on British ships at least, or at any rate on ships belonging to the Christian merchants of England, the peace and sanctity of the Sabbath were never disturbed by the noise of any craft! Would commerce suffer for this? In many cases there would not be even loss of time. I met with several instances where vessels, after being loaded by Sabbath labour, had to lie idle most of Monday morning, waiting till there was sufficient water on the bar to enable them to cross over it. And even if a tide were lost, is it too much to think that He who holds winds and waves in His hands would more than make up to the men who honour Him and keep His laws any loss they might seem likely to suffer from a brief delay? Let Englishmen do their duty in this matter, if they would have their commerce to prosper and the foreigner to respect us for our consistency and fidelity. A proper reverence for the Sabbath in the ports of the world by English sailors would do more, I verily believe, to win confidence for our Christianity than all the preaching of all our missionaries. It is charitable to suppose that shipowners are not aware of the wholesale Sabbath

desecration that goes on in foreign ports in their name and for their profit, but it is time that they were appealed to in every possible way to give serious consideration to a matter so solemn, and so vital to the spread of Christianity amongst the nations of the earth. What execrations would be poured out by the merchant on the man who should extinguish the beacon light on the deadly rocks that might lie along the course of his vessel? And yet there are Christian men at home, who are permitting the light of the Sabbath to be put out wherever their ships may chance to be, while they perhaps are singing in the sanctuary—

" Dear is the day which God hath made,
Signal of peace to earth displayed."

Can we wonder that commerce is so often stagnant for want of the blessing of the Lord, and need we be astonished at the comparatively feeble results of missionary efforts?

WESLEYAN POLITY IN REFERENCE TO THE SABBATH.

(CHAP. XV.)

(A.) The following extract is from *The Code of Laws* issued by the Conference of 1797, as containing the essentials of the Methodist Constitution:—

Q. Several members of our Societies who make conscience of Sabbath-breaking have been much distressed, barbers in particular. What can be done to relieve them?

A. Let no member of our Society employ any barber on Sunday. Let all our people who possibly can, employ only those barbers who conscientiously abstain from Sabbath-breaking.

Let none of our people make any wake or feast, neither

go to any, on the Lord's Day, but bear a public testimony against them.

A preacher ought not to wear powder in his hair, or artificial curls.

No person ought to continue a member of our Society who learns the military exercise, as a volunteer, on the Lord's Day; nor any one who, after having been warned of the evil, will attend in order to see them exercise on that day.

(B.) Extract from the Liverpool Minutes of 1820. Appointed to be read at every Annual District Meeting, and to be made "the subject of serious conversation among the brethren":—

"Let us earnestly exhort our Societies to make the best and most religious use of the rest and leisure of the Lord's Day. Let us admonish any individuals who shall be found to neglect our public worship, under pretence of visiting the sick, or other similar engagements. Let us show to our people the evil of *wasting* those portions of the Sabbath which are not spent in public worship, in visits, or in receiving company, to the neglect of private prayer, of the perusal of the Scriptures, and of family duties, and often to the serious spiritual injury of servants, who are thus improperly employed, and deprived of the public means of grace. Let us set an example in this matter, by refusing, for ourselves and for our families, to spend in visits, when there is no call of duty or necessity, the sacred hours of the Holy Sabbath. And let us never allow the Lord's Day to be *secularised* by meetings of mere *business*, when such business refers only to the *temporal affairs* of the Church of God."

The following quotations from living Wesleyan divines may be fitly added to those already given.

Dr. Pope, in a pamphlet published a few years ago, wrote :—

“ There may be differences of opinion as to the degree in which legislation ought to be called in for this purpose. Upon that question it is not expedient to enter ; though it is the deep conviction of most of us that our Christian legislation is set for the defence of the Christian faith and its morals, and, as far as liberty of conscience will allow, to secure the observance of the Ten Commandments. It cannot compel the reverent employment of the day of rest ; but it can protect it from desecration—open, shameless, and avowed. It cannot force the streams of population into the churches ; but it may help to keep them from places avowedly unfriendly to religion. All would agree that the State is bound, and every corporate body in it is bound, to remove every temptation from the masses to dishonour the day dedicated to public worship. We cannot fulfil our trust, and spread our common Christianity, without doing all that in us lies to bring the people into those more public ordinances which are the only door that leads into the enjoyment of the more private privileges of religion.”

The following extract is from the Rev. William Arthur's well-known pamphlet *The People's Day*, addressed to Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby) against his advocacy of a French Sunday :—

“ Where the Sabbath is used for its own ends, rest promotes religion. Where to these ends the foreign one of amusement is added, instead of a day of rest and religion, it is a day of drudgery, with an evening of dissipation. The barrier between a day of rest and religion, and one of drudgery and dissipation, is only the sacredness of the day. Man's rights rest upon God's rights ; the repose of the Sunday on the religion of the Sabbath. Destroy that in

England, then the physical toil and the moral pest of the French Sunday will at once invade the nation. From the rough hodman to the accomplished editor, **THE SACREDNESS OF THE DAY IS THE LABOURER'S ONLY SHIELD.**"

The Rev. Dr. Rigg in an essay contributed to the *Sunday Magazine* for 1865 makes the following observations in regard especially to the original and patriarchal Sabbath :—

"Nothing, then, appears more certain than that there was a body of truth in regard to God in the possession of men anterior to, and apart from, those discoveries of His character and purposes which are contained in the Scriptures. Abraham was *not*, up to the time of his call, utterly destitute of all knowledge of the Supreme Being as Creator and Moral Governor. Melchisedek, without any light from such sources as are represented in the line of Scripture revelations, was yet 'the priest of the Most High God.' If, indeed, the Scripture patriarchs had known no more of the nature and will of God than was made known to them by explicit revelation, their knowledge would indeed have been pitifully scanty, and their souls sadly dark. We have no reason to suppose that Abraham possessed any *documentary* knowledge of such truths in regard to the creation of the world and the early history of mankind as are contained in the opening chapters of Genesis. And even though he had possessed such documentary knowledge, nothing can be more clear or certain than that the Book of Genesis, and thereafter all Scripture, presumed, on the part of those for whom it was written, a large elementary knowledge of theological truth. While careful to vindicate for God the supreme and sole glory of the Creator, it still supposes its readers to be familiar with the idea of God; it makes no attempt to set forth any system of theological doctrine, or

any specific method of worship; and as to the future world—its lights and shadows, its rewards and punishments, or even its very existence—it is, except by implication, almost altogether silent. Except by implication, we say, for we admit the implication, and that to a candid mind it is clear and conclusive. But on this account it is but the more noteworthy, that in the way of direct description or deliberate statement, or any thing more than a slight and occasional reference, there is so little said about the unseen and eternal world. Does not this afford the most cogent proof that Scripture must be received, not as the original or the only revelation of Divine truth to man, but as a special revelation? It was a revelation upon a revelation,—a written revelation of grace, presuming an elementary theological revelation. Taking for granted a knowledge, on the part of its recipients, of certain great and fundamental truths, it further discloses the Divine counsels respecting one grand matter of universal and paramount concernment: it is the revelation of salvation for a fallen race. From first to last this is its character. This will be found to give unity to its plan, coherence to its parts. This furnishes the reason alike of its direct and supernatural revelations, and of its divinely preserved history. This binds history, prophecy, psalm, and doctrine together in perfect harmony.

“The primeval unwritten revelation, or the body of traditional truth which formed the substance of the true and pure patriarchal theology, included certainly the following ideas: the Divine government of the world, shown in particular, from time to time, by providential interpositions; the creation of man by God in His own image, and in a condition of purity and happiness; the doctrine of a future life, in which righteousness would be rewarded and wickedness be punished. It included also the doctrine of the fall, and that of propitiation by sacrifice. All these doctrines may be traced in the earliest poems and traditions of all

great races, whether Oriental or Western ; they are familiar to us, especially, in the poetry of Greece and Rome ; they may also be recognised very often in the fragmentary traditions of broken tribes and barbarous races. And it is only by recognising the fact, that, in their purest form, and as fundamental to the special Hebrew revelation, they are always presupposed by the Scripture, that we can be saved from many difficulties and perplexities in which Biblical students have, from failing to observe this fact, been involved.

“ These ideas form, in truth, the background from which all the special discoveries of the Bible stand forth in their bright distinctness. Let this be remembered, and it will no longer be a difficulty that the Old Testament Scriptures contain no positive or explicit revelation of a future state. The belief in a future state was throughout presupposed, and the doctrines of punishment and reward as associated with it. The object of the revelation was not primarily to teach a theology ; it was to reveal to fallen man the hope of a Saviour. The Divine messages and promises—the direct and special Divine revelation—were, of necessity, brief, peremptory, separated by various intervals, seemingly discontinuous. It was ‘at sundry times and in divers manners’ that the Most High disclosed His purposes. The patriarchs and prophets by the living voice applied the Word of revelation, and enforced the grand doctrines of morality, of repentance, of a future life. Meanwhile the great and special revelation, as delivered to each successive recipient, seldom regarded so individual a matter as his own salvation, nor even so limited a matter as the salvation of the men of that generation ; it respected the restoration of the race, as such ; it looked forward to the reconciliation by one grand transaction of the whole family of man.

“ Besides the great ideas already mentioned, a careful study of the Scriptures seems to show that the institution of

the Sabbath, and the special blessing attached to its observance, was a living part of the patriarchal theology, as inherited by Abraham and his descendants, while notices—slight indeed, but very distinct and suggestive—found in the poems of Homer and Hesiod, appear to render it all but certain that the sanctity of the seventh day had also become a part of the general ethnic tradition, although it faded away comparatively early.”

THE END.