

THE

SABBATH;

ITS

Claims, its Blessings & its Lessons,

WITH

FREE CRITICISMS ON THE OPINIONS OF SOME OF

THE

FATHERS, THE REFORMERS, AND THE MODERNS ON

THE LORD'S DAY,

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Preface.

The writer of this tract commits it to the reader, and prays for a blessing on it. In dealing with the sayings of men, he must beg it to be understood that his motto is, "measures not men." If any thing harsh, unfair, or unduly severe is found, he is sorry for it. He would rather have met the objections without naming objectors; but when the sentiments are abroad, it is well to know who utters them. That responsibility may rest on the proper shoulders, he has reluctantly appended his own name to the paper. If it leads any to see Christ as the true rest, or leads any Christian to enjoy more fully the Lord's day, his work is rewarded.

100 Wynn, St., Birmingham, May 5th, 1856.

P. G. A.



THE SABBATH.

THE great question of the day may be said to be settled so far as parliament goes; but as it is coming up in one shape or another all over the country, and moreover as it is an important question in itself and full of instructive truth it may be well to discover its scriptural bearing. Let us proceed with its relation to creation. In Gen. ii. 1—3, we read, "Thus the heavens and the earth were made and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had made; and he rested 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 to make." (See marg.) Here we observe 1st, God's own *example*. He rested, not because of tire, for "He fainteth not, neither is weary," but from intention. Not from an employment unlawful in itself, but from a work which was pronounced by his own lips as it appeared to his own eye "very good." 2nd, God blesses the day on which he rested. Days can only be blessed or cursed from the condition of those who see them. One may "curse his day," or say, "Woe worth the day," because of the sorrow it brings, whilst another may have reason to bless the day for the advantages gained, associations formed, deliverances wrought, or work done. Thus God blest the seventh day. He had accomplished a most glorious work. It was associated with prospects of great blessedness to his creatures and he pronounces it blessed. There is a blessing in it and a blessing for it. 3rd, God sanctifies it. To sanctify means to hallow, to make sacred, to set apart for a special use. As all God's time is holy time, filled up with works of holiness—one eternal sabbath of sacred operations—every day may be said to be alike to him. If it is an objection to a Christian's observing one day that his whole life is holy, how much more would this objection apply to God. For him therefore to consecrate a day, shews the high object in view and obviates the objection as applied to a Christian. The holiest and highest of beings did not think it wrong or beneath him to sanctify the Sabbath day;—why should one of his creatures? 4th. God's intention. As redemption was before him, for he created all things by

Christ Jesus to the intent that he might make known by **the** Church his manifold wisdom. Ep. iii 10. So in his resting, blessing, and sanctifying the Sabbath day, some intention must have been in his mind. What that was we must learn from his word.

We are told the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. Mark iii. 34. Here we learn the design of the institute. He who who had labored for six days to prepare a place suitable for man's residence and sustenance, now considers his comfort in his own rest. It is man's advantage that is seen in the seventh day's rest as in the six days' labor. It was for man—his rest, his ease, his comfort from his toil, that God rests. God presents man with his own example that he might neither be ashamed nor afraid to rest one whole day. If the Almighty rested, if he breathed and was refreshed, whose arm is never shortened, to whom nothing is too hard, surely his feeble creature may rest and be refreshed. The seventh day is a part of creation and as much man's as any day of the week. He who does not use the day according to the divine institution loses blessing in the same way as if he shut his eye from the sun, or refused to breathe the pure air of heaven. The one is as much for man as the other.

Passing from the institution and glorious example to its human observance, we have to remark that little notice is given of it during the days of the patriarchs. Yet there are some facts worthy of attention.

1. "Cain and Abel in process of time brought an offering." (Gen iv. 3, "at the end of days.") The expression is remarkable and occurs many times, and is used for the end of certain days mentioned. It means always the end of a definite time,—"at the end of forty years," "forty days," "the time of the end," &c., never a process or a progressive period, but when a series ends and a new one begins. Our translators seem to have taken it for when they came of age. But it would appear to refer to the end of six days, according to the divine appointment. Man in innocence would not need to be told to remember the sabbath day, and man under sin but not under law, as from Adam to Moses, could not be told it; he must therefore be guided by what tradition said. The example of the father would rule the son.

2. That they had the idea of dividing time by seven days is plain from Noah, (Gen. viii.) who sent out his dove every seventh day. It is remarkable that he should thus divide the

time into seven days if he had no precedent. The very fact that he thus divided time indicates strongly that it was by divine guidance. Else why not the eighth or ninth, or why not six or some such number one time and ten or twelve next? I feel Noah's case to be very unaccountable except on the ground of a patriarchal sabbath. Without the Divine institution at creation it is interesting; but coming after, it is a strong confirmation.

3. We pass on to the history of Jacob and Laban. Here we find the same division of time as in the days of Noah. Gen. xxix. 27, 28. "Fulfil her week and we will give thee this also. So Jacob fulfilled her week." That is the seven days of feasting at the marriage, as we learn from Judges xiv. 12. These three circumstances of Cain, Noah, and Laban furnish a moral certainty that there was a patriarchal sabbath; that the Divine example and Divine blessing were understood to influence mankind. We have no further Scripture notice of the hebdomadal division of time till Moses; but in looking at the history of the nations of the Gentiles who could not have received their rites from Moses, there is striking proof that their traditions led them to adopt the same division. Our Anglo-saxon forefathers had their seven-day divisions, to which we are still indebted for our names of the days of the week. The North American Indians, the Central Americans, the Hindoos and Chinese all observed the same division. To come to more civilized nations, the early Greeks, Hesiod, Homer, Callimachus, say the "seventh day is holy." Theophilus of Antioch, calls it the day that all mankind celebrate. Porphyry says,—“The Phoeniceans consecrated one day in seven as holy.” Linus,—“The day is observed among saints or holy people.” Lucian, a Roman, says,—“The seventh day is given to school boys as a holiday.” Eusebius, a Christian,—“Almost all the philosophers and poets acknowledge the seventh day as holy.” Josephus,—“No city of Greeks or Barbarians can be found which does not observe a seventh day's rest from labor.” Clemens, of Alexandria,—“Greeks as well as Hebrews observe a seventh day as holy.” Philo,—“The seventh day is a festival to every nation.” Tibullus,—“The seventh day which is kept holy by the Jews is also a festival to the Roman women.”

The nature of the argument drawn from these facts is this, that, as the account of the ark of Noah is found in every nation under heaven, which could not as nations have influenced each other, forms a strong proof that they all had it from

Noah,—so the fact, that a seven-day division of time obtains among all nations, shews the same thing. As we know he divided his time into seven days, no doubt deriving it from Adam, the descendants of Noah followed his example in a similar division. I have seen a note of the different days of the week celebrated by different nations: Monday, Greece; Tuesday, Persia; Wednesday, Babylon; Thursday, Egypt; Friday, by Turks; Saturday, by Jews; and Sunday by Christians; thus every day in the week is occupied by some class. They may differ as to the day, but they all preserve the original, God-made division. It is impossible this could be arbitrary. Day and night, moons and seasons and revolutions of the sun are natural, distinguishable divisions, patent to all, but whence this seventh day division, if not from the source of all wisdom, who made the sabbath for man?

4. We now come to the time of Moses when it was again Divinely observed and commanded. In Ex. xvi., the first intimation of it to Israel is in God's own example. He is to rain the manna twice as much on the sixth day and rest on the seventh. If we are commanded to walk in love it is as followers of God. If we are to observe the sabbath, we have the same example. Now what strikes one here is, that this takes Moses by no surprise. In the wilderness by the burning bush every new command meets with new objection or question, but here the most extraordinary statement that is to revolutionize the world and lay idle the whole of the nation for a seventh part of their time, is received without the least disturbance of the mind of Moses. This difficulty is increased immensely when applied to the elders, and still more as it spreads through the camp. The elders indeed, who, of course, had in Egypt been much accustomed, under the hard task masters to see little difference between one day and another, although, as we have seen, time was divided into seven-day portions by all nations and some difference observed on the seventh, the elders, we say, would not think it wrong, even on a consecrated, day to gather what God so freely bestowed; and being ignorant that to-morrow there would be none, therefore complained to Moses of the covetousness of the people, who, because they found more than their daily need required, were greedily securing more, but they make no question about the new appointment of a seventh day. The plain inference then is, that they were acquainted with the Divine arrangement of a seventh day, though they

were ignorant of the manner in which it was to be observed. As the sabbath now became a sign between God and Israel as a perpetual token of his dealing with them ; as it was written twice with his own finger, and spoken by his own mouth ; as it was locked up in the ark under the Shekinah (beautiful type of the heart of Jesus) among the very words that secured his own worship, forbade graven images, and maintained the reverence and truthfulness due to his name, along with the duties that bind society together : the question naturally arises,—“Why was it not thus formally and solemnly enjoined before ?” My dear enquirer the answer is at hand. When God made man, he intended him to enjoy the creation which he had prepared for him. The ground was to be drest and kept, thus involving a certain amount of healthful labor. The sabbath was also given as a day wherein he might rest even from that labor and enjoy God, in the contemplation of his works and in shewing forth his praise. But man sinned. Perhaps it was the very first day’s leisure that Satan used to ensnare the happy, holy man ; for leisure is a terrible instrument under the power of an ungodly mind. Man had now forfeited all claim to creation’s rest, either in an easy yield of its fruits, or a refreshment on its sabbath. God drives him out, and leaves him without any positive expression of his mind till the days of Moses. Now, however, he is going to try man again, and place him, as man, in creation’s blessings and responsibilities, to see what was in man, or rather to shew to man himself what he really was. It is true he was known individually by a list of devout men who “called on the name of the Lord.” He had executed judgment in the flood and on Sodom. He had called out in blessing Abraham to himself, as one in whose seed the trial should be made ; but as yet he had made no room for the people nor given them any right to the land. He could not therefore give the sabbath, not even to Abraham, because he had given him no place to celebrate it, not even a foot of land. And the sabbath implies the perfect title to, and enjoyment of the blessing, not as my purchase but as God’s own precious gift. Not as something I am going to seek, as going to gather manna, but something I already possess and enjoy. Precious type of what we have in Jesus, in whom we are blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and therefore rest in him. The soul that knows Jesus has his manna already gathered and prepared, and is now feasting thereon. This not only gives us the fact that the sabbath is not formally spoken

of from Adam to Moses but gives the reason for it. What rest could have been for man who had not ceased from his own works or had not entered on God's rest. But for forty years God was training Israel by his own example to rest on the sabbath day. God cannot rest when his people are in bondage. There is no mention of a sabbath in Babylon. Not because Israel did not keep one, but because God could not rest while Israel was in captivity. Neither can that man have a sabbath that is in the bondage of sin or his own works and does not know God's rest in Christ. The day may return, its joyous luminary may rise but it is only the soul that has peace in the sprinkled blood that responds to God's joy in the new creation.

The sabbath, in fact, was never enjoyed by Israel themselves. How could God rest in men still in the flesh and under the law? Hence their priests had daily to break the sabbath, (type of an unfinished work). The sacrifice they offered was not a perfect sacrifice;—the blood they sprinkled was not precious blood;—the cleansing it gave was not a purging of the conscience; the very priesthood under which the law was given was a transitory thing where the priest could not continue by reason of death. They could not enter on God's new creation, and God himself had to work. John v. 17. But now that Christ has come,—that the new creation has been completed, for the sabbath is a creation's day, not a redemption-day, though of course we must be redeemed from the old creation ere we enjoy it,—we that believe do enter into rest and stand in a new creation—created anew. That it was creation's rest he was giving them and not a new one is plain from the reason he always annexes to his command, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it."* He never says for six days did the Lord give you manna and rested the seventh day, shewing plainly that the sabbath is creation's rest, that Israel enjoyed it as being brought into creation's rest. Why does he go always back to creation for authority if it was merely Jewish? The sabbatical year, the jubilee, even the slain lamb and circumcision itself, for all of these God never goes back to creation for their authority,—only for one thing, the *day* of rest. Surely there is meaning in this. The addition in Deut. v. shews that it was the relief from work of the toil-worn laborer that God considered. In Egypt Israel was subject to the caprice, the avarice and

* Note A, page 24.

pleasure-taking of their taskmasters. They could not call a sabbath their own; therefore God in merciful consideration of their hard bondage brought them out and gave them the enjoyment of the sabbath, which they were to remember for the sake of those who would still be servants. "That thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou." It would be base ingratitude as well as abhorrent selfishness for them to demand service when God's outstretched arm had given them rest.

5. Isaiah lvi. shews the universal creation character of the sabbath. The house of God is to become the house of prayer for all people. The son of the stranger who might think himself excluded by his birth, and the eunuch by his condition, are both invited to taste its joys: and the test applied, the first characteristic of admission is, perceiving the rest of God, keeping the sabbath from polluting it. This shews that the sabbath is for man, as man, just as the house of prayer is opened for all people. Keeping the sabbath from polluting it, is associated with keeping judgment and doing justice. Don't suppose I am going to tell you that by your keeping the sabbath you will be accepted of God. If I should, you could not keep it. I only want you to see that the blessings of the sabbath are not intended by God for Jews only.

There is one objection to the view here given, which as it comes from a higher class of mind and spirituality than the common, I would notice before I come to the usual objections. It is thus stated, "That it would be absurd to say that the sabbath was given for every body if it was given to Israel as a mark of their separation from the rest of the world."

It is a most precious truth that Israel in their calling, portion, hopes, blessings and discipline, were types of higher glories in the Church. The blood of redemption on their door posts pointed to a richer blood. The communion of the roasted lamb to a higher and more intimate communion with the Father of the heavenly family; that their unleavened bread pointed to the unpuffed, substantial, satisfying food, which is for his saints: that their deliverance through the sea, shadowed forth a still greater deliverance from sin: that the manna, that food of the mighty, was type of the true bread that came down from heaven; and their remaining in their tents on the sabbath to feed on this manna, shews the rest the soul enjoys that has tasted this heavenly bread. Much more blessed instruction is in their sacrifices, their priesthood, their tabernacle, &c., but let this suffice. Let it

be remembered that while all these were types of a heavenly people, they were but facts to an earthly race. True they were redeemed, they were sanctified to God, and brought out of Egypt to God's land of blessing. Still they were but "Israel after the flesh." They were still a part of the old creation, not heirs of the new. They were not redeemed by precious blood and therefore were still on old creation ground. Their worship, their sanctuary were worldly, their calling earthly, their portion here. They were types of a higher and more glorious people, still in themselves, they were subject to carnal ordinances. This shews us that it was God's purpose to try man, as man under law and in the midst of earthly blessing, unassisted by his Spirit, (for He was not yet given ostensibly, though doubtless the power of life in those who had it) to see whether there was any good thing in the flesh, that when he should bring the First Begotten into the world, there might be seen no way but faith for redemption. The fact therefore that he called himself their God because he had brought them out of Egypt, did not make him cease to be the Most High over all the earth: that he gave them special blessings in their land and made it the glory of all lands, did not restrain his hand from giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons to others. Nor that the rest he gave in one special day and special forms of observance, said that no nation had such division of time or knew any thing of such a blessing. Rather, was it not the sanctifying of the day from the profanation of the gods of the nations and their rude sports, that shewed the people to be his. The common bread that is used on our tables every day, may, without the consecration of a priest, become to me a memorial of the body of my dying Lord. And the wine that is flowing around, and which others are drinking to their damnation, may become to me the assured pledge of God's own precious love, that my iniquity is taken away and my sin purged. So with the water of baptism. Hundreds may be bathing around me for their own sport: I am buried there by baptism into his death, who loved me and gave himself for me. Thus the Lord's day to me becomes the remembrancer of blessing which I partake of in a risen Jesus, while to others it is only a day of amusement and carnal rest. So the sabbath to the Jew was a mark of God's blessing in creation, at the head of which, for the time, God had placed him.

Having thus reviewed the sabbath in its creation, world-wide character and aspect—that it has claims on every man's

conscience, as an appointment of God for Gentile as well as Jew, that its claims have been more or less felt and acknowledged in some form or another, by all men; but that it was only when God gave a people a full title to the earth that it could be formally instituted, that still that institution connects itself, not with the investiture of the blessing, but with creation to which it belonged. We come now to consider the question, "Why change the day?"

In order to answer this question let me carry your minds, would to God I could carry your hearts and hopes, to other climes and other times, not of the past but of the future. There is a time coming when God is to create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. The first has been spoiled by sin, and God has not had an hour's rest in it. Man has spoiled all. Adam first and Israel after spoiled the rest of God. As the Saviour says, My Father worketh hitherto and I work. As soon as God rests in creation he has to begin to work in grace, to repair as it were what man had destroyed. But God is not always thus to repair, he is to "create all things new. Come with me to this new scene far beyond the rage of battle, and terror of bloodshed—those walks of vice and haunts of wretchedness. The air here is pure, the scene is peaceful. From the lowly dwelling you hear the sound of praise. The laborer comes forth not with sword or spear but with pruninghook and share. The curse has been removed and the earth yields in handfuls easily. The sun which gives life to all this righteous scene has arisen. Yonder in a meadow are a wolf and a lamb at play, there a leopard gamboling with a kid, a sleek calf dancing with a young lion, which the gentle hand of a little child takes by the beard and leads away. The snake plays its rattle to amuse the child, and nothing hurts or frightens throughout the holy place. So transporting is the scene that the past is all forgotten or remembered as a dream, for thus saith the Lord, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind."—Is. lxv. 17. The former troubles are forgotten because they are hid from our eyes. There the sun never goes down, the moon never withdraws her shining, for the light of the moon is as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold as the light of seven days. New modes of reckoning time, new days of observance are kept, but there is one day above all others sacred to them, it is the day on which the foundation stone of this new creation

was laid—the day when

Its glorious Sun, first cast his beams,
Across the gloom profound.

The day on which its full provision was opened, and its refreshing air fanned the breeze with spiritual life. Hence they say, "This is the day God made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."—Ps. cxviii. 24. And what authority have they for observing this day above other days? The very same that in the old creation ruled the seventh day: The Divine example and the Divine blessing. The new creation was thus established. The Lord Jesus had finished the work given him to do. He had brought in an everlasting righteousness; he had made an end of sin, and of law, and of the old creation, so far as our relation with God is concerned, and all that are in him are a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17. This new sabbath is our rest in Jesus. We have now ceased from our own works as God did from his. Created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works; not by our own works, lest we should boast; for we are his workmanship of the new creation. The high-toned praise of the new born soul is the song of the new creation of which he forms a part. On this new creation day, this first day of the week, when the old creation sabbath had closed, the Lord of life arose. He appeared to the women and to the disciples. He assembled with them, and breathed peace into their troubled minds. Again on the first day he met Thomas and assured him of his Lord and his God. On the same day he assured the disciples of his divine blessing, by filling their net and preparing their meal; and gave Peter fresh commission to feed the flock, invited him to follow him, predicted what death he should die, and promised his own return, John xxi. But the bright scene of the descent of the Holy Ghost, is still further witness of the divine blessing on this day. It was on this day—this eighth of the feast and first day of the week—that the Spirit was promised, (John vii. 37, with Leviticus xxiii. 36) and it was on this day he was given. The eighth day was a closing day of many feasts, and pointed onward to Jesus as the true feast, for the ransomed of the Lord. And now the seven sabbath's are complete. It may be that it was but the first day before that he was parted from them. For if we except the day he arose and the day he ascended and add them to the forty days, (Acts i. 3) it would just make the six weeks complete, and on the same first day of the seven complete weeks the blessed Spirit descends, as the witness to their souls that Jesus was glorified,

Here divine example was confirmed by divine blessing, and the disciples ever after designate it "The Lord's day," (Rev. i. 10.) Not the "day of the Lord" spoken of in the prophets, as a day of wrath and of fierce anger to his enemies, but the gracious day when above all other days he blest the church, consolidated "the body of the faithful," and on which he has, more than any other "added to the church those that should be saved."

Here are two days for you then, the sabbath of the old creation and the Lord's day of the new. Are you still under Mount Sinai, the blackness and darkness and tempest, where Moses himself says; I exceedingly fear and quake—type of all who put themselves under his law? Are you still seeking a righteousness by the works of the law? Are you not satisfied with Israel's failure, when the very land God gave them spued them out? If so, let me assure you God cannot rest on your sabbath. God can only rest in grace through Christ Jesus. O, do not pollute God's holy sabbath, by bringing your own works before him. This shews us what the gospel is, and what it gives. It gives rest in Jesus. You may be at home seriously leaving off work and engaging in doing good, and yet be polluting God's sabbath. If you have not peace with God, if your soul does not see in Jesus God's new creation, then you have not entered on his rest, nor yet your own. Resting *in* your works is a very different thing from resting *from* them. The sabbath was a day of rest. The souls that are only seeking Jesus, like those who sought the manna, or gathered sticks, are not sabbath keepers. If you are only *seeking* peace, if you are only *trying to find it*, if you are only *praying for it*, you are yet outside the rest of God. It is God's sign that he has redeemed us when we enter into his rest. But even this view shews that the sabbath was not made for the Jew only, but for the son of the stranger and the eunuch, and for all people. It is God's token that he has redeemed thee. But is not God willing to put it as a frontlet between the eyes, and as a sign upon the hand of others, than those who are already marked by this peace through the blood of the cross? God could no more give a man any other commandment than he could the sabbath. For what would it be but law and death till he saw it all met and borne away in the death of Jesus. Hence Moses could not bring in the tables while the calf stood there. It would have been the annihilation of the camp. And the second time, he lays them up in the ark, type of the law not being given to us, but

deposited in the heart of Jesus, who alone could keep it. Well he has kept it. He has both kept its precepts and borne its punishment; and now all who receive him enter into his rest. Let me press on you that you cannot keep the sabbath till you come to Christ. The common way of representing the keeping of the sabbath is, for a working man to rise devoutly after six days labor, read and pray, gather his family round him and go to church, listen to a sermon, join in the worship, and seek the salvation of his soul. On retiring, spend the rest of the day as best suits his taste or health, and either walk the fields or remain to join in other services and exercises of the sabbath. It may be he will visit the sick or help in a Sunday school. Now, to the Christian spending his time thus, to one who knows the Lord, I say nothing. He has the word,—let him follow it. And to the unconverted, I don't say one word against a man conducting himself thus. Far be it from me to say one word that would lead him to give up his present mode of spending the day, for one more careless and pleasure taking. But I must say that the mode described, is not the holy resting in God's love in the assurance of the blood of Jesus having put away sin. It is nothing better than going to seek manna, while God's rest supposes that we have got enough for the day. I want you to feel that for you to please God in this way is utterly hopeless. That it is as easy to lay the dust that dances in the sunbeam, as to think that these things will cleanse your hearts. I want you where you now sit, and with all your sins about you, as you now are, to look away from yourself to him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and say that's the one who kept the sabbath for me, who bore all my guilt and gives me all his righteousness.

Having thus seen the divine example and blessing of observing the first day,—God in the person of his Son giving the example, and in the person of the Holy Ghost the blessing,—we have now to turn to the New Testament to observe the light in which the first Christians viewed it. Three passages set this before us. Acts xx. 7,—“On the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” This passage teaches that the first Christians used the day for meeting to break bread, to hear instructive discourse, to enjoy the fellowship of each other, and by 1 Cor. xvi. 2, to make collections for charitable purposes. By these passages it is clear that they adopted the Lord's practice as their authority, and took the first for

the seventh day. A simple mind would surely have no difficulty in seeing that this was a regularly understood day of observance. In the last mention of the day we have still more proof that it was a general practice, for when writing to the churches in Asia, far away from Jews and Jewish things, we find, "the Lord's day" as well known among them as their own locality, Rev. i. 10. This is the last day the Spirit reveals any thing to the church. He descends and he ascends, as to revelation, on the first day of the week.

In reviewing we see that Christians would very much reverse the order of the Spirit of God, if they kept the seventh day; reverse the order of type, of divine example and of divine blessing. They would choose the most unsuitable day of the week for their joy; for it was the day, and the only day Jesus lay in the grave. They would set the old creation above the new, contrary to prophecy, Isaiah lxxv. 17. They would shew they were still under law. By keeping the first day they secure all that was proposed by the first sabbath—the contemplation of God in the works of creation, and still more honor him in the work of redemption. Accordingly the first Christians, in imitation of the Lord's example, and through intimation of his blessing, were careful observers of this day, and from them the church through all ages has been the same.

IGNATIUS, a companion of the apostles, says, "Let us not sabbatize but let us keep the Lord's day on which our life arose."

JUSTIN MARTYR, "On the day called Sunday is an assembly of all who live in the city and country, and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, for it is the day on which the creation of the world began, and that Christ rose from the dead." It was connected with creation in his mind.

IRENEUS.—"On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keeps the sabbath, meditating in the law, and rejoicing in the works of God."

DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH, writing to the Romans says, "To day we celebrate the Lord's day when we read your epistle to us."

TERTULLIAN, speaks of the Lord's day as a day of solemnity.

PETAVIUS.—"But one Lord's day was observed in the earliest times of the church."

LUTHER.—Keep the sabbath holy for its use both to body and soul.

CALVIN.—The Jewish holiday was abolished, and as a thing necessary to retain decency, order, and peace in the church, another was appointed for that purpose. As to its being a church movement, if by this is meant the first Christians guided by the Holy Ghost and the apostles, I agree; but if it means the church as an earthly body, I do not. For some of her great men have opposed it, as great men have opposed most of what a gracious God has given for blessing to this sad world and his sorrowing church. Again her authority has been sometimes used against it. Archbishop Cranmer charged his clergy to instruct their flocks; that, "it would be sin against God for them to observe the day in harvest;" and if in harvest why not in seed time?

so deeply engraven is the consecration of the day, on the Christian mind, and on all over whom that mind has influence. As the children of Israel were always pointed back to the deliverance from Egypt, as the "day much to be remembered," so the Christian looks back to the cross and the day on which the cross took its full effect in the resurrection of his blessed Lord, and hails it as the day of his own resurrection, Eph. i. 19, 20, with ii. 6. The church as an earthly corporation has only adopted it because she saw her opposition useless, or that it would forward her corrupt ends to enforce it.

MELANCTHON.—Sunday, even from the time of the apostles, has been consecrated by assemblies and by a sacred rest.

We need not carry the quotations farther down. It is remarkable that of all the days presented to the church, and there have been many, Friday every week in the year by the Papacy, the Birth day, the Conception, the Annunciation, Fasts and Feasts, all have failed to secure universality but this. The conclusion is irresistible. The Lord's day comes to the conscience as from God, as no other day ever does or ever can.

Yet objection has been taken to this. Men have endeavored to weaken the claim of this blessed day by saying it was a man-appointed day. Some contending against Jews, others against formalists have expressed themselves with a latitude that I feel sure they would regret if they saw the use those who would desecrate the day have made of it. The most determined opponent of the sanctification of the Lord's day in our own town is Mr. Dawson. I say its *sanctification*; for he wishes to observe it as a quiet, pleasure-taking day, but fights against a *holy resting*. As he has collected what the great authorities of the Church say on the subject, we shall examine his authorities as found in his reported discourses. His own objections are worth little, because he is not a careful reader of Scripture. Two instances will suffice to shew this. He does not think Adam had to work before he sinned. But had he not to dress and keep his garden? Thus the sabbath would be a rest and refreshment to him even in innocence, how much more with his disheartened spirit, his weakened body and the sterile earth. But this mistake alters the whole question. Another is Rev. i. 10. He says the word used there is the word rendered Jehovah in other parts of Scripture. I cannot but think that there was a purpose in this mistake. He evidently felt that if this was to refer to the Lord Jesus, his contention against a primitive observance of the Lord's day was hopeless. Now though it had been the word Jehovah this would not have made it less applicable to Jesus, whose name is a combination of Jehovah and Saviour. But the word is not the word used for Jehovah. He might have as well said it was the word applied to Paul and Silas by the Philipian jailor, and therefore it was St. Paul's or St. Silas' day. The word Lord is an adjective and is only twice used in this form, 1 Cor. xi. 20, being the other instance. "The Lord's Supper" which might, on this ground, be called the Father's Supper. One would wonder that a M. A. could make such a blunder and shock us by such an untruth. It is not, however, the expression itself alone, blessed title to that "pearl of days" though it be, that decides the matter. It is the fact that a day known by such a title was

as current among the saints at Ephesus, Smyrna, &c., at that time, as it is in Birmingham to-day, and the perpetuation of the expression by Ignatius, Irenæus, Dionysius, and the church ever since, as we have seen, gives us its true and universally received meaning.*

The first great authority I shall introduce to you is JOHN MILTON. A man that some people feel bigger when they get their hand in his arm, of course, meaning in their own conceit. I shall give you one specimen of Milton's reasoning by which you may judge of the rest. He says, "The inference drawn from 1 Cor. xvi. 2, is equally unsatisfactory: for what the Apostle was enjoining was not the celebration of the Lord's day, but that on the first day of the week (if this be the true interpretation of *kata mian sabbaton, per unam sabbathorum*) each should lay by him (that is at home) for the relief of the poor. No mention being made of any public assembly or of any collection at such an assembly, on that day. He was perhaps led to select the first day of the week from the idea that our alms ought to be set aside as a kind of first fruits to God previous to satisfying other demands, or perhaps it was most convenient for the arrangement of the family accounts." What shall we say to comments like these? Here is a great man, whose name can never be mentioned but with respect. Great in his position in the State;—great by the very State that gave him position; great as a poet, great as an independent thinker; a man whom it would appear to some to be more honor blindly to follow than intelligently to oppose; yet such is the position into which truth forces us. How sad it is to see a gifted mind led into such perversion of all truth and fact and history, to carry out a favorite dogma! We can only excuse him by remembering the circumstances under which he wrote, the times in which he lived. That formality had overspread the church; that religious forms and observance of days; a hireling, and consequently a corrupt ministry, had substituted rite for faith; and were burying life—true, real life in Christ, under the encumbrances of a restoration of Romish Paganism. The religious ordinance was more looked to than the truth it contained, and the mere attention to the day took the place of him who rose on it. Nevertheless that should not lead a faithful interpreter of Scripture to lay on it what it will not bear. Let us review the sentence quoted. "The Apostle was not enjoining the observance of the Lord's day." No, he did not need to do that;—we have seen the first Christians did that already. All he had to do was to take advantage of that observance for another purpose. Again, he questions the interpretation of the expression *kata mian sabbaton* and would hereby throw doubt on our mind as to the day on which the Lord arose from the dead, for the same expression is used Mark xvi. 2. Next he says the "laying by" meant at home. But this would have destroyed the very reason for which it was enjoined, viz., that there might be no gatherings when Paul came. If there was a public treasury where each one "every first day of the week" laid in as the Lord prospered him, its contents could be presented at once when the Apostle came; but if each one laid by *at home* his offering, there *must have been* gatherings when the Apostle came, and the walls of Corinth would be placarded with bills announcing his appearance and special collections. But once more, he says:—"Paul was led to select the first day of the week because our alms ought to be first fruits and it was a convenient day for settling accounts." Now I grant alms ought to be this, but what devout, heavenly minded Christian would devote the day on which his Lord arose to settling his family accounts. It reminds me

* Note B, page 24.

of a minister who asked a man how he occupied his Sundays. He answered, "By settling my accounts." "Remember," said his friend, "that the day of judgment will be occupied in the same manner." From the specimen here given we can easily see how Milton reasoned himself into a Unitarian, and to believe that when a man dies his body, soul, and spirit, are laid in the church-yard.

LUTHER may next be quoted. He is supposed to deny the sanctity of the Lord's day, but I very much question this. It is true he has expressed himself strongly against the superstitious Judaism of the formal sabbath; that would make an observance of the day cancel the sins of an unholy week. He also says that it was only appointed by man—appointed by the Church. He had his peculiarities and his prejudices. Most men have. He had strong views of justification by faith, and wherever anything like law interfered with his doctrine he knew no bounds to speak against it. Hence he denied the inspiration of the Epistle of James, and called it "An epistle of straw," because it went against his views on the Epistle to the Galatians. He says, and this is his strongest word, "Keep the sabbath holy for its use both for body and soul. But if any where the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if any where any one sets up its observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, ride on it, dance on it, feast on it, or do anything on it to reprove this encroachment on Christian liberty." Now this says nothing against the proper observance of the Lord's day, if it is observed for proper reasons, as good for body and soul. But "if merely for the day's sake." Why any intelligent Christian would say as much about any thing else. Take prayer. No Christian will question its value and blessedness, but if anywhere one sets up the form of prayer, for forms' sake, why, I should hear God saying, "When ye make many prayers I will not hear; when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you."

We come next to JOHN CALVIN. He says that the observance of the Lord's day was necessary "to decency, order, and peace." No argument drawn from man's reason could be stronger than this. Disregard the sabbath, the Lord's day, and decency is gone, order is turned into confusion, and peace, peace both with God and man, forsakes the earth. But he says that it was "a political and ecclesiastical arrangement." Is this true? What political reason had the Son of God for rising from the dead on the first day of the week. What political or ecclesiastical arrangement was in his meeting the disciples on that day afterwards? What nation or what church dictated to the Holy Ghost to descend and fill the hearts and fire the tongues of the disciples on that day? What politics were studied by God in giving that day—the eighth day—the morrow after the sabbath—all through a previous dispensation, as the new creation day,—the redemption day—the resurrection day? What politics guided the saints at Troas to wait seven days after Paul's arrival till the first day of the week came round, to come together then to break bread? What political arrangement did the Corinthians study to come together on that day and make collections for the poor saints? Whose politics, what ecclesiastical arrangement did he in the Isle of Patmos study, when he said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day?" and what political reason had the Spirit of God in wrapping him up in himself, and the blessed Jesus for sending his angel on that day, to shew unto John these things, and what earthly policy was studied in the Lord himself appearing to him as he did?

None: yea, I should think that a sound, worldly policy, and a real ecclesiastical arrangement—a thorough church movement,—that fitful thing that considers human expediency before truth,—would have led to the adoption of different days according to the nation in which she was located. She would have chosen Monday for Greece, Tuesday for Persia, Saturday in Jerusalem, and so on. But, no. The Divine example and the Divine blessing on that day sway the heart of every disciple and without command, without precept, and without penalty he consecrates it to the Lord who rose that day, the witness of his justification. So far from the Lord's day being a political arrangement, it was the earthly policy of Constantine and other ruling powers that adopted the Lord's day. They saw that unless they accommodated themselves and their government to the previous practices of Christians they would lose the benefit of their services and co-operation, and instead of fighting against them they took them into their lap. The Lord's day was observed long before earthly governments or a dominant clergy had any thing to do with it, save to persecute and seek to destroy.

As to John Calvin's playing at ball on the Sunday, I see neither "decency, order, nor peace" in it. We must remember however that though morality is always the same, morals may differ. The morals of the court may be very different from the cloister, yet the crowned head may be a Christian and the veiled nun a stranger to grace, and so the frivolity of the times and of the country where he lived may have left a tinge of their levity even on the severe mind of Calvin, which could not be tolerated under a higher tone of morals.

But I have done following man, I shall notice one or two objections on principle.

It is said "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" the true meaning of this Mr. Dawson tells us is,—“The sabbath was made to serve man and not man to serve the sabbath.” If this means that man may treat the sabbath just as he likes and be amenable to no law but his own lust, let us try this reasoning in another case. It is said, “neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man.”—1 Cor. xi. 9. Woman was made, like the sabbath and all creation, for man. He was lord of all. But does that say that man is to use the woman, without considering the claims, privileges, and liberties to which God has entitled her? It may be allowed him for the hardness of his heart, under some circumstances, to give his wife a writing of divorcement, is he therefore to put away his wife for every cause? Necessity may sometimes compel us to lay upon her more than she can well bear; but is that a reason, why men should club together to rob her of her rights? Surely not; but it shews that one moral duty, as well as positive law, may give place to another more urgent. It is always a duty for a man to love his wife, for a wife to obey her husband, for children to obey their parents, and subjects the

powers that be; yet occasions may arise, when the most righteous claims must be set aside for others yet higher, and the child may have to ask his father, as well as the subject his authorities:—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," and to say, "We ought to obey God rather than men;" and so with the Lord's day. Man's necessity, and the claims of mercy may call forth what otherwise would be a breach of the sabbath; may put the railway, the coach, the workman's hammer, and the clerks pen into requisition, but does that sanction, or do our Lord's words warrant, that for pleasure, amusement, games and sports, we are to club with an Infidel, worldling, and pleasure taker, in a league, to desecrate that day? Would the fathers and reformers to whom such braggadocioal appeals are made? Because the Lord said, a man was to hate father and mother and follow him, would he have joined in a league with every one that wished to throw off the parental yoke? All this proves that all God's works are subservient to man, and yield to man's necessities. Thus David's hunger was met by a violation of the rights of the temple and the priest. Hence the priests in the temple break the sabbath and are blameless. Had they ceased working the communion of God with the people would have been interrupted, and blessing ceased, (type of the continual intercession of Christ.) Also the people ate of the passover in an unclean state, otherwise than it was written, but Hezekiah prayed and the Lord healed them, 2 Chron. xxx. Grace tramples upon law and makes every thing subservient to man's *need*, but not to his voluptuousness.

Another objection may be expressed in the words of Chrysostom, "Of what use would the observance of the sabbath day be to him who passes his life in a holy day which has no end, and whose conversation is always in heaven." Looking at the Christian as seated in heavenly places, as one with Christ, as ever feasting on the true manna, as dwelling in God and God in him,—times and seasons are nothing—dispensations are all past, and he belongs to that period when all things are new. But looked at as a stranger and pilgrim down here, he is subject to the influence of earth and its changes;

"One day soothes, the next day grieves him."

The same argument may be applied to all meetings, prayer, praise, and worship. If the Christian life is a life of praise, what would singing of a hymn be to him? If the thread of prayer runs through his life, why should he have stated seasons for it. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been opposed on the same grounds, and supposed to be continued through mistakes and Jewish prejudices. The argument by proving too much, proves nothing. And the Lord's day is left in all its blessedness, for all who will observe it. Nay, the observance of the day is established by the very argument used to destroy it. For if prayer and sea-

sons of prayer are the blessed means of the Christian preserving a praying spirit in all his ways ; that enables him to buy and sell, to work, and rule as in God's presence, which, but for those seasons of prayer he would soon forget ; as the hymns of praise sung in the assembly of the saints, and often when "alone with God" enable him to preserve a grateful heart, in the midst of sorrows and trials in the world ; so the Lord's day is to him a season of divine refreshment, whose waters refresh his soul, and fertilize the land that would soon get parched and barren. Week-day services have their blessing ; special meetings give their joy ; but the heaven-appointed day, and especially the meeting to break bread, lifts his soul into the happy and holy regions of heavenly delight, and the glory of the Lord's blessed countenance sheds its light into every day of the coming week..

Another objection is, that the sabbath was a sign between God and Israel. This was no more destructive as to its former existence, or restrictive as to its reference, than Noah's rainbow, or the whole ten commandments and their summary, Deut. vi. 8 ; or that God himself is peculiarly called their God, though he is Lord of heaven and earth.

Another, The Gentiles are never rebuked for breaking the sabbath. But how could God charge the Gentiles with a breach of the sabbath, when they did not know himself? And again God had never formally given them his sabbath.

Again, "Jesus broke the sabbath." This is not true. He did, indeed, violate the notions of the elders concerning it ; but he did nothing to set aside God's authority. If he had, how could he have fulfilled the law ? He would not have been a true Jew, if he had not conformed to every iota of Jewish worship as prescribed by Moses, and confirmed by the prophets. "Now, I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," Rom. xv. 8. Most people look on the command to keep the sabbath, as one of the most tyrannical, unjust, and bitter laws, that could have emanated from hell rather than come from heaven ; and speak with the greatest happiness that it was never given to the Gentiles. But to me it appears one of the most blessed of the many blessings the Jew had ; and it is the Gentiles' loss that they were not near enough to God to receive it and to enjoy it with him. Let any one remember the holy convocations of that day, Lev. xxiii. 3, and try the 92nd Psalm in its spirit-stirring praise, and say whether he would not rather have been a doorkeeper there than dwell in the tents of wickedness. He will learn the joy with which the pious Jew welcomed the sabbath. Take the Psalms as the expression of the Spirit of Christ in suffering with or for his people,—as suggesting expressions suited to their condition of sorrow, or anticipating their glory, and you have in this 92nd Psalm, a view of the Lord's heart in connection with the day. See also the longings in Psalms xlii. and lxiii., and the gladness in lxxxiv. Had he broken it, as the Son of man he was above it—as Son of God he could imitate his Father, John v. 17. But he always shewed he was within its claims, for, "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day." Although we are not under the law as giving a justifying righteousness, "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."—Rom. x. 4. The law can follow a man with its vengeance no farther than Christ ; He is the city of refuge into which the avenger cannot enter.—Although the law is no test of what God has done for the sinner by the blood of his Son, consequently no test, by our obe-

dience to it, of our sonship in Jesus.—Although, as a rule of life it is in its negative prohibitions far below the position, the spirit and enjoyments of one accepted in the Beloved, as one in Christ at the right hand of God,—yet as expressive of God's moral character, what he loves and what he hates, it suggests principles of guidance which the redeemed ones will ever find happiness in following: therefore, "Not without law to God but under the law to Christ."—1 Cor. ix. So with the Lord's day. Although the old Testament is not our law on this matter, yet having the day from divine example and blessing, we may get many intimations how it may be observed from the Jew in his happy meetings and joyous Psalms.

Once more, "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day."—Rom. xiv. 5. The apostle is here arguing for a universal charity towards the weak in faith—that is, to any one that has faith at all. Some had been so long in the observance of days, that they were invested with a sanctity they could not shake off. Others were long accustomed to consider, that what was offered to an idol could not be eaten without doing honor to the idol itself. Others who had got above those days and meats, despised the weak consciences of their brethren, and would desecrate the day and eat the meat offered to idols, whatever the other might feel. Paul here shews, that first every one's mind was to be studied, so that none should do any thing contrary to his own light, nor judge his brother for doing the same. Then he shews, that we are to do nothing that would grieve a brother unnecessarily, because we feel liberty to do so.

To apply this to the sabbath and the Lord's day, 1st. If the Lord's day is meant here, it shews how firm a hold it had taken of the Christian mind, when they could scarcely be considered Christians who disregarded it. 2nd. I should rather think it referred to Jewish observances, sabbath days, &c., which the Gentiles did not know. 3rd. But the general principle is, that if a man has faith, every thing else was to be borne with. Of course, it says nothing to or about persons who are not converted. The New Testament does not legislate for the world, only the congregation of faithful men. To the mass of the unconverted its great word is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This passage brings out the practical ground on which all Christians can meet—bearing one another's burdens, covering errors and passing over weaknesses. This passage is the true axiom of Christian fellowship. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind; not to produce separation, but for our closer union. I should apply it to all forms of church government—to Calvinism and Arminianism—to Baptism

and to every thing short of the person of the Lord, his finished work, and our acceptance in him. Nothing, but what saps the foundation of Christian Salvation, should separate those who have obtained like-precious faith. It has happily never been my lot to see a man who gave any manifest signs of life in other respects that was careless about the Lord's day. Although many have pleaded liberty, few have used it. Even Quakers, though they trample on a Queen-appointed day, yet respect the Lord's day. Were it my lot, however, to meet a man whom I believed to be a Christian, but a non-regarder of that day, I should feel a difficulty in refusing his fellowship, seeing God had received him. Give him the place God gives.

In conclusion, let me answer a two-fold question : How is the Lord's day to be kept ?

If this question is asked by a Christian, I, in reply, hand him over the Bible. That is his only law book. If he asks me for a principle of guidance, I would mention Isaiah lviii. 13, as to the spirit of its observance, and the practice of the first Christians as to his employment. They were all together in one place when the Spirit descended on them. They came together to break bread in memory of their risen Lord. They made collections for the poor, they attended to exhortation and the ministry of the word. In a word, they were in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and were thus prepared for what the Lord by his grace might give. But, you ask, what penalty is annexed to a non-fulfilment of its duties ? My dear Christian friend, I thought you were already condemned, executed, and buried in the person of your Lord, and had risen with him in newness of life. If you do not feel so, take Paul's plan and *reckon* yourself so. Rom. vi. By your being in Jesus, the cross, and judgment, and death are all behind you. You have entered on the true sabbath, and are just on its short journey to meet him, who is soon to make his appearance in the air, Acts i. 12, &c., 1 Thess. iv. 17, and receive you to himself.

If the question is asked by an unconverted person : How am I to keep the sabbath ? let me tell you that you are always a sabbath-breaker till you believe on Christ. God cannot give you his sabbath till you have tasted the fruit of the tree of life—till you have eaten of his manna—till you have rested on the Son of his love. There alone is rest. Trying to keep the sabbath by your own devoutness is just taking the whole law on your shoulders. If you try to carry the law of the sabbath, you must carry the tables of stone on which it was written ; you must carry the whole ten. But, my dear

friend, the weight of these two stones would crush you to the earth, and tear the flesh of your back, and grind you to powder. Stop, a kind friend is passing who is able and willing to carry all for you; who has borne all for you and asks you to come on his shoulder, and he will give you rest, and carry you home to his glorious presence in heaven. The moment your guilty soul sees him as your Sin-bearer and Law-fulfiller, your sabbath morning dawns; by believing you enter into his eternal rest. Then only are you a true sabbath keeper; till then a sabbath breaker.

Finally, let me say to one and all, that the very fact that these questions are mooted in these days is a sign of the times, and of the downward progress of this world and of this country. The more refined a nation becomes, it becomes the more corrupt. If you look at the sins of the perilous times, 2 Tim. 3, you find them of a much more refined character than those of earlier dates. The grosser sins of 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, and of Gal. v. 19, are not found there. It is the heady, the high-minded, the lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, that are there; and withal a *form* of godliness without the power. Let us beware, then, brethren, how we mingle with those things; Satan comes in with woolly feet. There are snares, and pitfalls, and perils before us. Let our garments—our hearts be tucked up, our feet shod with peace, and our eye in full gaze, looking for the glorious appearing of him who rose, most likely ascended, and may come again, on the Lord's day.

P. G. A.

Note A. p. 8. It is worthy of remark, that there is no ceremony prescribed in the Fourth Commandment. It merely secures the rest for the day from worldly employment or pleasure; it leaves the day vacant to be filled up with what may afterward be enjoined. In this it resembles the others.

Note B. p. 17,—“If other proof was wanting of superficial reading it is inscribed on the walls of Mr. D's highly decorated chapel. He objects to the Decalogue being set up in detail on church walls, but he sets up the summary Moses made of it, (Deut. vi. 4, 5,) which is repeated by our Lord, Matt. xxii. 37. Surely here is a distinction without a difference. To object to each command by *itself*, and yet to take *all* the commands, is to be under law. Does not every guilty sinner that enters that place, read on its very walls his own death warrant? For he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. Who has loved God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself? Is it not the blessedness of the gospel, that it shews this, and every other law, taken up by God out of the way and nailed to the cross of Jesus, that there may be nothing between him and the vilest sinner to hinder full communion and joy in his presence? Eph. ii. 14—18.

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