

THE LORD'S DAY.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

No Preface can be required for the purpose of introducing Hengstenberg to English readers. He is already sufficiently known and appreciated, for his name alone to be all that is necessary, to secure for any work of his their thoughtful perusal. But there are, perhaps, few subjects on which a work from the continent would be looked upon with greater suspicion than that of the present volume. Our general horror of a "continental Sunday," and the prevalent idea that laxity both of views and practice are universally characteristic of foreigners, are enough to excite the instantaneous inquiry, Can any good thing come out of Germany?

These feelings do not exist without just cause. Our aversion to a continental Sunday is certainly a right one. And, though the effect upon foreigners is, perhaps, not so injurious as it would be upon us, every true friend of his country, who has ever spent a Sunday abroad, must have felt, as he marked the contrast between their Sundays and ours, the earnest wish that we may for ever be preserved from the temptation to spend our Sundays in the same way.

But the opinion is incorrect, that there are none in those countries who deplore the evil. German tourists, who have visited England, have often carried back a favourable impression of the English Sunday; and, though unable to come to any other conclusion than that, outwardly, it is maintained with a rigour, and enforced by means, which are characteristic of the Old Testament rather than the New, they have yet returned, prepared to aid in any movement for promoting a

voluntary, spiritual, and, therefore, truly Christian observance of the Sunday. With these feelings Hengstenberg strongly sympathises. His professed and evident object is to encourage them; and though, in some respects, he objects to movements recently made, and endeavours to point out and correct certain evils connected with them, his candour is but the proof of his sympathy; the only difference being, that, whereas the over-zealous are for promoting a good object in any way, seeking in the end the justification of the means, he is desirous of promoting the same object in the best way. He is, therefore, not sparing in his condemnation of the use of arguments which cannot be substantiated, as tending to do permanent injury to the cause; and is earnest in his warnings against any course which ignores the peculiar spirit and precepts of the gospel, and which tends to fetter the liberty, and cramp the energies, of the Church of the New Testament, by the attempt to force upon it the outward forms and letter of the Old.

His free criticism of the English rigour and scrupulosity, and, especially, his reply to the arguments of Dwight, whom he takes as the exponent of English as well as of American views, may, perhaps, prevent a hearty welcome in some quarters. The possibility of settled opinions being thereby disturbed, and the fears lest some should abuse the Author's arguments to purposes the most remote from those which he intended, may lead some to question the advisability of introducing from Germany a work, which may unsettle here what it is intended to establish there. To this it is sufficient to reply, by pointing to the fact, that the disturbance of settled opinions has already taken place. Recent events have brought to light, more clearly than ever, the extent to which multitudes of our countrymen have not only broken away from the authority, but have lost sight of the true worth and importance of the "Lord's day." To stay the evil in time, and to bring back those who are alienated, is a work, in which all earnest Christian men, with truly loving hearts, will be glad to engage.

But it is very certain, that this will never be accomplished by making enemies of those whom we wish to gain, by appealing to the

law, to make our consciences the rule for others, or to thwart their wishes, and prohibit their pleasures. And it is very doubtful whether it will ever be of any use to trust to the arguments, which, till now, have been found sufficient to defend what most men loved, and none opposed. If this be the case, nothing can be more important than that he who regards it as one of his greatest pleasures and advantages, that he can spend the Sunday in purely spiritual engagements, and in the worship of God, should, by a thorough investigation of the whole question, and, by looking at it from all sides, ascertain on what grounds he can most safely and forcibly impress on others (we do not say the obligation), but the immense advantage of spending it in the same way. In this task, he cannot fail to derive assistance from such a work as the present.

There are some, no doubt, who think that if we have the right thing, it matters little by what path we have reached it, or on what grounds we maintain it. It would not be difficult to show that such an opinion is utterly subversive of the teachings of the gospel, inasmuch as it has been the chief characteristic of Pharisaism, both in and out of the Church. The worth of the outward, for its own sake, even when not the free utterance of the heart, but a form imposed; has been the favourite doctrine of the Pharisee, the "whited sepulchre" in every age. And there is always danger lest, after having secured the immense boon, the one day free, we should not be content till we have canonized the day, and thus made the words of Paul applicable to ourselves, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Ye observe days." It is hard to say which extreme is most dangerous, laxity or legality; and, therefore, it is always important to examine our position well; lest, whilst rejoicing over our escape from the one, we should unwittingly have fallen into the other. The whirlpool of Charybdis is but too likely to draw in those who have only thought of escaping the jaws of Scylla. We cannot watch too carefully that "liberty be not used for an occasion to the flesh;" nor can we be too cautious that, in preventing the latter, we do not restrict the liberty also.

It would not, perhaps, be difficult to point out in this work weak points, as well as strong—inferences which appear far fetched, and applications which seem strained. But these do not affect the main argument. A preface, however, is not the place for criticism. All that a Translator has to do is to let the Author speak for himself, and present the book to the English reader with all its merits and defects. This is done, in the present case, with the hope, not only that it may not lead any to value the “Lord’s day” less, as a day of rest and Christian worship, but that it may help to the discovery of the best means of bringing back those who are estranged, to a right appreciation of the worth of that worship, and those spiritual employments for which a day of leisure affords so favourable an opportunity.

PREFACE.

THINGS old and new are offered here. The Second and Third Parts have both appeared before. But it is twenty years since the former was first published; and it has undergone many alterations before its incorporation in the present work. The Author would have cause to be ashamed, if, during this time, he had neither learnt nor forgotten anything. But the alterations only relate to details. The fundamental principle remains the same; and further investigation has fully established the Author's belief in its correctness.

It is hoped, that the incorporation into one work of the productions of different times will be rather advantageous than otherwise. In the study of a subject, which ought to be looked at from different points of view, it is difficult to avoid one-sidedness, if we only write under the impressions and influences of one particular time. The Author has, doubtless, not altogether avoided this danger. It was under the influence of dissatisfaction, arising from the course adopted by the English in Germany, that the Third Part was written; and that influence is probably too apparent, though he cannot erase anything which he has said there. The First Part was written with reference to the opposition which his published opinions had called forth. The reader will, however, discover throughout the attempt to do equal justice to all sides, and to bring clearly out, in one Part, whatever points the others may have left in the shade. If any wish for more than this, it is not in the Writer's power to satisfy them. The tendency of the times, in most things, is to one-sidedness, extreme views, and

the splitting of hairs. Even amongst religious men the same tendency frequently appears. In this, as in other questions, the Author cannot accompany them. He is no lover of a dull, heartless "*juste milieu*;" but he is anxious to have a good conscience with regard to *all* the expressions of the Holy Scriptures, and neither to do violence to any, nor, in his heart, wish any away; but to occupy the same position, with regard to all of them, in which the natural philosopher stands, who looks at his objects again and again, places them under the microscope, and then describes truly what he has seen.

Many persons will think they can discover contradictions in this work. The Author does not believe that it contains any. Whoever is anxious to do justice to every side of a question, which is not of the simplest kind, will always come to the *verge* of contradiction, and therefore be exposed to the appearance of it.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."

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PART I.

The Old Testament Sabbath: its Letter and Spirit.

OUR subject has been treated of late in a variety of ways; but the conviction is still very general that it is not yet exhausted, and that much of importance remains to be done. We intend in the present article to examine chronologically the most important passages of the holy Scriptures relating to the Lord's day, that we may ascertain to what result we are brought in this way. This method appears to be the simplest and most natural, and if it cannot claim to be the only one, it is yet indispensable to every other. The little room which it leaves to doctrinal prejudice, which it rather serves to correct, is in itself a reason that it should not be neglected. In every other method we move too much according to inclination, and become one-sided, and are too prone to select, even from the Bible, that which suits the direction already taken by our own thoughts. The more closely we adhere to the words of Scripture, the deeper will be the impression made upon the heart by the truth we gain. The writer stands with his readers before the Lord, and listens to his holy word.

I. THE REST OF GOD ON THE SEVENTH DAY.

“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.)

The first section of the Bible, in which the different events pass before us with great rapidity, suddenly ends here. The description

follows the action. Arrived at the rest of God, it also assumes a quiet character of repose.

Particular notice must be taken here of the great importance, which the Sabbath acquires from the fact, that *God had it in view at the creation of the world*, and that reference is made to it at the very commencement of the Scriptures. This importance attaches chiefly to the Sabbath of the Old Testament. But there is contained in this, at the same time, the germ of the day of rest under the New. And, moreover, in the Sabbath of the Old Testament the chief thing is not that it is exactly the seventh day, but that it is the weekly returning day of rest of the people of God, and, therefore, this early reference is of great importance even for us.

In the opinion of many, no distinction is to be made between the *blessing*, and *sanctifying* of the seventh day. Thus Bonaventura: "He blessed it, not only in that he praised it or approved it, or gave to it a peculiarly productive power, but, as immediately follows, by sanctifying it, *i. e.*, separating it from worldly or profane works, and setting it apart for works of holiness." But blessing is, on the contrary, quite *distinct* from sanctifying. As Isa. lviii. 13, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," &c., explains what is meant by, "God *sanctified* the seventh day," and, "Remember the seventh day, that thou *sanctifiest** it;" so the following verse explains the expression, "God *blessed* the seventh day." "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." To delight ourselves in the Lord is to know him to be gracious. A similar exposition we find in Jer. xvii. 24, &c. "And if ye diligently hearken to me, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but sanctify the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, and this city shall remain for ever. But if ye will not hearken unto me, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." He who sanctifies the seventh day after the pattern which God has given him, is blessed by him, according to the words, "Godliness is profitable unto all things,

* The words are the same in the original. This is only one of numerous passages in which our translators have, without reason, rendered the same word in different ways, and thus prevented the Bible from being its own interpreter.—Tr.

having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come ;” and, “ Seek first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you.” The blessing which, according to the letter, is promised to the day, belongs in reality to the observance of it, and to those who sanctify it. It is the reward of their faithfulness. The blessing precedes the sanctifying, to preclude from the first all idea that the interests of men have been overlooked. God, who is rich in love, only asks of us that he may give more abundantly to us. His fountain of blessing is opened by every offering that we bring to him.

It is not indeed *any one* of the seven days which is blessed and sanctified, but specially the *seventh* day, the Sabbath. We stand thus already not on ground which is common to humanity, but on that which belongs specifically to the Israelites. And therefore, here, not less than in the ten commandments, it is the work of theological interpretation to trace any applicability to the Church of the New Testament. This is not difficult; the *stress* is not to be laid upon the separation of this particular day, so much as of one day in general. Here, and in all the Old Testament, the essence of the institution is evidently the gift to the Church of God of a day for rest and meeting amidst the work and distraction of this earthly life, as a corrective for inevitable ills. “It is, indeed,” says Calvin, “a meditation befitting the whole life, the duty of every day, to contemplate the infinite goodness of God, his justice and wisdom, displayed in this splendid theatre of the heavens and the earth. But because men would most probably engage in this with less zeal than they should, the seventh day was especially chosen to make up for the want of constant meditation.” The seventh day, the Sabbath, is only positively, not exclusively, appointed in the Old Testament. Even the Old Testament recognises no holiness as existing in *any* day in itself. For instance, circumcision was to be performed on the eighth day, but that it was not unalterably confined to that day is evident from the account in Joshua v., where the whole mass of the people, who had omitted it during the journey, are said to have been circumcised on the same day. The passover was to be eaten on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. But if any were unclean at the time, it was eaten by them a month later, with the same blessing (Num. ix. 1, &c.). If, then, the chief festival of the Old Testament was not inseparably attached to the day, this certainly applies to the weekly festival also. The change might not, it is true, be made at pleasure, even in the case of the passover. Such an alteration was only justifiable under such

circumstances, as evidently contained in themselves a Divine command.

The rest of God is mentioned as the *reason for that of man*. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it he rested;" "in six days God made the heaven and the earth, . . . *therefore* the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." But in the rest of man we see the reason for that of God. That the object of his rest was to instruct by symbol, is apparent from the words, "On the seventh day he rested, and refreshed himself" (Exod. xxxi. 17). If this be admitted, the rest of the Sabbath is freed from its evidently forced isolation, and placed on equal footing with that of all the festivals, from which Lev. xxiii. prohibits its separation. And if the rest of the other festivals was only designed to furnish the opportunity and means of improvement, the same must be true of the Sabbath also. This idea, too, coincides exactly with the whole character of the creation. "All is yours" is true also of it. "God," says Calvin, "devoted six days to the creation of the world; not that he needed the succession of time, for to him a moment is as a thousand years, but to detain us in the contemplation of his works." It was for our good that the creation of the world was spread over six days, in order that his creative power might more deeply impress us; that our gaze might be directed longer to this grand display, and our hearts be filled with warmer love to the Creator; and that, as we studied this universe, and learned what place we filled within it, we might, in the words of the 8th Psalm, exclaim, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" "How excellent is thy name in all the earth." The symbolical and prefigurative character of the rest of God was perceived by Calvin. "Because," he says, "men are so slow to praise the justice, and wisdom, and power of God, and to consider his benefits, that, although constantly reminded of them, they remain unaffected, a powerful impulse is given in this example of God, and the command is shown to be one of love. Nothing can allure more kindly, or draw more powerfully, than an invitation to be imitators of him."

The *rest*, to which, with adorable condescension, God invites us by his own example, *presupposes work*, hard, oppressive work, which tends to draw away from God. Rest is the remedy for the ills which are inseparable from this toil. If anything is clear, the connexion between the Sabbath and the Fall undoubtedly is. The work, which needs intermission lest it should endanger the divine life, is not the cheerful and pleasant occupation of which we read in Gen. ii. 15, but

the oppressive and degrading toil spoken of in the following chapter, work in the sweat of the brow, upon the earth which brings forth thorns and thistles. Liebetrut's assertion, that "the account of the keeping of the Sabbath by God, at the termination of the week of creation, proves indisputably that the occasion is not to be found in the Fall and its consequences, but the idea of the festival is entirely independent of human sin and weakness," could only be correct, if here before the Fall we found the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," attached to the announcement, "God sanctified the seventh day." But since this is delayed till Exod. xx., and all that is said of the rest of God is contained in a book written for men who lived long after the Fall, what hinders our concluding that God rested, blessed, and sanctified, with reference to the mournful fall already foreseen by him, that the eternal pity for the fallen cared for them, even before they fell? And if it be so, there is no ground for believing, with the same writer, that the "just made perfect" will celebrate the Sabbath "in a manner suited to the new Paradise." If we deny in this way all connexion between the festivals, especially the Sabbath, and human weakness, we must necessarily believe that they are kept by angels also. But what employment, peculiar to such a day, remains for those who "rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy?" Sabbaths for the just made perfect are opposed to Rev. vii. 9—17, and especially ver. 15, they "serve him day and night in his temple." The Christian's hope of eternal life would be diminished by the thought. Eternal life must set us free from the day of rest also, delightful as it is on earth, for then we "rest from our labours."

II. THE FALL OF MANNA SUSPENDED ON THE SEVENTH DAY.

Exod. xvi. In ver. 5, the Lord says to Moses, after telling him he will send the manna, "And it shall come to pass that on the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

From ver. 22, it reads thus: "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake what ye will bake, and boil what ye will boil; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morn-

ing, as Moses bade ; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day ; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord : to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it ; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day, for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws ? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days : abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day."

As we found in Gen. ii. the heavenly, so here we have the earthly prelude to the institution of the Sabbath. But as it was not yet fully established, the rulers and people could not perfectly understand what Moses did. The exposition appeared later. Now it might have been said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

It shows the great importance of the Sabbath, that God here first sanctifies it *by an act*, before the command is given on Sinai to the people to sanctify it. This sanctification in act is shown in three things. First, that God, because of the rest of the Sabbath, gave a double portion on the day before. Secondly, that he kept in perfect freshness, to the astonishment of the rulers and the people, a part of that portion. And thirdly, that on the seventh day he rained no manna, and in this way separated the seventh day from the other six.

This actual sanctification of the Sabbath is a sufficient reply to the chief argument, which natural reason can bring against the keeping of it. We may find in the fact, that on the sixth day the double portion fell, on the seventh none, the lesson for all ages, that the blessing of God, on which all depends, can indemnify those who offer part of their time to him, and that *they* may labour in vain, who will use for their own advantage the day which he selected for himself.

We are not to suppose, that by this act the Sabbath was fully introduced amongst the Israelites. The keeping of the Sabbath is certainly mentioned, but, as the connexion shows, only so far as the collection and preparation of the manna were concerned. The instructions as to the complete sanctification of the Sabbath were first given at Sinai. It was not intended to enjoin this here, but, as Calvin has well and briefly said, "by the act itself the seventh day was hallowed before the promulgation of the law."

The Sabbath could only exert its beneficent power in combination with a complete system of divine arrangements; as now all efforts to promote the observance of the Lord's day, amongst those who submit to no other restraints, will be thrown away. It has no meaning except as a link in a perfect chain. By itself it has as little life as a single amputated limb of the human body.

The context offers a triple proof that *the Sabbath was till then entirely unknown to the Israelites*. 1. When a double portion fell on the sixth day (for which God had prepared Moses, though the latter had certainly not mentioned it to the people), the rulers came and told it to Moses. "They are astonished at the providence of God, that they had found a double quantity of manna, and ask what they are to do with it." The reply which Moses makes them, shows us the reason of their bringing him the information. This, to them inexplicable, occurrence is first explained in his reply. Then follow directions how to dispose of the surplus. Now, neither of these, the astonishment nor the perplexity, could have arisen if the Sabbath had been already known and observed. 2. We are led to the same conclusion, when we find that, notwithstanding the instructions of Moses, some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather, showing how new a thing it was to the people, and how difficult it was at first to conform. And, 3, we infer it also from the total absence in the words of Moses of a reference to an already existing Sabbath ordinance. Liebetrut, indeed, thinks that the words of Moses, "This is that which the Lord hath said," &c., show that the Sabbath was already known, since no such declaration is made in vers. 4, 5. But Moses is not referring here to an earlier revelation of the Lord, but to something actually said by the Lord when pouring out the double portion of manna on the sixth day; this is that which the Lord says (by this occurrence), "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord."

Let us add, to the arguments deduced from our narrative against a pre-Mosaic Sabbath, that the second chapter of Genesis does not contain the slightest trace of the promulgation of a Sabbath command, but, on the contrary, in striking contrast to Exodus xx., simply mentions the Divine intention that the seventh day shall be sanctified, and further, that there is not in the history the least reference to a Sabbath before the time of Moses; and no doubt will remain that the Sabbath was first instituted in connexion with the whole of the Mosaic economy.

The *name* Sabbath first appears in this narration. It is not men-

tioned in Gen. ii. There, only the seventh day is spoken of. We may, indeed, discover a slight hint at the name, but this is left to grow out of the institution itself, which is at first independent of it. The meaning of the name cannot be doubtful. The form denotes perfect *rest*, in contrast with the six days of work, שָׁבַת, resting, שבת, the perfectly tranquil (*sc.* day).

There are other days of rest in the Old Testament besides the weekly one. As a rule, its festivals are holidays. But the name Sabbath is set apart and sacred to the seventh day of the week. There are only two exceptions to this. In Lev. xxiii. 11—15, the first day of the passover, which was distinguished from the others as a day of rest, is called a Sabbath. There can be no doubt that the first day of the passover is here referred to, not only from the context, but from the testimony of the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, and the Rabbinical writers, without exception. The great day of atonement is also called a Sabbath in Lev. xxiii. 32. This bears a greater resemblance to the weekly Sabbath than the other days of rest, because on it no food was prepared, which was permitted on the other festivals. But the exception is only partial in this case. For in the same verse with the words, "Ye shall (on the day of atonement) keep your Sabbath," we find these also, "a *Sabbath of rest* it shall be to you;" so that it is expressly pointed out that, on account of the rest, the name of the Sabbath is *transferred* to this day. "Ye shall keep your Sabbath," is therefore the same as, "Ye shall *rest* on it as on the Sabbath." In the same way we may regard the name as only *transferred* to the first day of the passover, distinguishing it from the other festivals on which work was allowed. This transference of the name, however, to the first day of the passover and the day of atonement, is of importance, inasmuch as it shows that we are not to regard the rest of the Sabbath as different from that of other festivals, as they do who look upon the rest of God on the seventh day as the precise reason for the rest of man on the Sabbath.

"The Lord *gives* you the Sabbath," were the words used by Moses. Thus early the Sabbath appears not as a burden, but a *pleasure* (Isa. lviii. 13), a costly privilege which the Lord gives to his people. To be able to rest, without being full of care, to rest to the Lord and in the Lord, how great a comfort amidst our toil and work on the earth which God has cursed! But just because the day of rest is a gift of the merciful God, so much more grievous will be the consequence of despising it.

III. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou 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, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."—(Exod. xx. 8—11.)

We shall first compare this form of the commandment with that which we find in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. In general the difference between the ten commandments as given in Exodus and in Deuteronomy is this, that in the former we have the original condensed form ; in the latter a repetition, with exhortations. The latter are always expansions, never abridgments ; less the demonstrative speech of law, than the free utterance of the heart. The ten commandments in Exodus are self-supported ; those in Deuteronomy refer expressly to an earlier form. Instead of, "Remember the Sabbath day, to sanctify it," we read, "Keep* the Sabbath day, to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee."

The words, "*remember* the Sabbath day," contain a slight allusion to the fact that the Sabbath was not altogether unknown to the Israelites. Not that so much stress can be laid upon the word *remember* in itself (for one might commence a new command with the exhortation to remember it, after it is once received), as upon the abrupt manner in which the Sabbath day is mentioned in the Decalogue, whereas, in the account of the creation, the name Sabbath does not previously occur. But Moses had undoubtedly instructed the people in this history of the creation ; at any rate the occurrence related in Exod. xvi. had already happened, and to this he probably appended that instruction. It will, however, be clearly seen, that the allusion to a previous acquaintance with the Sabbath is very slight, and that it does not involve sufficient knowledge of the proper mode of sanctifying it, to indicate an earlier command and observance (as the advocates of a pre-Mosaic Sabbath imagine), if we notice the full instructions given after the "remember" as to the manner in which this remembrance shall be carried out. The "*keep*," on the other hand, shows expressly, that all that is required is, to hold fast what is already possessed. We

* That the word keep here means preserve, is evident from Isa. lvi. 2, "he that *keepeth* the Sabbath, so as not to pollute it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil."

find, too, in Deuteronomy, by the side of this, the words, "As the Lord thy God has commanded thee," which decidedly refer to Exod. xx. 8.

Instead of, "for in six days," &c., we find in Deut. v. 14, 15, "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt; and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence with a strong hand and a stretched out arm. Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

We have here an appeal to the hearts of masters in favour of their servants, in the words, "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou." They are a digression from the immediate question, and could not have occurred in the first strictly systematic form. That which is contained *there* of the rest of servants, and strangers, and cattle, does not rest on the ground of humanity, but is intended to secure "that wherever the eyes of the Israelites turned, they should be attracted to the keeping of the Sabbath, that nothing which disturbed the Sabbath should come in their way." But *here*, on the contrary, the heart of the Lawgiver, which is ever full of tender love to the miserable, pours itself more freely out. Calvin regards it from the right point of view when he says, "Because this belongs to the rule of *love*, it could find no place for itself in the first table, and is thus added by Moses only as an accidental advantage."

And the following words, "remember that thou wast a servant," &c., are intended especially to induce them to allow cheerfully to men- and maid-servants the Sabbath rest. The parallel passages are proofs of this. Thus Deut. xv. 15: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing to-day." In ch. xvi. 12, after an injunction to be benevolent to all who are in distress, there follows, "and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." (Compare xxiv. 12—18; Exod. xxii. 20; Lev. xix. 34.) But we must not stop here. It is not, "remember the Sabbath to have it kept," but "to keep it." The words evidently correspond with the *preamble* to the ten commandments, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." From the position in which these words stand, we infer that they apply to the whole commandment, and not merely to a subordinate part. We must, therefore, supply in thought, "and let others keep the Sabbath," which indeed is included in the command to keep it. The conscious-

ness of deliverance leads to both ; first, he who is delivered will prove his gratitude to the deliverer by serving him, a duty implied in the preamble to the commandments, which speaks of the redemption as the universal ground of obligation, saying, as it were, "This did I for thee, what dost thou for me?" and then he will cherish affection for all who are in distress. For ye know from experience what they endure ; "ye know the heart of a stranger," and so, too, ye know from experience that the miserable are God's clients ; and the heart, which is thankful for its own deliverance, will be cheerfully occupied in reducing to practice the knowledge it has obtained.

Many have concluded from this passage, that the Old Testament Sabbath was a festival commemorative of the deliverance from Egypt. This opinion is as far from correct as the other, that it is established in Gen. ii. with specific reference to the *creation*. The deliverance from Egypt appears here, not as the *reason* of the festival, but as the *ground of obligation* to observe it, as also to keep the other commandments. This deliverance would not have been thus introduced, had it not been that at that time it held the first place amongst the works of God for his people. This being the case, it was necessarily one of the chief subjects of meditation on the Sabbath, whose work it was to contemplate the works of God, and praise him for his manifestations. But this did not constitute the *essence* of the institution, which would have been the case if the Sabbath had been designated here as strictly a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. This belongs to its local, temporary character alone. It can and must, therefore, change with the circumstances.

It is very evident that the Sabbath commandment in this shape could not be applied to the New Testament. But we must bear in mind that the redemption by Christ occupies in the New Testament the position held by the redemption from Egypt in the Old. Not as though the latter possessed no interest for the Church now ; but it has lost its central importance, and appears only as a prelude to the redemption by Christ.

We shall now confine ourselves entirely to the commandment in its *original form*. The first and second commandments relate to the heart, the third to the tongue, the fourth to the hand and foot. (Comp. Isa. lviii. 13, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure.") The first and second command us to fear God, the third to swear by his name, and the fourth to *serve* him. *Service* embraces all the acts of life. In Josh. xxiv. 14, "Now, therefore,

fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth," the service is co-extensive with the fear, the practical proof of its existence. In Job xxi. 14, 15, it is said of the wicked, "They say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" In this passage, whilst the latter verse shows that service involves worship in its stricter sense, the former proves that it denotes the whole conduct so far as it is pleasing to God. Service in this sense, which makes the whole life a worship, is used in Job xxxvi. 11, and Luke i. 75, "that we might serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days." But though this "pure and undefiled service," of which James speaks, must be included in the works of the Sabbath, yet it is evident that worship, in its stricter sense, distinguished the service of the Sabbath, since the other duties relating to superiors and neighbours are specially and fully prescribed afterwards.

From the whole character of the ten commandments there can be no doubt that *the Sabbath formed only a part of the worship of God*; that it is to be regarded only as a specimen; and that, in reality, the worship here required is one which runs through the whole life. This commandment was perfectly obeyed by Anna, "who departed not from the temple, but served with fastings and prayers day and night." And not less so by "the women who assembled at the door of the congregation" (Exod. xxxviii. 8), who withdrew from the world that they might give themselves up entirely to spiritual exercises. Only the pharisaic lovers of a mechanical religion could ever think that the letter of the command expresses all that it requires. On the other hand, however, we may learn, from the fact that only the Sabbath is named in the ten commandments, whilst no mention is made of the whole system of sacrifices, of festivals, &c., this alone being worthy to represent the whole, how important a position the Sabbath held, how all the rest settle in a group around it, and, therefore, to what inevitable ruin the Church is exposed when this is not preserved.

It is a question of importance, in what relation the command to rest stands to the preceding one, "to keep it holy;" whether this enjoins the consecration of the day to God in every respect, of which the resting is but one prominent feature; or whether the latter half of the command explains the former, and the keeping holy involves nothing more than resting. If the latter were correct, the bridge, which connects the Sabbath of the Old Testament with the Sunday of the New,

would be completely destroyed. If Rücker is right in saying, "The essence of the Jewish Sabbath consists in this—1. That the creation of the world was the object of contemplation; 2. That it was kept on the seventh day; and 3. That it was a day of perfect rest," we must grant that he is also right in denying that there is any connexion between the Sabbath and the Sunday. But more than this, if the keeping holy of the Sabbath meant only resting, the divine character of this institution, and indeed of the whole Mosaic law, would vanish. A religion that could only celebrate its sacred days by slothful inactivity, would not bear on its forehead the seal of divine origin.

If there were no other ground for disputing the position, that the sanctifying of the Sabbath involved only rest, we should find one in its late and doubtful origin. Josephus and Philo know nothing of it. To them the Sabbath is the day of devotion, of holy contemplation, of meditation on the law of the Lord, and rest is but the means to this end. Josephus says,* "He commanded, not that they should hear it once or twice, or frequently, but that every week they should leave their work and assemble to hear the law, and learn it accurately." Philo,† in words more conformed to the taste and style of the Gentiles, says, "For it was always the custom to engage in philosophical pursuits (*φιλοσοφειν*) whenever an opportunity could be found, especially on the seventh days; in these the teacher led the way and taught what ought to be said and done, and the people applied themselves by purity and goodness to amend their manners and lives. Hence, even now, on the seventh day the Jews study the philosophy of their fathers, setting apart that time for the pursuit of knowledge and the contemplation of the objects of Nature. For the houses of prayer in different cities, what are they but schools of learning?"

The originator of the opposite opinion was Spencer. In his work on the ritual law of the Hebrews, which appeared in England towards the end of the seventeenth century, at the time when Deism was gaining strength, he opposes those who maintain that the Sabbath was appointed for purposes of worship and devotion, and endeavours to prove that the festival of the Sabbath consisted only in the cessation of work. It was not extraordinary that Spencer should express this opinion. But it was strange that the pious and acute Vitringa was so incautious as to fall in with, and even to refer to, him. Thus he says, "The lawgiver commences with the summary of the com-

* Cont. Ap. b. ii. § 17.

† De Vita Mosis, p. 530.

mandment, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,’ and then explains, in the latter part, what keeping holy implies. This continuation contains directions to cease from work, and to extend this rest to others. And wherever this command of God is repeated, we find only the injunction to abstain entirely from work, which proves in our opinion that the keeping holy of the seventh day consisted merely, as the words of the commandment read, in entire abstinence from work.”—(Obs. Sacr., b. i. p. 292-3.)

The safest mode of deciding this question, whether the keeping holy consisted only in resting, or included something besides, will be to examine whether in general the other books of Moses speak only of the resting as that which distinguished the Sabbath, or whether they mention other modes of sanctifying it, and lay stress on other things as distinguishing this day from the rest of the week. We shall, if we do this, find it impossible to reconcile what occurs in other passages with the original command, unless we admit that even in the latter the “*keeping holy*” implied something more than rest.

The *peculiar sacrifice* offered on the Sabbath is at once a proof, that the rest was not the only mark of the Sabbath. And even Vitringa remarks on this, “God commanded that the offerings on that day should be increased. But since the offerings were outward signs of the worship of God, the Israelites were, as it seems, reminded by this, that God required from them on this day more worship than on any other.”

Moreover, great stress is laid in this law upon the *study of the law of the Lord*, which contains not only his commandments, but, in close connexion with these, all his past acts, in order that, in this exercise, motives might be found to keep the commandments, and their hearts warmed and made willing to obey. In Deut. vi. 6, 7, we read, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Compare with this Deut. xvii. 19, in which the book of the law is to be always by the side of their future king, and he is to read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God; and Josh. i. 8, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” With this view of the importance of the law, how is it possible to suppose that it was not the intention of the lawgiver that the spare time, caused by the

leisure of the seventh day, should be employed in the study of this law? This followed so inevitably, that it did not require to be expressly said. If the law really possesses the importance attached to it here, the seventh day could not be perfectly and truly sanctified without giving it a prominent place. And again, the duty of the Levites was to "teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law" (Deut. xxxiii. 10); and the work of the priests to "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses" (Lev. x. 11). Now if this was the task of the priests and Levites, who were scattered through all Israel, that it might be the more easily discharged, how could the intention of the lawgiver have been any other, than that they should especially employ in their calling, that one day, which alone offered them a perfectly free scope for the discharge of its duties? This is especially confirmed by the analogous arrangement made for the public reading of the law during the Sabbatic year. From 2 Kings iv. 23, we learn that the free mode of assembling adopted in the synagogues was very ancient. The pious Jews of the ten tribes, as we may infer from this passage, were accustomed to meet on the Sabbaths, with the prophets, who had taken the place, in this kingdom, of the banished priests. Compare also Acts xv. 21, according to which "Moses has of old time in every city them that preach him."

All doubt, however, is removed by the fact, that in Lev. xxiii. 3, *assemblies for the worship of God are expressly enjoined on the Sabbath*. "Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a *holy convocation*; ye shall do no work therein." How completely this fact overthrows the more contracted notion of the sanctification of the Sabbath, is evident from the forced interpretation which Vitringa and those who adopt this opinion are driven to employ, in order to set it aside.*

The most important duty of the "holy assemblies" at Jerusalem was no doubt the offering of the sacrifices, which had to be presented as part of the worship of the Sabbath. The natural accompani-

* The word here translated a holy convocation, Vitringa tries to deprive of its force by rendering it "a proclamation of holiness;" "it was announced by the herald or by the trumpet that these days were holy." But the parallel passages show that the word exactly corresponds with our word congregation, *e. g.*, Isa. iv. 5: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her *assemblies*," &c. Num. x. 2: "Make two trumpets—for the calling of the *assembly*."

ment of sacrifice is *prayer*. As early as the time of the patriarchs the sacrifice was connected with "calling upon the Lord." That *singing* also formed a part, is evident from the fact that one of the psalms is headed "for the Sabbath day," for which its contents are specially adapted. From the importance attached in the law itself to the *public reading of the law*, this could scarcely have been omitted, and with the reading, explanation and application would soon be connected. But the bringing of offerings was confined to the national temple. In other places the worship was free from all such restrictions.

We have thus clearly shown from passages occurring in the law of Moses itself in reference to the sanctification of the Sabbath, that this was never to be restricted to rest. We are led to the same result by that which we read in the *other books of the Old Testament*. Everywhere we see that so contracted a sanctification was never thought of.

That all *trade and commerce rested on the Sabbath*, as well as on the other festivals, even the least important, such as the new moon, appear from Amos viii. 5, 6, where the wicked say, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" &c. In Nehem. x. 32, it is ordered that if the people of the land bring anything into the town on the Sabbath, even though it could be taken in without interfering with the rest, and without that work which was forbidden on the Sabbath, it was not to be bought. Now in the Mosaic law the cessation of trade is not expressly commanded, so that here we have a proof that no one thought of restricting the observance to rest. The sanctification of the Sabbath, and also of the festivals, the setting apart, and dedication of them to God, precluded that trade, in which a man pursues his own interests, seeks his own advantage, and which tends therefore to foster selfishness and a worldly mind.

If the law of God had appointed rest alone as that which constituted the sanctification of the Sabbath, Isaiah would be chargeable with presumption for including so much more, in his directions as to the mode of keeping it. (Ch. lviii. 13.) All that devolved on him was to *explain* the law. But there we read, "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." Here the proper observance of the Sabbath is said to comprise the unconditional and entire renunciation and denial of all their natural desires, and complete self-consecration to God. We see,

therefore, that a man might be guilty of Sabbath-breaking, who preserved the outward rest most scrupulously ; that the command was not limited to the external action, but that it applied to the *tongue*, which was not to speak vain words on this day, but only such as promoted the glory of God, and the improvement of one's neighbour and one's self ; and the *heart*, which was not to feel the day to be a burden, but to rejoice in it as a gracious invitation of God ; that, in fact, it was to be a day of rest from the distractions, the cares, the labours and sins of this miserable world. And when Ezekiel (xx. 13) condemns the whole sinful life of the Israelites as a pollution of the Sabbath, it is evident that he looks upon it as something more than a day of rest.

There is yet another point of view which establishes the correctness of our conclusion. *By excluding everything but rest from the keeping of the Sabbath holy, we make a difference between the rest of the Sabbath, and that of the other festivals*, in direct opposition to Lev. xxiii., where they are all classed together. In this chapter the "rest" is clearly pointed out, as only the means to the more important end of devotion. This is shown particularly in ver. 28, "Ye shall do no work in that same day: *for* it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God." Again, in ver. 32, the rest is brought into immediate connexion with the "afflicting of their souls." And lastly, as in this chapter, the cessation of all employment goes hand in hand with the holy meeting and the sacrifice, and is evidently the means and condition of a holy state of mind ;* so also in Exod. xii. 16, the connexion is indicated between a day of rest and a holy meeting. "And on the first day (*sc.* of the passover) there is a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you ; no manner of work shall be done on them ; save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you."

If, then, we have allotted to the rest of the Sabbath its proper place and design, it follows that these words of Thomas Aquinas are quite in accordance with the spirit of the divine law :—"Corporeal labours are opposed to the keeping of a Sabbath, so far as they interfere with a man's attention to divine things. And because sin interferes with this far more than corporeal labour, he who sins on the day breaks the commandment more than he who works."

And, again, if the rest is neither the only keeping, nor in fact in

* Comp. vers. 3, 7, 21, 24, 25, 35, 36, 37.

itself the "keeping holy" of the Sabbath at all; if its only intention is that it should furnish the means of devotion; the root of all pharisaic scruples, and straining at gnats, is destroyed, for these spring entirely from attributing importance to the rest itself, and looking upon this as the essence of the ordinance. As far as the general arrangements are concerned, it belongs to the Church, and as far as regards particular ones, it must be left to the individual, to decide to what extent rest is required, for the purpose it is intended to serve. There are circumstances under which it is not only allowable, but a duty to disturb our rest, which is only the means to an end, even for the sake of the end, which the rest is intended to subserve. The priests, in the words of Christ, profane the Sabbath and are blameless; and what is true of the priests must, in a certain sense, apply to all believers, who are a royal priesthood, a holy people. The Sabbath commandment never seems to forbid works of love, and care for the eternal good of our neighbours, except when a factitious value is set upon the rest which it enjoins.

On the other hand, it cannot be without an important reason, that, after the general command "to keep the Sabbath holy" is given, of all the elements which enter into the keeping, only this one, of rest, is prominently brought forward and fully developed. It proves to us that rest is of supreme importance, not only to the celebration of the Lord's day, but in general to our life in God, and to the continued existence of the Church. With this, observation and experience fully agree. They show us that incessant work, by making men dull and sad, is a most dangerous foe to religion and devotion; that no one, professor or working man, can withstand its destructive influence; that worldly amusements, if kept within certain bounds, and not leading to sin, do not produce by any means so injurious an effect, or so thoroughly harden the heart; that, therefore, any attempt to improve the observance of the Lord's day must begin precisely here.

If we consider the great importance attached to rest in the law, even the minister of the word will feel impelled to avoid breaking in upon the rest of the Lord's day, as far as he possibly can. He will be far from inverting the commandment for himself, so as to read, "Six days shalt thou, in whole or part, rest, and on the seventh shalt thou labour;" he will endeavour, as far as possible, to perform in the week those labours "by the sweat of his brow," which are necessary to prepare for the duties of the Sunday. So, also, the efforts of others for the promotion of religion, should be regulated in accordance with the necessity

for a day of rest. It cannot be beneficial, that after six days' hard and wearing exertion in business, a seventh should follow of the same character, except that the work is devoted to the good of others. If this were carried to the same extent here, as we believe it to be in England and America, of which, however, there is no immediate probability, the advantage to the kingdom of God would be only an apparent one. Apart from the fact that such workers are injuring their own souls, they are injuring their usefulness also, for only a mind which is cheerful, strong, and invigorated by rest, is in a proper state for exerting a truly holy influence upon others. Such a mind accomplishes more, by its mere existence, than others with all their running hither and thither ever can. The progress of the Church has always been best promoted by those whose chief care it was to keep their own lamps bright. To them others were sure to come, and light their lamps at theirs.

Lastly, if we rightly understand the meaning of the rest enjoined on the Sabbath, the close connexion between the Sabbath and Sunday will at once appear, and all must draw back ashamed, who will acknowledge no thought, in the appointment of the Sabbath, of any but the Jews. The meaning of the words of the Lord, that "no jot or tittle of the law should pass," becomes strikingly clear. "This," says Calvin, "we have in common with the people of the Old Testament, that we require one day free, that we may thus be in a better condition, both for learning and for attesting our faith."

Some have thought, that the Sabbath of the Old Testament no more affects the Church of the New, than the other festivals. But the express mention of the former in the ten commandments, without the other, indicates a difference between them. The Sabbath has less of a temporary, Old Testament, character than the others. The decision, that every seventh day shall be devoted to God, is founded on a constant and universal necessity of human nature, on the fact that men will surely become ungodly, unless there is some arrangement for a regular intermission of the labours and cares of this earthly life. The festivals, on the contrary, have either a natural origin, and were *adopted*, as it were, by the Mosaic legislation, or else a specifically Jewish origin.

Some have thought (amongst others Neander), that the annual Christian festivals stand in the same relation as the Sunday to the Christian life. In both cases we must, in their opinion, recognise the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their historical development, and a divine purpose in the historical necessity which led under certain con-

ditions to these results, and, therefore, should feel bound to follow this guidance of the Spirit, and arrangement of God.

We fully acknowledge this common ground of obligation to celebrate both the Sunday and the other festivals. And had we no other ground for retaining the Sunday, it would be still wrong to give it up. In sentences such as this of Kraussold, "Jesus has set us free from the ordinances of men. The Church has no right to make laws," we see only homage to historical rationalism, whose true successor is rationalism commonly so called. Still, on account of the great importance of a weekly returning Lord's day, God in his love has set his seal on this more clearly than on the rest, has sanctified it more expressly, and he, who opposes so evident an expression of the will of God, commits a greater sin.

IV. THE SABBATH A SIGN BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that men may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you; every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death. For whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath, the holy rest of the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh he rested, and was refreshed."—(Exod. xxxi. 13—17.)

The injunction to preserve the Sabbath, which is here repeated, as is usual in the books of Moses, with greater fulness, concludes the instructions concerning the tabernacle, and the appointment, consecration, and clothing of the priests, and all that belongs to the service of the sanctuary. We see again, in this combination, the close connexion between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. Without the Sabbath the sanctuary would have been instituted in vain, for worship would not have been maintained. This confirms our view, that sacred meetings were held on the Sabbath; that the cessation of work was intended to make room for the worship of God. Had it been kept only by rest, there would have been no connexion between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. The employment of the singular in ver. 14 proves that the Sabbaths spoken of in ver. 13 denote the weekly day of rest, and not the festivals in general.

The Sabbath is to be a sign between God and his people : on the part of God, who appointed it, a symbol of his choice ("that men may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you"); on the side of the chosen, a confession to God. The point to be regarded is not exclusively, or even chiefly, this, that the seventh day particularly is devoted to God, or even one in seven; but the principal thing is the manner in which it is to be kept. The whole essence of true religion is brought to view on the Sabbath, the difference between the Church and the world fully appears. In the wilderness of the world's indifference to its Creator, where there is no recognition of God, there is one oasis—a people serving God in spirit and in truth, and entrusted by himself with his own beautiful service. In the manner in which the day of the Lord is celebrated, there is seen in the clearest light the attitude in which a people stands to its Lord, and the Lord to it. The day of the Lord is the gauge of the religious life. It is a great error for any to attempt to erase and annihilate the seal, which God thus set upon his Church, that he might separate it from the world, and make it visible, and approachable by the world; an error, that can only have its deepest root in ungodliness. And it is a mark worthy of the Church's and each individual's aim, to preserve this seal from becoming obliterated.

And because the Sabbath is a sign, it is "a sanctuary." "By this," says Calvin, "he urges his people to preserve this institution as a holy and indestructible one, because with the neglect of it religion would fall. It would show an inexcusable contempt wilfully to overthrow that which God intended as a mark of distinction between his people and the heathen nations." To wipe away the Sabbath would be to make the Church unknown. And this, again, would be to dishonour God, who can only be found in the Church, and to offend against one's brethren.

"He who desecrates the Sabbath shall be put to death." The Church of Christ has taken a right course, in never in any place visiting upon those, who fail to observe the Sunday, the punishments with which the Old Testament threatened those who broke the Sabbath commandment, even where the strictest theory of the sanctity of the Sunday has been adopted. The punishments appointed by the Mosaic law are essentially distinct from its commandments. They presuppose, for the most part, the weakness and want of spirituality which characterised the Old Testament times. As sin could not be successfully attacked within and rooted out from the heart, the offender must be

dealt with from without, by which he only received according to his deserts. Under the New Testament all is changed. Since Christ has appeared in the flesh, and especially since he has brought in eternal redemption, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, since he has poured out his Spirit upon all flesh, the Church has been happily delivered from the necessity of dealing with offenders in so harsh a way. Still the punishments appointed by the law preserve even yet their importance in reference to the Church of the New Testament, and the words of Christ, "no jot or tittle shall pass," apply here. A sin which, by the law of God, under the Old Testament, was visited with death, must be a great and grievous one, and one with which we dare not trifle now. To bring this to our consciousness, there is still importance in the words, "he shall be put to death."

The Sabbath is designated "a perpetual covenant," "a sign for ever." Some have found these words inconvenient, and wished to weaken their force; but it is clear that an abrogation, which puts a *smaller* in its place, is not to be thought of; that the Sabbath, so far as its *substance* is concerned, must belong to that which is the true continuation of the Old Testament Israel, the Church of the New Testament; that only that, which is not essential, can pass away, and that this could only die to rise again in a brighter and more glorious form.

V. THE SABBATH NOT TO BE SUSPENDED IN HARVEST.

"Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest, in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest."—(Exod. xxxiv. 21.)

The Sabbath is mentioned here in a review, which is rendered necessary by the renewal of the covenant, after it had been broken by the people. The whole section has the appearance of being thrown in as an episode.

Clericus remarks here, "'in earing time and harvest,' that is, at the time when work is especially necessary, in order that this might not be used as an excuse for breaking the Sabbath on other equally urgent occasions." The weakness of the spiritual powers, which should have preserved the Sabbath amongst the people, rendered it necessary that under the Old Testament it should be the more carefully hedged about. Works of necessity could not be permitted, for caprice would soon have made them a cloak. The Church of the New Testament, which possesses the more powerful weapons of the word and the Spirit, makes the works of necessity an exception. It is in a condition to guard against abuse. But even for it, this "in earing time and

harvest," has not been said in vain. It teaches it not to strain unduly the notion of necessity. It imposes on masters the obligation to do all in their power to diminish the necessity of their dependents.

VI. NO FIRE TO BE KINDLED ON THE SABBATH.

"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day."—(Exod. xxxv. 2, 3.)

Moses begins here to communicate to the people the commands, which the Lord gave to him after the conclusion of the covenant. The covenant which was broken by the people is here *renewed*, and it is therefore time to make this communication. As the instructions of God to Moses end by inculcating the observance of the Sabbath, it is with this that those of Moses to the people commenced. He then turns immediately to the explanation of the arrangements for the *tabernacle*.

Here, too, the close connexion is evident between the Sabbath and the sanctuary, and hence its character as a day of worship. It is separated from all the other times of worship, which are only accessory; and stands here as the representative of the whole.

We are not to regard ver. 3, as increasing the stringency of the law by a new prohibition. The injunction, "Ye shall kindle no fire," is simply an explanation of the commandment, "Ye shall do no work." The law distinguishes between work and labour.* In Lev. xxiii., all work is forbidden on the Sabbath and the day of atonement; on the other festivals, labour alone. This distinction is everywhere maintained. In Exod. xii. 16, in which all work is forbidden on the first and seventh days of the passover, the lighting of fires and cooking are expressly excepted, showing that these come under the denomination of work.

However, since the term work is nowhere strictly defined, the explanation given in this passage shows that it was necessary to guard against making too many exceptions. Without imitating the Rabbinical writers in their straining at gnats, it must still be admitted that this injunction, "Ye shall kindle no fire," was intended only as an example, showing that occupation on the Sabbath should be kept

* Rendered in our version "servile work;" more properly labour, including business.—Tr.

within narrow bounds, so far as this was possible, without falling into an anxious scrupulosity, which was foreign to the Sabbath, or an unsociable state, which would be decidedly opposed to it. This prohibition, too, proves that the Sabbath commandment could not be transferred without change to the Church of the New Testament. Such a command is based upon the peculiarities of the climate, in which the people lived.

The principal reason for the distinction made between the rest enjoined on the Sabbath and that required on the other festivals (though the difference is not great), was, evidently, because there is a greater difficulty in steadfastly maintaining a weekly festival, and a worldly mind is more strongly tempted to break away. With us* there is far less work done on the yearly festivals than on the Sunday. For this reason, the requirements were made more stringent for the Sabbath amongst the Jews. The main design is undoubtedly to prohibit labour, but in order to guard more surely against any approach to this, the adjacent ground is surrounded by a sacred fence; just as the Nazarite, to keep him more surely from drinking wine, was forbidden even to eat grapes. If it be admitted that the greater amount of rest required on the Sabbath than on the other festivals, was only intended as means to an end, it follows that the greatest importance belonged to that which was common to them all. That which is simply intended as means, may, under other circumstances, give place to other means. It assumes the character of instruction rather than of a command.

VII. THE SHEW-BREAD RENEWED ON THE SABBATH.

“And thou shalt take fine flour, and take twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute.”—(Lev. xxiv. 5—9.)

In this passage instructions are given, that every Sabbath fresh shew-bread shall be set before the Lord.

With regard to the meaning of the table with the shew-bread, the

* In Germany.

following points may be regarded as indisputable, and help to a correct interpretation of the institution :—1. *This symbol is not to be regarded as a promise, but as a precept* ; it cannot, that is, denote what God will give to the Church, but what the Church ought to present to God. The name shew-bread indicates this. It was so called because it was set by the people *before God* continually (Exod. xxv. 30). It is expressly mentioned (Lev. xxiv. 8) as a gift of the children of Israel to God (not of God to them) : “ Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, an everlasting covenant on the part of the children of Israel.” Lastly, the loaves were dedicated and offered to God by prayer, in its Old Testament form of incense : “ And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon the row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire unto the Lord.” Thus the loaves themselves were regarded as offerings. It is evident that they were considered as consumed in a spiritual sense, together with the incense, from the words, “ an offering made by fire.” 2. *In addition to the bread, wine was placed upon the table.* This is indeed nowhere expressly stated, but both in Exod. xxv. 29 and Num. iv. 7, the bowls “ with which the wine is poured out,” or of the drink-offering, are mentioned, as forming part of the furniture of the table of shew-bread. It follows from this that only that explanation can be the correct one, which gives to the bread such a meaning, as makes the wine its natural, and, indeed, inseparable accompaniment. 3. Every explanation is to be rejected, which does not connect the table, on which stood the bread and wine, with *the provision made by subjects for their king* ; which denies the correctness of the view entertained by Dr. Paulus, that it was “ the natural provision for the national king,” and does not recognise an analogy between the bread and wine, set by the Israelites before their invisible King, and the supplies provided for his visible representative. 4. *It would be absurd to suppose, that the bread and wine in their material form are offered as gifts acceptable to God* ; that they are placed there for their own sakes, and not for the sake of that which they denote. The name, Jehovah, alone is sufficient to show the folly of such an opinion ; for in this name so thoroughly are the depths of the Deity explored, that he appears as pure absolute Being ; for that is the meaning of this name. Before this such frivolities fall away. Whoever can for a moment entertain them, has not the least conception of the nature of the Old Testament religion. But apart from this, and the consideration adduced by Bähr, that “ only bread and wine were offered, provisions found on the tables of the poor, instead of the im-

posing banquets of a king," it cannot be right, where all else is symbolical, enclosing a deep spiritual meaning in the outward form, to come down in this case alone into the sphere of rude literality. How can we tear away the table of shew-bread from its connexion with the candlestick and altar of incense?

According to this, the following view appears to be the correct one. The loaves, whose number, like the twelve stones in the breast-plate of the high priest, refer to the twelve tribes, and the wine, are truly the supplies which Israel offers to its King; but this King is a spiritual, heavenly one; the supplies, therefore, though here presented in a material form, must really be spiritual too. The bread and the wine are spiritless unless they are representatives of *good works*. The prayer to God, "Give us this day our daily bread," and the promise on the strength of which it is offered, are accompanied by the demand of God, *my* daily bread give me to-day; for as God never requires without giving, so he never gives without requiring. And this demand is complied with when the Church, by its diligence in good works, presents to God those offerings for which he has given strength, and blessing, and success.

This opinion is confirmed by comparison with the bloodless offering, the so-called meat offering, which is indisputably related to the shew-bread. The shew-bread was the perpetual meat offering of the whole community; it was in this fact, that it was *continually* before the Lord, that it differed from the other meat offerings, which were only presented at certain times, on special occasions, and generally with reference to the circumstances of individuals. In other respects, both as to the nature and the purport, they were exactly alike. The meat offerings also were to be combined with wine, a proof that they too were symbols of the provisions to be presented to God. Bread and wine, both in the Old and New Testaments, are the usual representatives and symbols of nourishment. It is evident that the spiritual provisions, denoted by them, are good works; since this is the only view which brings out the meaning of the rite and all its particulars. The meat offerings were always to be accompanied by a bloody sacrifice. They were not allowed, however, to accompany every sacrifice. They might be brought with burnt offerings, and thank offerings; but never with sin offerings or trespass offerings. Expiation and reconciliation must precede the ability to perform good works; the unreconciled heart does not possess this ability; good works do not *accompany* reconciliation, they *follow* as a necessary consequence. He who has been reconciled

by the sin offering, first devotes himself, his whole being, to the Lord, under the symbol of the burnt offering ; he then, under that of the thank offering, presents his thanksgiving and prayer ; and, lastly, consecrates his works under the symbol of the meat offering. The last was to be without leaven and honey. Leaven is in the Scriptures the symbol of *corruption*. The name of the unleavened loaves, mazzoth, meaning *pure* loaves, indicates the spiritual counterparts pointed out by Paul, *sincerity* and *truth*. Thus the prohibition to mix leaven with the meat offering taught them, that good works were not to be spoiled by any admixture of unholy corruption, which would make them unfit to be spiritual food for the holy God. The prohibition to use honey, which resembles the grape cakes* mentioned in Hos. iii. 1, signifies, that he who will perform good works must not give himself up to sensuality, but practise self-discipline. By the side of the prohibition to use leaven and honey, stands the command to mix salt and oil. Salt indicates that which is sound, preserved from moral corruption. Oil is here, as always, a symbol of the Spirit of God. It signifies that good works, as they rest upon reconciliation, can never be performed without the grace of the Spirit of God.

It has been objected by Kurz to this exposition that "it is harsh, unsuitable, and repulsive, inasmuch as it regards the food, the bread, as that which is necessary, indispensable to life, which cannot apply to Jehovah, whose life is not dependent on Israel's performing its covenant duties."

But the whole system of sacred symbols, including the Lord's parables, would fall, if subjected to such a test as this. They have necessarily a one-sided character. All that we have to do is to find out the sides, in which the natural corresponds with the spiritual, and can, therefore, be used as its representative. The point to be regarded here is not so much the necessity of the Lord, though *in a certain sense* even this is included, as the duty of his people. And there is the less reason for objecting to this representation of the duties owed to the Lord, under the figure of nourishment to be brought to him, since the same figure is frequently met with in the Scriptures.

Abraham said to the heavenly guests, "I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts ! And they said, So do as thou hast said." Abraham did it and they ate. The Lord would certainly not have accepted Abraham's offer if spiritual food had not been hidden in

* Rendered in our translation, "flagons of wine."

the material ; if Abraham, that is, had not offered therewith a loving heart. We have either a fable before us, or the transaction has a symbolical character.

In Solomon's Song, iv. 16, the bride says to the bridegroom, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." And the bridegroom answers, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk." The exclamation of the sacred poet, which concludes the section, shows us in what the meal consisted. "Eat, friends; drink, yea, drink and be drunken with *love*." It is *love*, then, to the enjoyment of which the bride invites the bridegroom.

Isaiah says, in the parable of the vineyard, ch. v. 2, "And he made a winepress therein, and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." The grapes which the vineyard should have brought forth to its Lord, are, as ver. 7 shows, justice and righteousness; the wild grapes, which it really produces, oppression and a cry. The expression, "he looked," shows with what certainty the Lord had reckoned upon the fruit, as it is in the very nature of the Church to provide food for the Lord.

Matthew narrates (ch. xxi. 18, 19) of the Lord, "Now in the morning as he returned into the city he hungered. And seeing a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only; and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away." The fig-tree is the Jewish people. The words, "he hungered," should be particularly noticed. It shows that, with reference to the good works of the members of the Church, neither indifference, nor an absolute sense of need exists on the part of the Lord. The latter could only exist if the laws of his Being were not executed in their punishment of the unfaithful. The Lord found only leaves, the decorations of their heartless hypocrisy. Mark adds, "for the time of figs was not yet." For the spiritual fig-tree it should always be the time of figs; it is its own fault if it is not so, and this fault infallibly brings its own judgment.

In Rev. iii. 20 we read, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

We have in these passages enough to prove that the objections brought against our explanation have not force enough to shake it, especially as it rests on such firm positive grounds.

We would just notice in passing the explanation given by Meier.

"By it," says he, "they express their consciousness that they are dependent on a higher power, and owe entirely to it their enjoyment of the gifts of nature. They offer the bread to God, that they may receive it again, not as procured by themselves, but as a gift from the hands of God, and that as such it may be eaten by the priests, the representatives of the twelve tribes." The shew-bread, then, is the expression of thanks for the daily bread. In thanksgiving, in Meier's opinion, prayer is also included.

But from this explanation there results a want of harmony between the table of shew-bread, and the other furniture of the tabernacle, namely, the altar of incense, which pointed out the people of the covenant as a people of prayer, and the candlestick, which indicated that they were a people of light. By the side of these there is something very tame in mere thanks for daily bread.

The one task of the people of God, as pointed out as early as Gen. xviii. 19, was to do justice and righteousness, and to keep the way of the Lord. "To love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and their neighbour as themselves," is set forth, in a whole series of passages in the law, as the highest claim which God makes upon his people, and this could not fail to be exhibited in the sanctuary, whose furniture set forth in symbol the duties of the people of the Lord.

If we have correctly explained the meaning of the shew-bread, there will be no doubt as to the reason of its being renewed every Sabbath. Diligence in good works ought to pervade the whole life, but it would soon flag, if not invigorated by days of rest and meeting before the Lord. Without the day of the Lord, the Church can never attain its end, to do justice and righteousness. When the observance of this day is neglected, in the same degree will the observance of righteousness be neglected too.

Every Sabbath (according to the catalogue of offerings given in Num. xxviii. 9), a special burnt offering, meat offering, and drink offering, were to be brought, "beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering." This doubling of the offerings corresponds with the fact, that, on the Sabbath, fresh shew-bread was laid on the table. If the doubling of the offerings indicated that the Sabbath was the day of increased devotion, it also pointed it out as the source of moral vigour, as surely as good works are only performed in God; and the arrangement with regard to the shew-bread did nothing more than unfold this intimation, and present it in a symbolical form.

Let him who feels that he makes no progress, and must confess that he is a barren tree, look first of all how he observes the Lord's day.

VIII. THE SABBATIC YEAR.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee. And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat."—(Lev. xxv. 1—7.)

This passage contains the injunction that after the land is possessed it shall be *left untilled every seventh year*. The year of rest is to be also a year of communism, of suspension of ownership. All that grows spontaneously is to belong, not to the possessor, but to the public. It is, moreover, to be observed by the cancelling of all debts. (Deut. xv.)

The close connexion between this year and the Sabbath is shown by the transference of the name, "the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest to the land;" "the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord." A promise of special blessing during the sixth year is also given in Lev. xxv. 20—22, analogous to that given with regard to the sixth day in Exod. xvi. 5. And, lastly, the positive elements are accompanied by negative ones of rest and suspension. In Deut. xxxi. 10—13, it is decreed that the law shall be publicly read to all the people this year; from which we conclude that it is to be a year of devotion, of meeting, and religious meditation.

The Sabbath and the Sabbatic year both assume that work and possession promote selfishness; that they stifle the divine life, unless a period of respite is given, in which they are laid aside, and a free course opened for the soul's progress towards God.

The institution of the Sabbatic year is everywhere mentioned as only intended for the people of the Old Testament. It is confined to Canaan, and nowhere is the intimation given that it is to be extended beyond it. And even with reference to the Jews, the same importance is never attached to it as to the Sabbath. Whilst the one is not spoken

of till a late period, and then only in a few passages, the Sabbath stands out prominently from the very first in the law of God, and is introduced at every turn. It is not altogether without reason that Calvin regards this command as a means of enforcing more strongly the observance of the Sabbath. It is given, he says, that the sanctity of the Sabbath may shine forth on every hand, and thus the children of Israel may be instigated to maintain it by contemplating the land.

Yet certain as it is that this command is based upon the peculiar circumstances of the Jewish people, and, as to the letter, in no way affects us, it is as certain, that it contains a germ restricted to no age. It teaches the Church in every age, that if men are for ever working, scheming, grasping without intermission; if there are no periods of respite, in which the hindrances to the higher life are removed, and the spirit is left free to seek its Author, it will never prosper. It urges us conscientiously to secure this respite, as far as we have it in our power. The Sabbatic year has ceased, but all that is said of it serves to enliven our zeal in the maintenance of the weekly festival which we still possess. The Sabbath year grew out of the Sabbath; it served also to make the latter fruitful.

IX. A MAN STONED FOR GATHERING WOOD.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses."—(Num. xv. 32—36.)

A man who had gathered wood on the Sabbath is brought forth at the command of the Lord, and stoned by the whole congregation before the camp.

Calvin says rightly, "the guilty man did not fall through error, but through gross contempt of the law, so that he treated it as a light matter to overturn and destroy all that is holy." It is evident from the manner of its introduction that the account is not given with any regard to its chronological position; it reads, "and when the children of Israel were *in the wilderness* they found a man gathering sticks upon the Sabbath." It stands simply as an example of the presumptuous breach of the law, of which the preceding verses speak. He was one

who "despised the word of the Lord, and broke his commandment," (ver. 31); one who "with a high hand sinned and reproached the Lord," (ver. 30).

Had he transgressed from *want*, even under the Old Testament, a different sentence would have been passed. Under the New, even transgressors of this kind are dealt with in a different way. The Church of the New Testament happily does not make use of stones against the sinner. But here, too, it is only the letter that has passed away; the Divine sentence, in the spirit of it, has importance still. A sin which under the Old Testament was visited with stoning, is not to be treated as a light matter, either by the individual or the Church. By doing this, by substituting indifference for stones, whereas it is its work, instead of stoning the body, to stone the conscience of the sinner by means of the word of God, the Church of the New Testament would sink below the level of that of the Old.

X. THE SABBATH A DAY OF PLEASURE.

"And I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her festive seasons."—(Hosea ii. 11.)

The festivals answered a double purpose—they were days of holy consecration, and days of pleasure. (Num. x. 10.) Israel had neglected the first, and as a merited punishment God had deprived it of the second. In proof of that he announces the cessation of the festivals, as in itself the end of the days of pleasure; he places in the foreground all her mirth, and then passes from the general to particulars.

The prophet can only have referred here to the festivals which had been instituted by God; otherwise the notion of recompense would be inapplicable. God only takes from the Israelites what they have first taken from him. The festivals are mentioned in the same order as in Col. ii. 16. The feasts are the three yearly festivals; next in order is the monthly festival of the new moon; and lastly the weekly one, the Sabbath. The phrase, "all her festive seasons," connects all together under one general term.

The first thing which strikes us in this passage is the finger of God raised to threaten, if his command, "Thou shalt keep the festival," is not better observed. The year 1848 gave to us a taste of the import of these words, "I make all your mirth cease." But this was but the beginning of sorrows.

The Sabbatic years, which the people of the Old Testament had so

wickedly neglected to observe, had to be observed afterwards. During the period of the Babylonian captivity Judea lay waste, "until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). Nor has the righteousness of God lost its energy under the New Testament. Even with us a reckoning will have to come, when we may have to say, "The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning." We may have to celebrate mournful Sundays and festivals then.

But the passage is of importance in another respect. The festivals, and especially the Sabbath, appear here as *days of mirth*. This is not indeed the principal feature, which, on the contrary, is said emphatically to consist in their being days of consecration, whilst it is denounced as a sin that they should be changed entirely into days of pleasure. But as a subordinate object, this is made very apparent, and it is only as a punishment for the neglect of the other that the pleasure is taken away. This design is indicated in the Mosaic law, though it is placed far behind the more important object. In Num. x. 10, the festivals in general are termed "days of gladness;" and in Exod. xxiii. 12, the Sabbath is especially pointed out as a day of natural refreshment and recreation to those who through the week have borne the burden and heat of the day. With these expressions before us, we must acknowledge that Rothe is correct in saying, "the festivals were essentially days of joy, and that not exclusively of a religious character;" and with reference to the weekly festival, "this was to be essentially a day of rest and refreshment, a breathing time amidst the toil and trouble of the present state of being; a day of joy, in which a higher element of life should both invigorate and exalt." It is not for us to be more oppressive and severe than God, who knows our labour and distress upon the earth, which he has cursed; it is not for us to deprive the poor and oppressed of the people of that recreation and refreshment which his merciful love allowed in former times. We must not expect to promote the chief end by opposing or ignoring the minor object which was authorized by God himself. A melancholy, dull, oppressed spirit may indeed be brought to a certain pietistic level, but will never be able to soar with gladness to its God. And as God deprived the people of the festivals as days of joy, when they had refused to observe them as days of worship; so, on the other hand, to deny to the people all that is cheerful on such days as these, would only lead them sinfully to neglect them as days of worship too.

In what way is the Church affected by this design of the festivals, including the Sabbath, of the Jews?

The most evident duty of the Church is thus stated by Rothe: "It has not only to take care that its worship shall not be disturbed by any other engagements of the day of rest, but to see also that these shall never be of such a kind as to clash with that calm spirit of worship which should pervade the whole day." But it will not do for the Church to rest satisfied with this exclusively negative, overwatchful position. It will never succeed in checking the search for enjoyment elsewhere, unless it learns how to provide it within its own circle, and ceases to be so monotonous, so unbending, so stern and gloomy, so sermon-mad, as to be unable to teach its children to *rejoice before the Lord*.—(Lev. xxiii. 40.)

"Even enjoyment," says Hirscher, "is not without a good effect upon the mind. It was, therefore, judicious and with good intention, that the Church introduced into its service much which was designed to help the poor and often downtrodden people to rejoice before the Lord. And even if processions, for example, could do little to edify, they were not without worth when regarded in this light, that they ministered to religious enjoyment."

In this respect our Church has greatly erred, and if it would but earnestly apply itself to the work, it might reap more fruit from this than from the other Sunday arrangements, which, indeed, must also continue, but to which many ministers of the Church are apt to attach too great importance. There may be cases in which the magistrate must be called upon to interfere, as, for instance, to protect servants against their masters, who wish to rob them of the Sunday. But for the Church to do this, is to proclaim its weakness and to disgrace itself, for its calling is of a different kind from this. The more the Church is in fault, for having by its austerity increased the disregard of the Sunday, the farther must it be prepared to go, that it may bring back to its worship, by the enjoyment it offers, those whom pleasure has led away. Love must instigate it, not always to keep to the well-trodden and easy road of sermon-worship; must make it as fertile in the discovery of attractions and sacred pleasures, as the world has been in the invention of worldly amusements. Only this will make the Sunday attractive to the people again. He who thinks that this is beneath his dignity, forgets that he serves a church of the people, which involves much that is difficult, but much also that carries a blessing with it, as surely as we have a Saviour, who came to seek that which was lost. If we look at the present condition of our people, we cannot but smile, though with pain, at the attempts made to promote the

keeping of the Sunday, without applying any but the ordinary means. All that can be secured in this way will be, that there will be less work, but more drinking, &c. We are glad, however, that a beginning has been made, in a different way, and that it only remains to pursue a work, already commenced with the evident blessing of God. To this beginning we reckon the liturgical services, which, apart from other considerations, are justified by this, that the great mass of the people are still no further advanced than the stand-point of the Old Testament, and must therefore be attracted by that which is suited to this condition. We reckon also the growing popularity of missionary festivals; and in connexion with these we notice the first signs of a renewal of pilgrimages, but in an evangelical spirit. We have been particularly struck by an arrangement lately made by several ministers of the province of Saxony. In a certain neighbourhood a missionary festival is held every Sunday at a particular place. The other congregations, with their pastor at the head, proceed to this spot, singing "pilgrim hymns." We have here a sign that the Church is thinking of pouring the old wine into new bottles, since the old ones will not hold it any longer. Let us proceed in this course, and we may accomplish more by it, than by Church ordinances and Presbyterian constitutions.

XI. BLESSING PRONOUNCED UPON A PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

"Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye justice and do righteousness, for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold upon it, that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil."—(Isa. lvi. 1, 2.)

In this and the following passage great importance is attached to the preservation of the Sabbath. It opens the way to the enjoyment of all the benefits of the house and kingdom of God. In the prophet's view the Sabbath, in its essence, reaches beyond the Old Testament period. In the whole section his eye is directed to the Messianic time. The conditions, on which its salvation is to be secured, are here laid down; and, according to ver. 6, the Sabbath belongs to the Gentiles who, in the day of salvation, will enter the kingdom of God.

The injunction to preserve the Sabbath is connected in vers. 2, 4, 5, with other demands, which preclude the supposition that its observance consists in rest alone. Against such an observance the prophet

has already, in chap. i. 13, inveighed in the strongest terms. The Mosaic idea of sanctification is embraced in its fullest extent. Those who adopted the superficial view of Vitranga, that outward rest alone constituted sanctification, felt themselves compelled to regard this as a "mystical Sabbath" of a different kind from the legal one.

We must, however, distinguish between the form of the Sabbath, which belonged specifically to the Old Testament, and its essence. That our passage only serves to prove that the latter belongs also to New Testament times, is evident from ver. 7, where the prophet speaks in the same terms of the Sabbath, the temple, and the sacrifices: it was not the prophet's vocation to unfold the grand distinction between the form and essence, the letter and the spirit. This must be learned elsewhere.

XII. CHARACTERISTICS OF A RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

"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 words."—(Isa. lviii. 13.)

The prophet explains most clearly here, what the Sabbath is to him. He gives a full explanation of the Mosaic, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The foot, which moves to and fro on the Sabbath in man's own ways, in worldly business and amusements, trespasses as it were upon its holy ground. But, not the foot alone, the mouth also receives its command. It is in vain that the feet rest, if the mouth speaks words, empty words, such as have no substance in them (Matt. xii. 36), but which the old man delights to indulge in.

And he who keeps a bridle in his mouth, that it may not offend, has not yet done all. Every thing depends upon the heart after all. If this finds no pleasure in the Sabbath, if it feels it to be a heavy burden, if it regrets that foot and mouth may not wander freely amidst worldly occupations and pleasures, if it seeks to compensate itself for these restraints by satisfying itself the more with the worldly passions within, then the pretended holiness is in truth a more thorough desecration, and instead of the expected blessing there will come the curse.

XIII. PSALM FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

Psalm xcii. This psalm is, according to the heading, "A song for the Sabbath day." The proper positive employment of the Sabbath

appears here to be, a thankful contemplation of the works of God, a devotional absorption in them, which could only exist when ordinary occupations are laid aside. "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High." "O Lord, how great are thy works." Amongst these works, one of the greatest, of which the psalm speaks, is this, that, with the same power which he put forth in the creation of the heavens and the earth, he also preserves his Church in the midst of an evil world. The circumstances, under which the psalm was composed, dictated this; from which we may learn, that the constant care of the Church on its days of rest should be, to keep before it especially those sides of the works of God, in which his nature has most prominently appeared, and which, therefore, under existing circumstances, most tend to edification. Our Church would gain more ground, if we understood this better, and were not so firmly attached to monotony and one-sidedness. The best means of avoiding these, are, on the one hand, to study deeply the whole Bible, that we may thus discover the whole image of God, and all the riches of his works, and be able to draw from this treasure, as circumstances require; and on the other, to study no less deeply, and with a serious mind, the signs of the times, the spirit of the age, their evils, and the best means of curing them. Churches would not be empty, if the subjects introduced were such as must be at least interesting to all, though many might still thrust them from them.

The mention of morning and evening ("to show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night"), probably refers to the morning and evening sacrifice, and indicates that the psalm was to be sung at the offering of these sacrifices on the Sabbath. This is confirmed by the next verse, "upon an instrument of ten strings; and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound." These were evidently connected with the worship of God. Here, then, we have the same exposition of the Mosaic command; the only one consistent with the permanent character attributed by Christ to the Mosaic law. It cannot belong to both the Old and New Testaments, if we look at the surface alone.

XIV. NEGLECT OF THE SABBATH BY THE JEWS.

"Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness . . . and my Sabbaths they

greatly polluted.”—(Ezek. xx. 12, 13.) (Compare ver. 20.) “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.”

If we understand here, by the polluting of the Sabbath, only the disturbance of outward rest, we involve ourselves in no little difficulty. The prophet could evidently only refer to well-known facts, to such, that is, as were contained in the authentic history of the Mosaic times, the books of Moses. But these contain nothing, on which a charge of this description could be founded. Hitzig, indeed, cites two cases, that of the few who went out to look for manna, and that of the man who gathered sticks. But these examples have no weight. They only speak of the acts of a few individuals, whilst Ezekiel has evidently in view a national sin. The man who gathered sticks was taken prisoner, and, at the command of God, stoned by the whole congregation. This fact, therefore, shows, that at that time the Sabbath was, outwardly at least, strictly observed. Further, nothing of this kind is ever related of the *second* generation in the wilderness; yet the same charge is brought against them (ver. 24). We must, therefore, acknowledge that Ezekiel looked upon the keeping of the Sabbath as something deeper than the outward act, that to him the pollution of the Sabbath consisted just in this, that they thought they had sufficiently sanctified it by resting from work, and might then give themselves up to the pleasures of an unrenewed heart. This was Calvin's opinion. “The charge refers, not so much to the disturbance of rest, as to their neglect of the design and proper use of the Sabbath.” If we take this view of the prophet's complaint, it is confirmed by all the accounts, contained in the books of Moses, of the ungodly character of the people in the times of Moses. It was on the Sabbath, which can never come in as an oasis, when the six days are a perfect waste, that this appeared in its most glaring light, and for this reason was just the point on which the prophet seized.

The Sabbath appears here as the outward self-manifestation of the Church, the practical proof of the life of God in it, and of its life in God, the seal of its separation from the world. Alas, then, for him, who ungratefully annuls this privilege of the Church, and causes it to be ridiculed by the world, instead of giving to it an imposing aspect, which shall attract rather than repel. This object, however, can never be attained by rest alone. Lastly, the Sabbath is introduced here as something characteristic of Israel alone. It is spoken of as given first and exclusively to the Jews. They, therefore, who seek for “remains

of the Sabbath amongst the heathen," are acting in opposition to the teaching of the prophet.

XV. THE DISCIPLES CHARGED WITH A BREACH OF THE SABBATH.

"At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."—(Matt. xii. 1–8.)

In this passage the Saviour leaves it undecided, whether the rubbing out of the ears of corn belonged to the work forbidden on the Sabbath, or not. It was a question that admitted of dispute, although Moses would certainly not have answered in the affirmative. He first asserts, in opposition to the views of the pharisees, that necessity breaks the Sabbath; the disciples had not rubbed out the ears wantonly, but they *hungred*. Then again, they were the less in fault, because it was their working for his kingdom that had deprived them of the opportunity of providing for their bodily wants. If work for the temple is not opposed to the command, much less is work for Christ, and that which is connected with it. The hunger of the disciples was the result of their labours for Christ's kingdom, so that the question really resolved itself into this—are these allowable? Love, in the exercise of which the disciples had become hungry, is that which pleases God, and not an outward service, such as that with which the hypocrites sought to quiet their consciences.

In general the attitude assumed by the Lord here, and on several other occasions, shows that, with reference to the observance of the Lord's day, there are other opponents to deal with besides the licentious, and that it is important to be on our guard, lest, in opposing the latter, in an imprudent and one-sided manner, we should fall into the hands of the others. On the other hand, it is a wrong method to pursue, to form our views on the words of Christ, without remembering that he assumes the basis of the Old Testament as already laid,

and is speaking to those, who are attacked not by the licentious, but by other foes. He who finds it difficult to fall in with the observance of days, has first to turn to the Old Testament. False liberty must find its corrective there. First Moses, and then Christ.

The Saviour expressly declares here, that real personal necessity justified the breach of the Sabbath, the disturbance of its rest. David had nothing but hunger to justify his eating the shew-bread in defiance of the Mosaic law. The conscience must decide, what works of necessity really are. But we must not impose too severe a task upon the conscience. We must avoid compressing necessity into too narrow bounds. Otherwise it is easy to fall into the error of the pharisees, even whilst admitting the general principle, on the authority of the Lord, that works of necessity are to be regarded as exceptions.

To the faithful Christian, indeed, the words of Paul are fully applicable here: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." But he will make only a sparing and prudent use of the liberty given him by the Lord, because in a time of indifference to the Lord's day, such as ours is, that which is in itself lawful may easily tend to confirm others in indifference, and lead them, without necessity, to disregard the Lord's day.

The exception, pointed out by Christ, places on the same footing the shew-bread and the Sabbath rest. They agree in this, that they are both means, not ends. The shew-bread typified good works, and promoted the performance of them; the rest of the Sabbath was but the means, of which devotion was the end. Now that, which is only means to an end, can never be placed on an equality with that which has its importance in itself. This should be impressed more strongly on the minds of those, who maintain so earnestly that there is no difference between the fourth commandment and the others, amidst which it stands. The latter are under all circumstances indispensable; no necessity can justify a breach of them. It will never do to stretch the cords too tightly. The effect will then be just the reverse of that which was intended. But in this, the Sabbath command agrees with the others, that *in its essence* it cannot be abolished, without the moral world falling into ruins. And he is no friend to the human race who would substitute his own will for that *necessity*, which appears here as a dispensation on the part of God.

The second exception pointed out by the Lord, is, that the command to rest is principally and absolutely directed only against working for one's own interest and the affairs of this life. To help others

forward in the Divine life, can never be to act in opposition to a command to rest, but is rather embraced in it; for this is but to advance the end, of which the rest was appointed as the means. The Lord is only speaking here of the undue straining of the idea of rest. The pharisees themselves were obliged to admit the force of the argument, from the work enjoined by the law itself upon the priests, as soon as they caught a glimpse of the personal dignity of the Redeemer. Their disputing this troubled him so much the less, because they were convinced in their consciences, and only wilfully suppressed this testimony within. It belongs to majesty to pass unnoticed the attacks, which are foolishly and wickedly directed against it.

The fact, moreover, that under the law the priests were *obliged* to break the Sabbath, makes a large rent in the pharisaic notion of the Sabbath. If the prohibition of work stood on an equality with that of murder, theft, and adultery, the priests would never have dared to break their rest. In the parallel passage in Mark there is added, "And he said to them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The pharisees regarded the Sabbath as a power superior to men. Rather let a man perish body and soul, than disturb the rest of the Sabbath, which, in their opinion, was important for its own sake, and to which they attributed an independent worth. The Lord regards the rest, in harmony with Moses, as only a help to devotion. If, then, it was appointed only for the sake of man, it could never present an obstacle to the performance of anything which the Saviour, either himself or through his servants, had to do for the good of men.

XVI. PHARISAIC SCRUPLES MET BY CHRIST.

"And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."—(Matt. xii. 10—12.)

Bengel remarks on this passage, "The subject of the Sabbath occupies a considerable portion of the evangelical history." This fact is of no little importance. It can scarcely be supposed that the Lord would have taken so much care to correct the erroneous opinions which prevailed as to the Sabbath, if this had been, *in its essence*, purely an Old Testament institution. No one will take much trouble about the im-

provement of a house, which is directly after to be pulled entirely down. The Saviour does not oppose, with anything like the same assiduity, the prevalent notions with regard to the temple.

Whilst it follows from what has been said, that the Sabbath was intended to continue, in substance, under the New Testament, we are, by the very nature of the Saviour's instructions, thrown back upon the Old. These instructions have not an appearance of completeness. They always presuppose the positive teaching of the Old Testament. They correct particular mistakes, or fill up particular parts, which were there not fully developed, and might easily be overlooked or misunderstood. Still, all that the New Testament teaches with regard to the Sabbath is of a fragmentary character, unless taken in connexion with the ground-work of the Old Testament.

It is an important sentence to which the Saviour here gives utterance: "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." It is closely connected with the Old Testament point of view, though nowhere directly expressed there. He who keeps to the letter only might indeed think, that the Sabbath was intended *purely* as a day of worship. The act of Christ shows, that the expression "it is lawful," is only chosen with reference to the pharisaic expression, "it is unlawful," and really means it is praiseworthy, that in fact he regards the Sabbath as the day, to which, more than to any other the doing of good belongs. The disease of the man was not one, in which danger would result from delay. The healing could not be justified on the ground that it was lawful in cases of necessity. How easily could Jesus have waited a few hours till the end of the Sabbath! The ruler of the synagogue would have praised him then. But the fact that Christ so often healed on the Sabbath, suggests the idea that he purposely chose this day. On the Sabbath he taught in Capernaum and cast out an unclean spirit. On the Sabbath he healed a woman that was diseased, and the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, and gave sight to the blind.

In order, however, to draw a correct conclusion from these occurrences, we must keep well in view their symbolical character. The material side has throughout only subordinate importance. These cures of the body were but typical of that which Jesus does as physician of souls. It is only in this light that Matthew regards them as fulfilling the predictions of Isaiah, "he took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17). The cures of Jesus go hand in hand with the fact, that he went into the synagogue and *taught*.

XVII. HEALING, THE PROPER WORK OF THE SABBATH.

“Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision ; (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers ;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken ; are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day ?”—(John vii. 22, 23.)

We cannot agree with Bengel, that the words “not that it is of Moses,” were designed to *raise* circumcision above the Sabbath, and bring to light its greater value. Apart from other reasons, it is opposed to the context, in which the duty to circumcise is founded upon the law of Moses alone. We look upon the remark as simply a historical comment in passing. But, even in this light, it appears to indicate that the Sabbath was first introduced in the time of Moses. Had the Saviour considered that the notice of the Sabbath in Genesis ii. denoted the period of its institution, he would certainly not have made a remark with regard to circumcision only, which would then have been equally applicable to the Sabbath.

Jesus had made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath. On this rests the similarity to circumcision. Had the cure been confined to the *body*, it would have been inferior to circumcision, which had reference to the health of the soul. That the bodily disease, in the case referred to by Jesus, was only the outward sign of an inward spiritual disease, is shown by John v. 14, where Jesus says to the healed man, “Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.” As the evil had commenced with the soul, so must the cure also. In Matt. ix. 2, Jesus says to the palsied man, “Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee.” Thus did the Lord point out the day of rest, as one intended as a “*medicina mentis*” both to one’s self and others.

XVIII.—PAUL’S CHOICE OF THE SABBATH FOR HIS MISSIONARY WORK.

“Now, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews ; and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. . . . And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.—(Acts xvii. 1—3, xviii. 4.)

These passages show, that on the Sabbath Paul performed nearly all his missionary work. He was accustomed to go on the Sabbath into

the synagogues and preach Christ, and in this way he converted both Jews and Greeks. Hence we see that the practical importance of the weekly festival was fully recognised by Paul. That, which he had found so important, he was not likely to wish to set aside. We may obtain from this a preliminary rule, which may help us to ascertain the meaning of the expressions we are about to examine.

XIX. PAUL'S WARNING AGAINST A DISTINCTION OF DAYS.

"One man esteemeth one day above another; another considers all days alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."—(Rom. xiv. 5.)

"Let no man, therefore, judge you by meat or by drink, or in respect of a festival, or a new moon, or Sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."—(Coloss. ii. 16.)

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."—Gal. iv. 9, 10.

It has been often thought, that the arguments of the apostle are directed entirely against the transference of the Jewish festivals, as such, to the Christian Church, and, therefore, concern us no further. But, if this were the case, the apostle would mention them particularly in all three passages, as he does in the second. The fact, that in the first and second he speaks against all preference of *days* and *times*, shows that the *Jewish* festive times are only regarded by him as specimens of a class, and that his sentence of condemnation fixes upon Christian festivals also, as soon as such views are entertained of them, as place them in the same category with those of the Jews.

The Jewish idea of the festivals, which is to be distinguished from that of the Israelites contained in the Old Testament, was this, that these festivals were the only bright points amidst the darkness of the people's life, that they were, from the first, distinct from all other days, and that they possessed an inherent holiness. They were not regarded as means for promoting the holiness of every day; but the keeping them holy was thought to be in itself enough. The transference to Christianity of this miserable view is nothing less than contempt and denial of Christ. By his redemption he has made a full end of all piecemeal religion; and, since his atonement and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, nothing less than the filling of the whole life by Christ will find acceptance; and every setting apart of sacred times is worthless, except for the purpose of using them as means to this greater

end. Their points of departure must be man's sinfulness and weakness, which render it necessary to employ such means, and require that at times we should concentrate the light, that we may the more effectually contend against the darkness. The Jewish idea of the festivals, which was objectionable even from the Old Testament point of view, is, since the coming of Christ, an unpardonable anachronism.

We have passed the limits drawn by the apostle with regard to the Christian festivals, if we think with Liebetrut, "that the necessity for them is something more than practical, that it reaches beyond the mere notion of their usefulness and adaptation;" or if we hold with Rücker that, "the setting apart of days may be imagined possible even in a state of innocence;" or if we agree with Kraussold that, "the Church was not at liberty to choose any day but Sunday for its worship, and, if it had chosen another day, this would not have been truly the Lord's day, the festival of the New Testament." Even scrupulosity and excessive rigour, in the observance of days, rest generally, though perhaps unconsciously, upon a somewhat Jewish notion of sacred days. It is not till they have been invested with a false halo of sanctity, that there arises an anxious fear of desecrating them. But if we regard them as means to an end, our relation to them will be one of greater liberty, though, still, we shall not forget the warning of the apostle, "use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." In this case the rule, by which to decide whether a certain thing is allowable on the Lord's day or not, is to ascertain whether it helps or hinders the life in God. It cannot be a harmless matter to cherish, however slightly, the views which are condemned by the apostle. Were it so, he would not have said so earnestly, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." In the warmth of our zeal against the frivolity and wickedness with which the Lord's day is despised, we must never forget that there are dangers, too, on the other side; we must take care that whilst calling attention to the former dangers, we do not content ourselves with a partial view, like those who oppose the interests of the church.

The apostle speaks in the passage quoted from the Epistle to the Galatians of the elements of the world. These elements are, as in Heb. v. 12, the beginnings or first principles of religion.* In Gal.

* We adopt the usual explanation of the elements of the world. (Thus Rückert says, "First principles of knowledge such as the world possesses, in contradistinction from the higher and more perfect wisdom of the children of

iv. 3, he speaks of the elements of the world in connexion with *children*. Where we meet with such mere *first principles* of religion, we may be sure that the cause is not to be found in God, but that the fallen, corrupt world, has been at work. Compare 1 John ii. 16; and that which is said in 1 Cor. i. 20 and iii. 19 of the wisdom of the world. Such a worldly A, B, C, religion was heathenism with its worship of Nature. Such a worldly A, B, C, religion was Judaism with its restriction of the sphere of religion to the festivals, with its notion that the observance of these was all that God required, that they were something more than the first amongst equals, and with its heartless celebration of the festivals themselves, which was the necessary consequence of such a notion; "when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may have wheat cheap; making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes?"

The apostle designates these elements of the world as "weak and beggarly." They cannot fully and truly satisfy the spiritual wants; they look miserably poor by the side of the riches of Christ, which are sufficient to sanctify the whole human life. The apostle speaks of a slavish service which is rendered to these elements. Wherever Christ is not embraced in living faith, and the sun has therefore not arisen, which enlightens the whole life, wherever a man is still devoted to a piecemeal religion, which is confined to certain observances, and seeks salvation in them, there he groans under a heavy yoke, "there the spirit gnaws, and complains, and still pursues true pleasure in vain." Real freedom is only to be found where the true and perfect Christ is, with his spirit and gifts, and there all piecemeal religion is at an end.

XX. THE LORD'S DAY.

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."—(Rev. i. 10.)

There can be no doubt that the Lord's day here is our Sunday. A comparison of ver. 5 and 18 leads to the conclusion that it was called

God.") In Neander's view, "the elements of the world are worldly, natural objects, the world in general, the same as Paul generally speaks of under the name of carnal things. This subjection to the elements of the world had its culminating point in the deifying of Nature." But this does not explain why the apostle speaks of the *elements* of the world. If we understand the elementary matter of nature, *Time* can scarcely be regarded as belonging to this, nor can we see why it should be regarded as a slavish service rendered to Time, that the Jews considered certain days as specially holy.

so, as the day of resurrection, and, therefore, without any regard to what the Church would do on it, but simply on account of that which the Lord had done on it. Still, what the Lord had done on this day was in itself an inducement to the Church to observe it; and it was by yielding to this, by giving himself up to the death-conquering power of Christ, that the apostle became able and worthy to receive his revelation.

We meet with the Sunday here for the first time under a spiritual name. In the evangelical history, and in the epistles, it only appears under its *natural* name. It is there always called the first day of the week. The keeping of the day, however, preceded the new name. On the very first return of the day on which Christ had risen, we find the apostles assembled in remembrance of that which had occurred a week before, hoping probably that the Lord would appear again; and this day is distinguished for the second time by the appearance of the risen Saviour (John xx. 24—29). Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, appoints the first day of the week as the day on which each one should lay by his gifts. On the first day of the week we find the Christians in Troas assembled to “break bread” (Acts xx. 7). The apostle had arrived just a week before, and was evidently anxious to be with them a second time on the first day of the week.

How did the observance of Sunday originate in the Christian church? “The New Testament festival,” says Kraussold, “has its roots in the Divine act of redemption, is devoted to the praise and honour of this act, and on this act and its meaning is the manner of its observance founded.” “The Lord’s day! this is in itself sufficient to lead the Christian mind to regard it as sacred without a law, and to shrink from neglect of it as from a desecration.” This, however, is more than we can say. For this event to exert precisely this influence, the Church must already have been impressed with the unconditional necessity of a weekly festival, and this conviction must have been first derived from the scriptures of the Old Testament, especially from the ten commandments, as well as from observing the blessing, which in the Church of the Old Testament rested upon the fulfilment of this command, in spite of all the corruptions which had crept in. And so with regard to the manner of observing it, this, too, was decided with reference to the Old Testament revelation. Without this the Christians would never have come to so universal an agreement to set apart the whole day; nor would it from the very first have been considered of such great importance, that it should be a day of *rest*. The autho-

urity of the apostles, which was nowhere exerted, as far as we can perceive, must have been exerted, if there had not been in the Old Testament a safe regulator at hand.

In every century of the Church's history, the observance of the Christian festival has been connected in some way with the Old Testament, and especially the ten commandments, even where there has been the clearest conviction, that the letter of the Mosaic law was only for the Jews. A consciousness which manifests itself so uniformly in every age of the Christian Church, must have existed at its commencement.

And if the necessity for a weekly returning day is to be gathered from the Old Testament, the fact of the resurrection does not offer the only reason why *this day* should have been chosen. The continuance of the Sabbath, even in the Church of the New Testament, might have been advocated on forcible grounds; and history shows that it was with a heavy heart that the Church left it at last. The historical continuation of the kingdom of God would thus have appeared in the clearest light. The Sabbath, first consecrated to the contemplation of the works of God, was well fitted to take into connexion with them the completion of those works in Christ. The Church, however, was not *bound* to this day. It knew that the letter of the Old Testament law did not apply to it at all, and that the spirit of the command did not consist in the observance of this day, but only in the keeping of some one day. And all that could be adduced in favour of the Sabbath was outweighed by one important reason for its discontinuance. A number of false notions, prejudices and bad practices had become connected with this day, and since, in the course of centuries, they had taken deep root in Judaism, it would have been a difficult matter to prevent their coming over into the Christian Church, especially as they were strongly supported by the Judaizing party in the Church. The choice of another day tore this danger up by the roots. When this was once determined upon, the day of the resurrection, from the importance of this event to the Church, would naturally offer itself. Still we have no right to suppose that the Church was bound to this day; and the question started by Kraussold, "supposing the Church had chosen another day for its worship, would this have been the Lord's day, the New Testament festival?" must be unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative. We have no more right to say that Sunday was exclusively, or even chiefly, dedicated "to the praise and honour of the fact of the resurrection," than that "the Old Testament

Sabbath rests upon the completion of the creation, and is dedicated to the praise of this creation, and the confession of God, who made the heavens and the earth." The day of the New Testament is rather a day of spiritual refreshment, a day for meeting together, and seeking edification in the worship of God; and on it all the works of God, from the beginning of the world, are the proper objects of contemplation, everything, in fact, by which God has made to himself a name, and revealed his nature. If these events all culminate in the resurrection, and the day of resurrection is thus especially recommended, still the boundary line between this and other memorable days, such as that of Christ's death, of his ascension, and the pouring out of the Spirit, cannot be so clearly drawn, that the Church must be unconditionally and under all circumstances bound to it. If, for instance, the day of resurrection had been a Sabbath, the Church would have had perfect freedom to choose another day, in order to keep clear of Jewish corruptions. And even if we wished to place the New Testament festival in direct connexion with the resurrection, we should not therefore be right in maintaining the absolute necessity of choosing just the Sunday. It is, indeed, pleasant, and more exciting, to keep up the remembrance of an event on the day on which it happened. But it is not absolutely necessary. No one would think of asserting, that the keeping of a birthday materially suffers, because, from some cause or other, it is held upon another day than the actual day of birth. Or, to take a more pertinent case, the enjoyment of the Christian Christmas festival is not really affected by the fact, that we have no means of ascertaining whether it is really held upon the day on which the Word became flesh. We cannot maintain the necessity of choosing the day of the resurrection, "in praise and honour of this event," without trespassing upon the view so expressly condemned by Paul, according to which certain days are in themselves more holy than others, and coming into collision with the Saviour's words to the woman of Samaria (John iv. 21), "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." For what the Saviour says here of *places of worship*, is evidently as true of *times*.

If, then, we inquire on what the Sunday festival rests, the first ground is evidently the authority of the Church. "Everywhere," says Liebetrut, with perfect correctness, "where the Church has been and is, it has kept the Sunday as the Lord's day, and its own day. The authority of the Church, so far as this is the bride of Christ, led by the

Spirit of the Lord, is itself a divine authority, from which none of its true members can withdraw." To cast away this authority altogether, is a sad symptom of historical rationalism, of which rationalism, commonly so called, is but the necessary consequence, springing from the common root of spiritual pride, which fancies that wisdom will die with it, and that it has monopolized all its treasures.

He who with humility acknowledges this authority, which no one can slight without at the same time slighting the Lord, who has promised his Spirit to his Church to lead it into all truth, who has promised also to be with it always to the end of the world, and has said, "Whoso heareth you, heareth me;" such a man will soon have his eyes opened to perceive how great a blessing has attended this arrangement of the Church, and will thus be confirmed in the conviction, that it has been made in the Spirit of the Lord. "The living practice preceded all theory, and decided long ago as to the undeniable necessity for the regular Sunday festival, and as to the good resulting from it, which nothing else could supply." He who has once acknowledged this authority will perceive, more and more clearly, the internal grounds for the necessity of preserving the Lord's day. He will see that without such an arrangement the Church would soon cease to be a church, amidst the labours, and cares, and distractions of human life; that it would perish through dulness, indifference, and an animal nature; that, in fact, the best means which Satan could apply in order to make the Church's watchword, "Let the whole life be a Sabbath," but empty words, would be to encourage doubt as to the utility of setting apart particular days for rest.

But we must not stop here. We, who are evangelical, cannot deny the abstract possibility that the Church has done wrong. All that the authority of the Church does for us, is to excite a decidedly favourable prepossession. The internal grounds, too, are still open to an impartial sifting. They only suffice in cases, in which there is no inclination to break through the fences of the day of rest, and no strong temptation from without. But these are, after all, but outworks; the real citadel is still the command which sounded on Sinai, with all the words of God which are connected with it, either preparing the way, or expanding the letter, or confirming its importance, or guarding from abuse. The institution is far too important, the temptations too strong, for us to be able to dispense with a solid scriptural foundation. The fact that the New Testament presents one of so partial a description, refers us decidedly to the Old; and if we but open this with the

prayer, "Lord, open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law," we shall find what we seek, and discover how good a thing it is that the heart be established. It is clear that the force of the Old Testament command has not diminished, but increased. This is but a necessary consequence of the fact that the redemption effected by Christ is incomparably more glorious than the deliverance from Egypt, on which, in the introduction to the ten commandments, the obligation to obey them is based. No ingratitude is so black as that which refuses obedience to God, after he has given for us his only-begotten Son.

PART II.

The Sabbath of the Jews, and the Sunday of Christians.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF OPINIONS ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE SABBATH AND SUNDAY.

THERE can be no doubt, that the circumstances of the times render a thorough examination of this part of our subject highly desirable. It is unfortunate that this has been so long delayed. The numerous accounts received from England and America of the agitation of the question of Sabbath observance, have necessarily suggested the frequent inquiry, what estimate ought we to form of the fundamental doctrine held by English and American Christians on this subject? And the subject has excited the more attention in consequence of attempts originating in England, but principally made through the medium of the Tract Society of Lower Saxony, to introduce this doctrine into Germany. Many adopt it without hesitation, because it seems to them the only remedy for the evils which prevail in reference to the observance of Sunday; the injurious effects of which are seen most clearly by those who come most into connexion with the world. Others, who are most interested in the doctrinal question, are driven to the other extreme, and oppose this doctrine with all their hearts, at the risk of thereby increasing the gaiety so prevalent on the Sunday. Our intention here is to establish an opinion, which shall be satisfactory both from the practical and doctrinal points of view. But before we proceed to this, we think it necessary to glance at the history of the opinions which have prevailed in the Christian Church,

as to the relation of Sunday to the Sabbath, and thus prepare the way for our own discussion of the subject.

To exhibit at the outset the chief design of the following historical sketch, we give here an extract from Gemberg's "Scotch Church," which contains an outline of the opinions generally held in Great Britain and America:—"The law of the Sabbath is of divine authority, given by God in the days of our first parents, and afterwards repeated by Moses to the children of Israel. Christ did not repeal it, but taught us how to interpret, and keep it rightly. It is not merely a ritual law, but stands amongst the commandments of the Decalogue, to which he gave, in the Sermon on the Mount, a more spiritual explanation, but which he did not repeal. Paul, in Rom. xiv. 5, 6, Gal. iv. 10, Col. ii. 16, warns against a false Jewish mode of observance, and justly enforces the one thing needful, that Christ be formed in us, without on that account treating as antiquated this primeval command of God." According to this view the only difference between the Sabbath of the Old Testament and the Sunday of the New is, that, under the latter, the first day of the week has taken the place of the seventh by divine command. With this exception, the Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sunday are precisely the same.

This opinion, that the Jewish Sabbath has been simply transferred to the Sunday was entirely unknown in the first ages of Christianity; so much so, that it is never even discussed; whilst the opposite opinion is always mentioned, without any appearance of partiality, as that which universally prevailed. And there was never any controversy in reference to the Sabbath, except with the Jews, who required that the Christians should observe the seventh day, and with the Manicheans, who concluded that because the orthodox Christians did not keep the Sabbath, they secretly distinguished between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New. An examination of a few witnesses of great importance will prove the correctness of our assertion. In this our object is simply historical, and we by no means wish to defend the many obscurities and one-sided errors which are mixed up with their testimonies. We shall pronounce upon these when we state our own opinion, so that it will be unnecessary to do this whenever they occur. Our only concern at present is to ascertain the leading principles, which were professed by the early Christian Church.

Justin Martyr,* in his Dialogue,† introduces the Jew, Tryphon, as

* Died A.D. 163.

† *Dialogus cum Tryph.* c. 10.

making the following objection to the Divine origin of Christianity:—
 “ This is the strangest thing to us, that you, who pretend to be pious, and think yourselves better than other men, are not in any respect different from them, but still imitate the Gentiles in your lives, by refusing to observe either the festivals, or the Sabbaths, or circumcision.” To this Justin replies, not that the Sabbath is transferred to the Sunday, but that *the whole Mosaic law is abolished*. “ The law given on Horeb has now grown old, and belongs to you alone ; the new law is for all without distinction. But since one law has been given in the place of another, the later has repealed the earlier, and the new covenant fixes the termination of the old. To us, however, Christ is given as a last and eternal law, the sure covenant, which contains no law, no commandment, and no precept.” He contrasts the *spiritual* Sabbath-keeping of the New Testament with the *outward* observance of the Old (c. 12). “ The new law requires that you keep a *perpetual Sabbath*, and you fancy you are pious, if you spend one day in idleness, without understanding why this was prescribed. If there is amongst you a perjurer or a thief, let him leave his sins ; if an adulterer, let him repent ; thus will he keep the true and acceptable Sabbath to the Lord.” He maintains (c. 18) that the keeping of the Sabbath, and other similar things, were enjoined by God solely with reference to the peculiar condition of the people of Israel, and were, therefore, not an eternal law, but alterable according to circumstances. “ We would retain circumcision, and the Sabbath, and all the feasts, without hesitation, if we did not know the reasons for which they were enjoined on you, namely, on account of your lawlessness and hardness of heart.” He speaks of the law of the Sabbath as a means of reminding a rude people of its God. He answers the assertion, that the law of the Sabbath is valid for ever, by remarking that in that case, instead of being first given to Israel in the wilderness, it would have been given from the very first to the whole human race, of which we find no trace. “ If we deny this (that the law of the Sabbath is abolished, &c.), we must entertain the preposterous opinion, that it was not the same God who was the God of Enoch and of all those who had no circumcision, and neither kept the Sabbath nor the other things which Moses commanded. Or, if it were the same, that he did not wish the whole human race to perform the same duties to him. To suppose this would be ridiculous. But to maintain that he, who is always the same, commanded this and other similar things on account of the sins of men, is but to represent him as the friend of man,

foreseeing, perfect, just, and good." "If no circumcision was necessary before Abraham, and no Sabbath, no festivals, and no sacrifices before Moses, there is no necessity for them now, since the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has been born of the Virgin, by the will of God, of the seed of Abraham."

*Tertullian** argues at great length against the Jewish notion of the perpetual obligation of the law of the Sabbath. He says, amongst other things:—"Lastly, let them show that Adam kept the Sabbath; or that Abel, when he brought a sacred offering, pleased God by keeping the Sabbath; or that Enoch, who was translated to heaven, was an observer of the Sabbath; or that Noah, who prepared the ark on account of the great flood, kept the Sabbath; or that Abraham offered his son Isaac in observance of the Sabbath; or that Melchizedek in his priesthood received the law of the Sabbath. But the Jews will say, since this law was given by Moses it has been always necessary to observe it. But we have here at the same time a confession, that the commandment is not an eternal and spiritual, but a temporal one; one, therefore, which was to come to an end."†

Irenæus‡ expresses himself to the same effect.§

Augustine|| explains his views of the Sabbath in many places, but most fully in his work against the Manichean, Faustus. He considers the law of the Sabbath to be purely ceremonial; the keeping of the Sabbath a symbolical act, a type of the saints' rest from earthly labours, which has been secured by Christ, and as having, therefore, ceased, with all the shadows of the Old Testament, as soon as the essence came. We select a few passages:—B. vi. c. 1: "Faustus said, dost thou accept the Old Testament? What, accept that whose commandments I do not obey? I believe that thou also dost not. For I reject circumcision as repulsive, and I believe that thou dost the same. The keeping of the Sabbath I look upon as something superfluous, and so do you." C. 2: "Augustine said, I answer that they are thoroughly ignorant of the great difference which exists between the precepts which are to *guide* the life, and the precepts which are to *indicate* life. For example, thou shalt not covet, is a precept which is to guide the life; thou shalt circumcise every male, is a precept which is to indicate it. From the stand-point of the present they blame the things which were suited to that time, and which indicated as future that

* Died A.D. 220.

† C. Judæus, c. 4.

‡ Died A.D. 202.

§ C. Hær. iv. c. 30.

|| Died A.D. 430.

which is now made known." C. 4: "The observance of the festival of the Sabbath appears to us now superfluous, since the hope of our eternal rest has been revealed. But it is not useless to read of and understand it, because, as that which is now revealed to us was predicted in the prophetic times, not only by words, but also by actions, so by this sign that which we now possess was prefigured." B. xvi. c. 28: "As to what thou sayest about the Sabbath, and circumcision, and difference of meats, Moses taught one thing, and, from Christ, Christians have learned another; thus we have said above, in the apostle's words, all these are types for us. It is, therefore, not the doctrine, but the age, which has changed. For the age, in which this could only be taught by figurative prophecies, was different from that in which it is fully revealed by the truth, which is made manifest, and has been imparted to us. But what wonder is it that the Jews, who only understood the Sabbath according to the letter, resisted Christ, who interpreted it according to the spirit?"

In his 36th letter* he says:—"The Lord allowed the disciples to rub out the ears of corn and eat on the Sabbath, in order that the former might serve to refute those who advocated idleness on the Sabbath, and the latter those who would enjoin fasting; showing that the former is superstitious, since the times are changed; the latter, both under the Old and New Testaments, always free."

In the letter to Januarius,† he unfolds the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath law, and then continues:—"And, for this reason, the only one of the ten commandments, which refers to the Sabbath, is to be regarded as figurative; and *we* have received the figure, that we may understand it, but *not that we may keep it by bodily inactivity*. The observance of it by the Jews themselves would have been justly pronounced ridiculous, if it had not indicated another spiritual rest." How far he was from placing the Sabbath and Sunday on an equality, is evident from his attributing to the Sunday a spiritual meaning altogether different from that of the Sabbath. The Sabbath denotes, in his opinion, the rest of the whole earthly nature, the Sunday the new heavenly life.

Jerome,‡ commenting on Gal. iv. 10,§ starts the question, whether, if, as Paul says, we are not to observe days, or months, or times, Christians do not fall into this error in their observance of Sunday

* Opp. ii. p. 53. Bened. Cler.

† Died A.D. 420.

‡ Ep. 55. al. 119.

§ Opp. t. ix. p. 142.

and other festivals. He answers this question by pointing out that the Christian festivals have an entirely different signification from those of the Jews. To the Christian *every day is a Sunday*, a Whitsuntide and Easter festival. But to enhance enjoyment by intercourse, and for the sake of the weaker Christians, who are too deeply engrossed in the business of the world to be able to keep a perpetual festival, the Church has chosen out of the days of the year, which are *all equal* in themselves, some few in which especially to magnify the gifts of the grace of God which have been bestowed upon them. He says, amongst other things:—"And lest disorder in the assembling of the people should diminish their faith in Christ, certain days have been appointed, that we may all meet at the same time. Not as though there were any superiority in the day on which we meet, but in order that, whichever day is chosen for our meetings, the sight of each other may increase our pleasure. But if we were to give a strict answer to the question started, we should say, that all days are alike, that not Friday only is to be regarded as the day on which Christ was crucified, nor Sunday only as the day on which he rose, but that every day is to us the sacred day of resurrection, and every day we eat of the flesh of the Lord."

Jerome agrees with Augustine as to the spiritual interpretation of the Sabbath law, so far as Christians are concerned. He says on Isa. lviii., "The Sabbath, which word means *rest*, must be always sanctified by believers, by their doing continually not the will of the flesh, but that of the Spirit."* And on Ezekiel xliii., "The literal Sabbath, the Sabbath of the Jews, is properly neglected by those who are a chosen, royal, priestly, race. He sanctifies God's Sabbath, who bears on that Sabbath no burden of sin."

We may see from the following circumstances, how far the Christians of the early ages of the Church were from entertaining the opinion, that the Sabbath was *transferred* to the Sunday:—1. Work was under certain circumstances considered lawful. It is true, that Tertullian says, "business is laid aside, in order that no place may be given to the devil;" in which Neander† thinks, that a trace of the erroneous opinion, that the law of the Sabbath was transferred to the Sunday may be observed. But apart from other passages of Tertullian, which are altogether opposed to the notion of such a transfer, the reason

* Opp. t. iv. p. 186.

† De Orat. c. 17.

‡ Church Hist. v. 1, p. 403. Clark's Ed.

given by himself shows, that the cessation of work on the Sunday was not, as the Jews considered it, an act of religion in itself, but only an ascetic means of promoting the worship of God. Work is to be abstained from, because it draws away the thoughts from God, and thus opens the door to the prince of this world. The council of Laodicea enjoins, in its 29th canon, that "Christians are not to imitate the Jews, and be idle on the Sabbath, but to work on that day; but on the Sunday, if circumstances allow, they are to abstain from work as Christians." This, "if circumstances allow," is worth attention. Balsamon, a later writer on canon law, has this suitable comment upon it (p. 839): "Our forefathers enjoined abstinence from work on the Sunday, not as an inviolable command, but added, 'if believers are not prevented by circumstances.' For if any one from poverty, or other necessity, works on the Sunday, he is not to be condemned." And so Zonaras (p. 349): "The canon adds, 'if circumstances allow.' The civil law, on the contrary, commands rest on the Sunday, unconditionally, with the exception of the agriculturists; for these are allowed to work on the Sunday, because when work must be done, they would probably not be able to find another day so suitable for it." The Emperor Constantine forbade on the Sunday all judicial processes, all work on the part of mechanics, and all military exercises, but expressly allowed agricultural labour. Such a permission is inconceivable if the Sunday was not distinguished from the Sabbath. The third council of Orleans, in the year 538, says, in its 29th canon: "The opinion is spreading amongst the people, that it is wrong to ride, or drive, or cook food, or do anything to the house or the person on the Sunday. *But since such opinions are more Jewish than Christian*, that shall be lawful in future, which has been so to the present time. On the other hand, agricultural labour ought to be laid aside, *in order that the people may not be prevented from attending church.*" The reason here given shows clearly, that even the more stringent edicts of the later Greek emperors, with regard to agricultural employment, on the Sunday, did not proceed from any idea that the law of the Sabbath was transferred to the Sunday. They were dictated by the same motive, which led both elders of the Church, and rulers in the State, to unite in the effort to abolish theatrical exhibitions and other public amusements on the Sunday, namely, from the desire to remove everything which could interfere with devotion on that day, of which Augustine says: "This day is called the day of the Lord, because on it the Lord rose from the dead; and also, in order that the

name may teach the importance of entire self-consecration to the Lord.”*

2. Mosheim† has already shown, that a distinction was made in the primitive Church between the Sabbath and Sunday, from the fact that the early Christians *celebrated the Sabbath as well as the Sunday*, though not in a Jewish manner, by strict abstinence from work (which is in itself a proof that it was not because the Mosaic law was thought to be still binding), but by prayer and in remembrance of the Creator, who finished his work on this day. Such an observance of the Sabbath would have been altogether unmeaning, if the Sunday had simply taken its place.

3. Even those theologians who were of opinion that the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation, and kept by the pious before Moses, never thought of inferring from this, as was afterwards done, that the Mosaic law of the Sabbath is binding upon Christians still.

If the opinion had not been so universally prevalent in the time of the Fathers, that the Sabbath law applied only to Old Testament times, it would be difficult to explain the fact that *the same opinion prevailed in the Middle Ages*, when the inclination was so strong to bring over that which belonged to the Old Testament into the sphere of the New. But even here we find no trace of the opinion, that the Sunday has taken the place of the Sabbath, and that the law of the Sabbath applies to it.

Bede‡ says on Gal. iv., “The new covenant is manifestly promised (in the Old Testament Scriptures), but not after the pattern of the covenant which was made with the people, when they were brought out of Egypt. Since, then, in that old covenant, precepts were given, which are no longer binding upon us who belong to the New, why do not the Jews confess, that they have remained behind amidst antiquities which are now superfluous, rather than complain of us who have received the new thing which was promised, because we do not observe the old? Since the day has thus dawned, the shadows may well depart; let the spiritual meaning shine forth, and the literal observance fall. Since that keeping of the Sabbath which consisted in a day’s inactivity is done away, he keeps a perpetual Sabbath who performs his works in hope of future rest, and boasts not of his good

* De Verb. Apost. serm. 15.

† Ethics, P. 5.

‡ Died A.D. 735.

deeds, as though they were his own, and he had not received them, but confesses that He who, at the same time, works and rests, is working in him. The Christian keeps the true Sabbath, when he abstains from servile work, that is, from sin; for he who sins is the servant of sin.”* The disciple of Augustine is unmistakeable here.

Thomas Aquinas,† who is renowned both for piety and sagacity, expresses on this subject a more independent opinion. He regards the command to keep the Sabbath as applicable, so far as the letter is concerned, to the Jews alone; but he endeavours to extract the kernel from the shell, and to separate from the temporary form, which belonged only to the people of the Old Testament, the eternal truth which the commandment contained. To the form belonged, in his opinion, the appointment of a particular day (which is to be borne in mind, as showing that he did not derive the choice of Sunday, in the place of the Sabbath, from divine appointment); and also the precepts as to the manner of keeping it, which were not, in his opinion, inviolable, and to be literally observed. The outward observance is only of worth as means to an end; and the mode is to be determined (a thing unlawful under the Old Testament), according to its apparent fitness to promote the end. “This command to ‘keep the Sabbath holy,’ is, literally interpreted, partly moral and partly ceremonial. *Moral*, inasmuch as men are to devote a certain portion of their time to an attention to divine things. For men have a natural inclination to fix a certain time for everything that is necessary, such as for bodily refreshment, and other things of a similar kind. And, therefore, in compliance with the dictates of natural reason, they devote a certain fixed time to that spiritual refreshment by which their spirits are strengthened in God. Thus it is a moral precept, which enjoins upon men to set apart a certain time for the purpose of devoting it to divine things. But inasmuch as a *special* time is named in the commandment as a sign of the creation, it is in this respect a *ceremonial* command.—Servile works are inconsistent with the keeping of the Sabbath, so far as they hinder us from fixing the mind upon divine things. And because a man is kept away from divine things more by sin than by work, even of the body, the man who sins breaks the command, more than he who performs any lawful bodily work.—The observance of Sunday, under the new law, follows the keeping of the Sabbath, not in consequence of a legal precept, but from the decision of the Church, and the custom of Christians.

* Opp. i. 6, p. 662.

† Died A.D. 1224.

For this observance is not typical, as the keeping of the Sabbath was under the old law. And, therefore, the prohibition of work on the Sunday is not so strict as on the Sabbath, but some employments are lawful on the Sunday which were forbidden on the Sabbath, such as the cooking of food and other similar things. And with regard to things not allowed, it is easier to obtain a dispensation in case of need under the new law than under the old, since the design of a type is to bear witness of the truth, and therefore must not be departed from in the *smallest* things; but works in themselves considered can be changed according to the changes of time and place."

If, however, there had been anything like an established opinion, that the Old Testament law of the Sabbath was binding upon the Church, it would certainly have been overthrown by the powerful attacks of the Reformers upon any mixture of the Old and New Testaments.

Luther's opinion as to the law of the Sabbath can be easily inferred from his views as to the Old Testament law in general, and especially the ten commandments. The distinction, so current in later times, between the moral and ceremonial laws, according to which only the latter has been abolished by Christ, whilst the former is valid in all ages and binding upon all men, received no support from him. He looked upon the *whole law* as an outward compulsory letter, *only intended for the Jews*; a view, which, as we shall show in the second chapter, can only be objected to by those who misunderstand it. Thus he says, in the work entitled, "Instruction to Christians how to make use of Moses," "The law of Moses belongs to the Jews, and is no longer binding upon us. The words of Scripture prove clearly to us, that the ten commandments do not affect us; for God has not brought us out of Egypt, but only the Jews. We are willing to take Moses as a teacher, but not as our lawgiver, except when he agrees with the New Testament and with the law of nature. . . . No single point in Moses binds us. . . . Leave Moses and his people alone. Their work is done. He has nothing to do with me. I listen to the word, which concerns me. We have the gospel. . . . We do not read Moses, because he concerns us, because we have to obey him, but because he agrees with the law of nature; and has expressed this law better than the heathen ever could. In this way the ten commandments are a mirror of our life, in which we see our defects."

To the same effect he says, in the explanation of the ten commandments: "We must remark at the outset, that the ten commandments

do not apply to us Gentiles and Christians, but only to the Jews. If a preacher wishes to force you back to Moses, ask him whether you were brought by Mōses out of Egypt. If he says, No, then say, How then does Moses concern me, since he speaks to the people that have been brought out of Egypt? In the New Testament Moses comes to an end, and his laws lose their force. He must bow in the presence of Christ. . . . The words, 'I am the Lord thy God,' apply to all of us, to the whole world, not because Moses has written them, but because God has created, and preserves and governs all." And in another passage of the same work he says: "We must stop the mouths of the factious spirits, who say, 'Thus says Moses.' Then do you reply, Moses does not concern us. If I accept Moses in one commandment, I must accept the whole Moses. In that case I should be obliged to be circumcised, and to wash my clothes in a Jewish manner, and to eat and drink, and dress and do everything of this kind, in the manner in which the Jews are commanded to do them in the law. Therefore, we will not obey Moses, or accept him. Moses died, and his government terminated when Christ came."

Luther's opinion of the Sabbath, in harmony with this general view, is so clearly expressed in his larger Catechism, that there is no necessity to bring forward other passages from his writings. "God set apart the seventh day, and appointed it to be observed, and commanded that it should be considered holy above all others; and this command, as far as the outward observance is concerned, was given to the Jews alone, that they should abstain from hard labour, and rest, in order that both man and beast might be refreshed, and not be worn out by constant work. Therefore this commandment, literally understood, does not apply to us Christians; for it is entirely outward, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, bound to modes, and persons, and times and customs, all of which are now left free by Christ. But, in order that the simple may obtain a Christian view of that which God requires of us in this commandment, observe that we keep a festival, not for the sake of intelligent and advanced Christians, for these have no need of it; but first *for the sake of the body*, because Nature teaches that the working-classes, servants and maids, who have spent the whole week in their work and occupation, absolutely require a day in which they can leave off work, and rest and refresh themselves; and, chiefly, in order that men may, on such a day of rest, *have time and opportunity*, such as they could not otherwise have, *to attend to the worship of God*, that so they may come in crowds, to hear the

word of God and practise it, to praise God, and sing, and pray. But this is *not bound to any particular time*, as with the Jews, so that it must be this day or that; for no day is in itself better than any other, but it ought to be performed daily; only, because this would be impossible to the mass of the people, we must at least devote one day to this purpose. And because Sunday has been appointed from the earliest times, we ought to keep to this arrangement, that all things may be done in harmony and order, and no confusion be caused by unnecessary novelties."

Melancthon speaks just as decidedly in the Augsburg Confession, art. 28 :—"Those who maintain that the Sunday is necessarily instituted in the place of the Sabbath, are greatly mistaken; for the sacred Scriptures have abolished the Sabbath, and teach, that all the ceremonies of the old law may be dropped since the introduction of the gospel; still, as it is requisite that a certain day should be appointed, in order that the people may know when to assemble, the Christian Church has appointed Sunday for this purpose; and this change it has made with the greater pleasure and good will, since it sets before men an example of Christian liberty, and teaches that neither the keeping of the Sabbath nor of any other day is absolutely necessary."

The Lutheran theologians of the century following the Reformation remained true to the views of Luther and *Melancthon*. This could be easily shown by copious quotations; but for the sake of brevity we shall content ourselves with one passage from a work by Chemnitz :—"It is a part of Christian liberty," he says, "that the consciences neither are bound, nor ought to be bound, to observe certain days or times, in the New Testament sense of 'binding'; but since it is the will of God that the church should assemble at times, to hear the word of God, to partake of the sacrament, for public prayer and thanksgiving, and for other united exercises of piety, and since Paul enjoins that, in the meetings of the church, everything be done in order, a certain day in the week was appointed in the days of the apostles, in the exercise of Christian liberty, for the meetings of the church for worship; and this was done for the sake of order, to prevent confusion, and irregular meetings, and that men might not neglect the assembling of themselves together. And though the meetings of the church are not necessarily bound to that day, in consequence of any law or precept of the New Testament, it would be an act of rude caprice to refuse to conform to this custom of the apostolic and primitive Church, which was established for the sake of order and union,

since entire Christian freedom is left to the conscience, and it tends, and can be employed, to the edification of the church." * And again : — " It is a remnant of Jewish leaven to be over anxious to forbid outward employments on the festivals, whether they do or do not interfere with those exercises, which constitute the observance of the Sabbath. They abuse the Sabbath most who employ it in sensuality, frivolity, drunkenness, and other disgraceful practices ; which, however, are so frequent, that on hardly any day is God more grievously offended than on those which have been especially devoted to his service. It is also a remnant of Jewish leaven to contend, with too great eagerness, that the observance of the day must extend exactly from midnight to midnight, as many do." †

The *Reformed Church* held at first precisely the same doctrine as the Lutheran. Those writings, which possessed the authority of articles, afford such positive proof of this, that we need search no further. The Catechism of Geneva contains the following questions and answers upon the fourth commandment?—Q. " Does it forbid all work ? " A. " This commandment is one of a distinct and peculiar kind. For the observance of rest is a part of the ancient ceremonies ; it is, therefore, done away by the coming of Christ." Q. " What part of this commandment, then, applies to us ? " A. " That we do not neglect the religious institutions which belong to the spiritual constitution of the church, especially that we attend the religious meetings which are held, to hear the word of God, and observe the sacraments, and offer prayer." Q. " Is the framework, then, entirely useless to us ? " A. " By no means. But we must learn the truth which it teaches, namely, that since we have been planted into the body of Christ, and have become his members, we must cease from our own works, and thus give ourselves up to the guidance of God."

In the Heidelberg Catechism, the 103rd question reads thus :— " What does God require in the fourth commandment ? " A. " God requires, first, that preaching and schools should be maintained, and that I come diligently, especially on the feast day, with the church of God, to learn the word of God, to observe the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and to give alms. Moreover, that I rest *every day of my life* from my wicked works, that I let the Lord work in me by his Spirit, and thus commence in this life the Sabbath of eternity."

The *Helvetic Confession*, which was drawn up in the year 1566, and

* Examen Concilii Tridentini, b. iv. p. 155.

† P. 156.

adopted by the Reformed Churches in England, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary and Germany, reads as follows:—
 “Although religion is bound to no particular time, yet it cannot be fostered and carried out without a fixed arrangement and distinction of times. Thus every church chooses for itself a certain time for public prayer and the preaching of the gospel, as well as for the observance of the sacraments. But it is not left free to every one capriciously to overturn this arrangement of the church. And unless sufficient leisure is reserved for the outward exercises of religion, men will certainly be drawn away from them by their worldly affairs. We find, therefore, that in the early churches not only certain hours in the week were appointed for meeting together, but the Sunday was also devoted to these meetings and to sacred leisure, even as early as the times of the apostles: a custom which our churches very properly retain for the promotion of love and the worship of God. But we do not tolerate here either superstition, or the Jewish mode of observance. For we do not believe that one day is holier than another, or that rest in itself is pleasing to God. *We keep the Sunday, not the Sabbath, by a voluntary observance.*

The Socinians, in the Rakow Catechism, which is acknowledged as containing their confession, expressly deny the identity of the Sabbath and Sunday.—Q. “What is your opinion as to the fourth commandment?” A. “I believe that, like the other ceremonies, it is abrogated by the New Testament.” Q. “Why, then, is it placed in the Decalogue?” A. “In order that it may be seen that the most perfect part of the Mosaic law is still not perfect, and that thus an intimation might be given, that a much more perfect law would supersede the law of Moses.” Q. “Has not Christ enjoined that we should keep the Sunday instead of the Sabbath?” A. “By no means. For the Christian religion puts an end entirely to the choice of days, as it does to other ceremonies, as the apostle clearly shows in Col. ii. 16. But, as we perceive that, from the earliest times, the Sunday has been observed by Christians, we allow all Christians the same liberty.”

The wretchedness of the reason here given for the introduction of the Sabbath commandment into the Decalogue, the fallacy of the opinion on which it is founded, that the fourth commandment is a mere shell, a mere letter without spirit, and the perversity of regarding the observance of the Sunday only as a thing to be tolerated from compassion to the weakness of others, were perceived to some extent by later

Socinians. Thus Ruarus says, "Although I do not believe that we are under a direct obligation to keep the commandment of the Decalogue relating to the Sabbath; yet I do think that we may argue correctly in this way, if the Israelites were commanded to devote the seventh part of their life to the worship of God, what ought we then justly to do?"

Even the Romish Church did not venture directly to oppose the views of the Reformers, in the face of the decided opinions expressed by the Fathers. In the decrees of the Council of Trent, this subject is passed by in silence; the *Catechismus Romanus* discusses it, but with evident wavering. The ten commandments are said to be binding, not because they were given by Moses, but because they coincide with the law of nature. There is a part of the fourth commandment, however, which cannot be deduced from the law of nature, and is therefore ceremonial, and subject to change, namely, the appointment of the seventh day. This is repealed by Christ. In the place of the seventh, the apostles established the first day. The fourth commandment teaches how it must be observed.

The opinion that the Sabbath was transferred to the Sunday was first broached in its perfect form, and with all its consequences, in the controversy, which was carried on in England between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The Presbyterians, who carried to extremes the principle, that every institution of the Church must have its foundation in the Scriptures, and would not allow that God had given, in this respect, greater liberty to the Church of the New Testament, which his Spirit had brought to maturity, than to that of the Old, charged the Episcopalians with Popish leaven and superstition, and subjection to the ordinances of men, because they retained the Christian "feasts." The Episcopalians, on the other hand, as a proof that greater liberty was granted to the New Testament Church in such matters as these, appealed to the fact that even the observance of the Sunday was only an arrangement of the Church. The Presbyterians were now in a position which compelled them either to give up the observance of the Sunday, or to maintain that a direct appointment from God separated it from the other festivals. The first they could not do, for their Christian experience was too deep for them not to know how greatly the weakness of human nature stands in need of regularly returning periods, devoted to the service of God. They, therefore, decided upon the latter. They maintained that the fourth commandment was a perpetual one, binding upon all ages, and that

the difference between the Old and New Testament consisted solely in this, that at the command of God, given through the apostles, the first day of the week was substituted for the seventh.

This doctrine—for which many Puritan clergymen were deposed, because they either would not read the proclamation of James I., issued in the year 1618, and renewed by Charles I., in the year 1633, that all kinds of public sports should be allowed on the Sunday, or, if they did read it, added the words, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,”—commended itself by the greater sanctity which it gave to the Sunday in the eyes of the people, and its consequent tendency to promote a Christian spirit and conduct. This affords the best clue to the striking fact, that it was gradually adopted even by the theologians of the Episcopal Church. There was less to hinder this in England than elsewhere, because the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church do not teach the opposite doctrine, as is the case with the other Reformed Confessions of Faith.

The following passage in Spencer's book, *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*, shows how extensively this view had spread by the second half of the seventeenth century:—“Many in the present day appear under the Christian name, but in the character of Jews, and introduce a religion, which troubles the minds of the weak with many scruples of conscience; saying, that we are bound, according to the fourth commandment, to devote one day of the seven entirely to rest, and meditation, and prayer, and other pious duties. Some even are so far gone in their folly, as to think, that religion consists chiefly in keeping the Sabbath. They allow no investigation of the subject, and regard all as atheists, exposed to the wrath of God, who are so presumptuous as to violate the rest and observance of the Sabbath (as they call it) by any worldly occupation.”

Spencer's vehement opposition to this view was insufficient to stay its further spread; the more so because he was unable to meet the erroneous opinions with correct ones. He could not fathom the deep religious meaning of the observance of the Sabbath, under the Old Testament, nor could he see any meaning in the laws relating to it, which could possibly affect the Church of the New Testament. He maintained the harsh doctrine, that the observance of the Sabbath was nothing more than a formal declaration on the part of the Jewish people, that the world was created by God and not by idols, and was therefore simply intended to preserve them from idolatry. The

outward rest prescribed was not intended at all to promote inward rest from worldly affairs, and raise the mind to God. It was only ceremonial, an imitation of the rest of God after the creation. By resting and working, according to the example of the work and rest of God, the Jews were to signify clearly, that they continued to believe in the completion of the creation in six days.

The stricter view of the Sunday, on the other hand, gained so perfect a victory, that it may now be regarded as the only one prevalent in England, Scotland, and America. It has scarcely an opponent in the sphere of theology; only the worldly and the sceptic oppose it, and that with timidity, from the fear of public opinion, whose power is so great in these lands.

The feeling which is now so general in these countries, that all opposition to this doctrine must be the result of frivolity, is favoured greatly by the striking proofs which have been given them through a long series of years, and are still given every day, of the beneficial effects of a strict observance of the Sunday. German travellers, whose theological principles are opposed to this doctrine, have been so overpowered by the sight of these results, as to be unable to refuse a certain testimony to the value of the doctrine itself.

The German minister in London, Wendeborn, remarks in his book, on the Condition of the State, of Religion, of Learning, and of Art in Great Britain, at the end of the eighteenth century: * “The respect shown in England to the Sunday, whatever it may spring from, certainly preserves a kind of outward reverence for religion. Criminals, who have been executed at Tyburn and in other places, have often been known to warn the crowd of spectators, present on such occasions, to keep the Sabbath, as Sunday is generally called here, because, in their opinion, their own miserable and untimely death is to be ascribed to their neglect of it.”

Dr. Sack, in his remarks on religion and the Church of England,† says: “Religious improvement and instruction are promoted generally by the love of the people to the Church, which has never been altogether destroyed, and by their deep respect for the worship of God, and the day which is devoted to it. The strictness with which the Sunday is observed in England is well known. So far as the irreligious are concerned, the manner in which this day is spent, seems

* Berlin, 1785, pt. 3.

† Berlin, 1818, p. 148.

indeed often useless and spiritless; and even the religious do not always keep it in the free spirit of the gospel. But the number of those who do keep it in this spirit, is very great, and this strictness is remarkable and of great worth, when considered as an expression of the national sentiment. For thus it is; and if the Government were to endeavour to effect a change, most probably the strongest opposition would be raised by all, from the lowest to the highest classes of the people. Thus the restless driving of this ever busy people is quieted on this day by a general voluntary rest; and the strong feeling of a higher order and repose is certainly sustained thereby. Fidelity to this ancient custom of the Christian Church, respect for worship, and the encouragement of peaceful meditation, present a strong and favourable contrast to the very dishonourable disregard of the Sunday by work and pleasure, which is witnessed in so many of the large towns in Germany."

From England the doctrine of the obligation of the Mosaic law of the Sabbath spread to Holland. Some English Puritans, who sought an asylum in Zeeland, introduced it. It was first published in two works on Ethics, by Udemann in 1612, and Teelling, in 1617. Several ministers embraced the new opinions; others retained the old. The Synod of Dortrecht attempted to put an end to the controversy; but they did not venture to do so by giving a positive decision as to the doctrine. They sought to stifle the discussion. At last it was determined, that, in the reprint of their minutes, what had passed about the Sabbath should be omitted. A commission of four theologians was entrusted with the settlement of the question, and the preparation of articles, which both parties could accept. They accomplished this, and both parties were at first really satisfied with their six articles. At the same time it was decreed that these should be retained, and that no one should preach or write against them, till a national synod was held, which was not likely to be very soon.

As we may readily imagine, these means were not adapted to secure the desired effect. It was not long before the controversy was renewed with greater warmth than ever. From the ministers it soon passed to the professors. It spread through all the academies of Holland, and for a whole century was the cause of great and uninterrupted discord in the Church.

At the commencement of the controversy, the principal opponent of the validity of the Mosaic Sabbath law, was the renowned Gomarus, who published his work, *Examen Sabbathi*, in the year 1628. In this

he maintains, that the Sabbath was first instituted in the desert, and was ceremonial. The chief writers on the other side were Rivet, Walaëus, Amesius, and Boetius. No attention was paid to a moderate theologian, Thysius, who warned them not to attach too great importance to their differences, and either to be silent, or at least to tolerate each other. At last, however, they grew weary of the controversy, and it rested for a time, but only to break out again with the greater violence.

The principal opponents of the validity of the Mosaic law in this new period of the controversy, which commenced in the year 1658, were Heidanus and Cocceius in Leiden ; the chief writers on the other side, Hoornbeek in Leiden, and Essen in Utrecht. A long series of works appeared on both sides in Dutch and Latin, of which those of Cocceius were the most important, whose opponents went so far as to accuse him of Socinianism, on account of his views. At last the States-General were obliged to interfere. The controversy was stopped by them at Leiden by the edict, issued by them on the 7th August, 1659, prohibiting any more writing upon the subject, and commanding that the six articles of the Dortrecht Commission should be regarded as final. But it continued at Utrecht with the greater warmth. There Francis Burmann appeared as the opponent of the Jewish observance of the Sabbath ; and was warmly opposed by his less known colleagues. In Groningen, too, these contests were carried on ; Altling defending against Maresius the universal validity of the Mosaic Sabbath law.

The controversy was kept up in Holland till the eighteenth century, but with greater calmness. However, the more liberal views gradually advanced, and became more and more prevalent throughout the Reformed Churches, with the exception of Great Britain.

In Germany, the agitation of this question in Holland was watched with great attention. The more stringent views, which commended themselves by the appearance of greater piety, and promised to do much to stop the prevalent neglect of the Sunday, were preferred by most of the theologians to those contained in the works of the Reformers. But they were kept very quiet during the whole of the second half of the seventeenth century, from a knowledge that they were held in direct opposition to the powerful authority of the Confessions of Faith. In 1688, however, *Fecht*, a theologian at Rostock, entered the lists against these views, and, amongst other things, quoted the whole list of historical witnesses against them, whom many would gladly have buried in oblivion. No one ventured to oppose him. But

this did not prevent their gaining fresh adherents, with such rapidity, that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the more zealous advocates, believing that nearly all the orthodox theologians were on their side, ventured to make a fierce assault upon the few who still defended the more liberal views.

A slight contest arose as early as the year 1700, when Lünekogel, a minister in Holstein, translated into German Francis Burmann's work on the Sabbath; and in a preface and notes defended his opinion, that the law of the Sabbath was purely ceremonial, and did not apply to Christians. His superior, Schwarz, the general superintendent of Holstein, wrote a reply. In the year 1701 appeared his "True Account of the Sabbath, in reply to Burmann's false doctrine, which a minister in Holstein has sanctioned, and introduced into Germany, *with evil consequences to the Land.*"

Far more important was the agitation, caused by the work of Stryk, a jurist in Halle, on the Sabbath. This man, who was actuated by truly religious zeal, and inclined to the views of the pietists, was led especially to oppose the doctrine which had become prevalent regarding the Sabbath, from the fact that it seemed to him to promote generally a merely external fear of God, a kind of Christian pharisaism. He himself says, in his answer to Mayer, which appeared in 1707: "This dissertation is written with no other object than to show how, in the present day, men are relying upon outward worship alone, so that the real inward worship, the worship in spirit and in truth, is almost entirely forgotten." He borrowed his weapons chiefly from Spencer. In the first part of the treatise, which consists of four chapters, he treats of the origin and progress of the Sabbath, and its force under the New Testament. He maintains, that the Sabbath was not prescribed by any law before the time of Moses. From this it follows, that it affects the children of Israel alone. This is still further confirmed by the fact, that the reason stated for the institution of the Sabbath, only applies to the Jews. It is said to be appointed, in order that they may be reminded on the Sabbath of their bondage in Egypt; that the Sabbath may be a special sign between God and the Jewish people; and that the children of Israel may be preserved by it from idolatry. If the commandment had been a moral one, no alteration could have taken place under the New Testament in reference to the day. The Sunday of Christians does not stand on any common ground with the Sabbath of the Jews. It has not been introduced by a direct Divine command, for it cannot be proved that

the observance of it originated with the apostles; and even if it could, they evidently did not wish to lay down any law with regard to it. The observance of the Sunday rests entirely upon a simple arrangement of the Church. In the second chapter the author proceeds, on this ground, to examine the rights and duties of a government with respect to the Sunday. He maintains that a prince has authority to appoint another day for public worship instead of Sunday, though this would be a decidedly imprudent course.* His duty, in reference to the Sunday, is to see that the design of it is secured. He must, therefore, make a difference between his subjects. The rude and inexperienced in Christianity he must urge to attend upon public worship; but the more advanced, on the contrary, who no longer need a Sunday, he has full liberty to leave to themselves. Such men serve God at all times in spirit and in truth, and must, therefore, enjoy the full liberty which Christ has gained for them. All worldly amusements, which interfere with the design of the Sunday, ought to be forbidden. In the third chapter he treats of the rights of individual Christians. He maintains that the Christian ought to be bound to no day, as that on which he must worship, but that he has a perfect right to set apart now one day, and now another, for the worship of God, as the Spirit prompts him. But this right does not belong to all who bear the name of Christians, but only to the true members of Christ and of the new covenant, with whom the whole life and every day is nothing else than a Sabbath. But those who are not established in the true faith are bound to keep the Sunday, not because of the commandment of the Old Testament, but from a knowledge of their condition, which makes the observance of the Sunday a useful arrangement of the Church.

This work, as we may easily imagine from its contents, excited great attention. It was soon translated into German; and by the year 1715 had reached the fifth edition. The author, too, threw his opponents into perplexity by a reprint of the treatise of Fecht, with a preface of his own, in which he maintained, that he needed no further defence, since this theologian, whose opinion agreed with his own, had never been answered. The large number of his opponents showed, how deeply rooted the views he attacked had by this time become. Nearly all of them, however, instead of attacking the false spiritualism so

* The author writes, of course, from the stand-point of a State-church, and from that with indisputable consistency.—Tr.

apparent in this work, and whose nakedness when applied to the Sabbath we shall discover, when we discuss the subject presently, directed all their efforts to defend the moral nature of the Mosaic Sabbath commandment. The "moral nature of the Sabbath" was a favourite theme for academical exercises for many years.

The opponents of the Sabbath did not omit to appeal to the authority of the articles of belief. "Our articles of belief," says a writer in 1703, "are brought forward *against the opinion of all our teachers*, with the complaint that the people are compelled to swear upon these books, and yet those opinions are condemned which are in accordance with them." We can see at once what perplexity would be caused by such an appeal; but the means resorted to for escaping from it—the forced interpretations by which the clearest passages were made obscure—are too miserable to deserve quotation.

It is worthy of notice, that the opinions expressed by Stryk were rejected as warmly by the theologians of the pietist school, as by the orthodox, and that, not only that they might avoid giving the latter an occasion of commencing a doctrinal controversy, but, even more, because the practical result, at which Stryk aimed, was counterbalanced by another which, in their estimation, was more important. The result which, even in Stryk's opinion, the Sunday ought to ensure, they believed to be unattainable unless the views, which he opposed, were firmly maintained. And they knew too well, that, even in believers, the conflict between the flesh and the spirit is not yet terminated, to dream of perfect Christians who need no special times of devotion and meeting. Buddaeus and Walch defend the ordinary view; and so also Spener, who has written at greater length than others on the subject. He thinks, however, that it is better not to carry on the controversy in too public a manner; partly, because the consequence will only be, that men will indulge a liberty injurious to their souls and their edification; and partly because the Augsburg Confession is more against them than in their favour. It is better, he thinks, to recommend the strict observance of Sunday on the ground of experience. "I am convinced, that, if the people could be persuaded, for a certain time, to spend the Sabbath sacredly in honour of God, their own experience would advocate the practice most strongly, and would show them so clearly the will of our heavenly Father, who has granted us such rest for the good of our souls, that there would be no necessity for further discussion on the part of those who watch over their spiritual interests." He recommends others to test the question,

by the same means which were effectual in his own case. "I thank my God," he says, "who caused me to learn this important lesson, that I ought to abstain on the Sunday, not only from worldly amusements, but from studies also, even though theological, by which I was seeking to advance in learning rather than in goodness or piety."

But Spener, though he regarded the Sabbath commandment as part of the moral law, did not overlook another distinction between the two Testaments in reference to it, besides the difference of days. Under the Old Testament, in which everything was outward, the discontinuance of work, of that which was outward, formed a most essential part of the commandment; but since worship, under the New Testament, consists more in that which is within, the sanctification of the Sabbath is to be sought by us principally in the inward rest of the soul, and in giving this up to the operations of God; and outward rest is connected with this, only as a help to the rest within. Therefore, sports on the Sunday are more sinful under the New Testament, than the performance of the duties of one's calling, even though these consist in hard work. For a few hours spent in amusements do more to disturb the soul's rest in God, than a whole day spent in work; since the latter may have been accompanied with thinking upon the word of God. The same is true of all *worldly studies*, of cares, of everything, which rivets the mind and thoughts upon itself; for by this they all hinder the keeping of the Sabbath, more than severe labour. The fourth commandment differs, in his opinion, from the others in two respects. *First*, in the fact, that what is forbidden in it, work on the seventh day, is not wrong and sinful in itself, which is the case with all that is prohibited in the other commandments, but something which became so, simply in consequence of the divine prohibition; and therefore, even under the Old Testament, as Christ has explained, some work ceased to be sinful when necessity compelled. And *secondly*, inasmuch as this commandment, according to Col. ii. 16, 17, belongs in part to the shadows and types of the Old Testament, and God appointed it especially as a sign between himself and the Israelites. Therefore, not only does that, which was typical of the future, cease in the New Testament, since the body itself has come; but all the different ordinances which are added in the Old Testament, beyond that part of the Sabbath which human nature requires, and which gives the command its force, are no longer binding upon us who are under the New Testament. Men, who are so far advanced in spiritual things, that they would not be hindered by outward

works, might even on the Sunday, to some extent, engage in them without sin, and yet by inward spiritual exercise obey the command. But if engagements of this kind were, in the present day, to be attended to by persons, who cannot comprehend this liberty, but feel scruples about it, or who would do so in opposition to their conscientious convictions, it would be sin in their case, because of their scruples; it is better, therefore, not to use this liberty, but to avoid evil, and the appearance of it. In cases of necessity, however, work on the Sunday is right. To these belong commands of governors and masters, which save those, who are under their authority, from the charge of sin; and also labour in the field.

If Spener had thought out the views, which he expresses here, more thoroughly, he would have seen that his agreement with the prevalent opinion was much less than he imagined. He would have perceived, that the Old Testament Sabbath commandment has quite lost its legal power under the New Testament. For the application, which he makes of it, can be made as powerfully by those who hold that the law of the Old Testament, having been given by God, cannot be abrogated in the same sense as the laws of men, but must ever contain a treasure of *instruction*, to which the free Church of the New Testament must always go for the material, with which to prepare *its own laws*.

The prevailing doctrine, as to the Sunday, was not affected by the theology, upon which the influence of Wolff's philosophy was exerted; but, in the second half of the last century, it began to lose its sway. Mosheim arose as one of its most active and powerful opponents. He rejects the Old Testament basis of the observance of Sunday altogether. He goes in this respect to a decided and erroneous extreme, and maintains that the Sabbath of the Jews has scarcely anything in common with the Sunday of Christians, except that they both belong to the seven days of the week. But he thinks that there is quite as much cause for disputing the opinions of those, who hold that the observance of the Sunday rests upon the authority of the Church. Actuated by the same motive which led others to identify the Sabbath and Sunday, he seeks to trace the obligation, to observe the Sunday, to a direct precept from God. "The apostles of the Redeemer," he says, "at the very commencement of the Church of the Lord, chose the first day of the week, on which the Lord rose from the dead, for the Christians' day of meeting. (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; Rev. i. 10.) And they themselves, as well as their disciples and fellow-workers, instituted it

in every Church which they founded, and amongst all the nations of the earth, to whom the gospel had been preached. This fact is sufficient in itself to remove all doubts as to the claims of our Sunday, and the duty of Christians to keep it holy."

A work, written by a christian-minded jurist, which appeared in 1830, with the motto, "Stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage, Gal. v. 1," deserves to be noticed here. The author has written with the intention of opposing the doctrine of the identity of the Sabbath and Sunday, which was coming over from England. He maintains that the application of the Jewish law of the Sabbath to the keeping of the Sunday, as the so-called Christian Sabbath, is a return to the weak and beggarly elements, and thoroughly opposed to the gospel; and that it is unwise to go so far, as some do, as to begin with the unconverted, by attempting to terrify them with the consequences of breaking the commandment to "keep holy the Sabbath day." The observance of the Sunday he regards as a human institution, occasioned by the weakness of man and the relations of society, but one which stands in close connexion with another institution of divine origin, that of the office of preacher of the gospel, and with the necessity of the godly man for Christian fellowship, in order that our inward life may be sustained. The design of Sunday is, in fact, to give us *time* for availing ourselves of the means of grace. This time is not holy in itself, and the mere cessation of work brings no advantage; but we gain advantage only when we so use the time, that we grow in the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope.

We have now brought the historical account to a close. We shall in the next chapter examine only those views, which are based upon the common ground, that the Mosaic law is to be received as divine.

CHAPTER II.

INVESTIGATION OF THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE SABBATH AND SUNDAY.

OUR first course in making the investigation, which we are about to attempt, is obviously to examine the arguments, by which the advocates of the continuance of the Old Testament Sabbath under the New support their views. We shall confine ourselves chiefly to those

brought together by Dwight in his "Theology;" from the conviction that this theologian, who is highly esteemed in England and America, has collected all the arguments, including those which are only apparent ones, which have ever been used in support of his views.

The perpetuity of the Sabbath, it is said, is evident from *its original institution*, Gen. ii. 1—3. The Sabbath was instituted and commanded for the first parents of the human race, and therefore for their *whole* posterity. The ground then given for rest on the seventh day, namely, the rest of God on that day, is altogether a general one, and does not affect the Jews more than other men. The example of God is set before the whole human race for imitation.

Now it is very striking, in the first place, that, in the passage appealed to, there is no mention of a *command*, nor even of God's having made it known to men, that he had blessed and sanctified the seventh day. This impression is increased by a reference to Exod. xx. 8, and the other passages in the Pentateuch relating to the Sabbath. Looking now at the commandment, we see clearly how necessary it is to distinguish between the decision of God, and the revelation of it with a command, from the fact that this decision supposes the fall of man, and, therefore, the execution of it could not have been enjoined upon him before he fell. Where sin has not entered, the whole life is one continued service of God; and there is no danger that attention to earthly things will be the cause of worldliness, and, therefore, there is no necessity for the setting apart of special times. And if it was not made known at once, it cannot be maintained that it was known at all before the time of Moses.

No one can bring the smallest probable ground for assuming that this was the case. The argument has indeed been often used, that without a Sabbath the origin of the week cannot be explained, and that in the earliest times, in Gen. xxix. 27, 28, even as early as ch. vii. vers. 4 and 10, the division of weeks occurs. But the origin of the week may be explained in another very natural manner. It is but the subdivision of the lunar month; instead of $7\frac{2}{3}$ days, which are the average of a quarter moon, the nearest whole number was taken, namely, seven days. This explanation is confirmed by the analogous origin of days, months, and years, and by Gen. i. 14, in which the sun and moon are to serve for signs, for division of time, and by the fact, that the division of time into weeks of seven days does not exist in some nations, where we might expect to find remains of a primitive tradition, and does exist amongst some nations, which, like the Chinese

and the ancient Peruvians,* are certainly out of the line of tradition which has descended from the earliest times.

It is further asserted, that the seventh day of the week has been considered sacred by the most different nations of the earth, without the possibility of the idea having been obtained from the Jews; and that this is a proof that it was instituted in the earliest times of the human race. And, certainly, when we look at the collection of passages, cited by Dwight, or Spener, we cannot but be struck by them at first. But when we see the test, to which these passages have been submitted by Selden and others,† we soon recover from our first astonishment. It is proved, that the seventh day has not been kept by a single people, except the Israelites, and that where a seventh day has been observed, it has not been the seventh day of the week. The argument then changes into one for the opposite side. If the Sabbath had been instituted at the first, we should expect to find traces of its observance elsewhere than amongst the Israelites. At any rate, this argument against the institution at the first, serves to strengthen the more important one, that, in the whole history of the times anterior to Moses, no trace of the observance of the Sabbath occurs.

It is said also, that the account of the gathering of the manna, related in Exod. xvi. 22—30, affords us ground for presuming that the Sabbath was observed before the giving of the law. For the Israelites gathered a double portion of the manna on the Friday, because they would not gather any on the Sabbath. But this assertion rests upon a misconception of the whole account. A correct interpretation, on the contrary, shows evidently that the Sabbath was a Mosaic institution. The gathering of the double portion on the Friday was not an arbitrary act of the people. They gathered every day all the manna which was upon the ground, and, according to the Divine arrangement, this was just sufficient for their wants. On the Friday they found unexpectedly so much, that exactly twice as much as the usual portion was gathered. Thus understood, we find in this a striking parallel to another event. At the first passover the command to eat unleavened bread was not given to the people, but God, contrary to all expectation, so ordered the circumstances, that, without any intention on their part, they were compelled to eat their bread unleavened. This Divine arrangement served to give a sanction to the Mosaic com-

* Ideler, Chronol. th. i. p. 87.

† Selden, de Jure Nat. et. Gentium, i. 3, c. 10, &c. Gomarus de Sabb. c. 4. Spener and Ideler.

mand, as to the future observance of the festival. In the same way God sanctified the Sabbath, before he gave the people through Moses the command to sanctify it. How could the people have been possibly led to acknowledge this command in a more effectual manner?

After it has been thus shown that there is every ground for doubting the observance of the Sabbath before the time of Moses, those passages gain importance in which particular emphasis is laid upon the fact, that the Sabbath belonged peculiarly to the Israelites. Thus Exod. xxxi. 12, Ezek. xx. 12, where it is said, in the summing up of the mercies of God to Israel, after the giving of the law on Sinai has been spoken of, "Also I gave them my Sabbaths;" and Neh. ix. 14, in the statement of the acts of kindness on the part of God to Israel, "Also thou madest known to them thy holy Sabbath." Nothing but the most decided grounds for believing in a pre-Mosaic observance of the Sabbath could justify us, in assuming that the Sabbath is here spoken of as a new institution, peculiar to the theocracy, only because it now received a new meaning.

But even granting that the design of God, that the Sabbath should be sanctified, was made known to men before Moses, and that the command was given and obeyed, this does not *in itself* justify us in concluding with certainty that this arrangement was to last under the New Testament. If it did, it would also follow, that the prohibition to eat blood given to the descendants of Noah is still binding in New Testament times, whereas it is evident that even before Christ this prohibition might have been passed over without sin by a people, in whose altered circumstances more effectual means were at work to create a horror of murder. And so also the command to circumcise would of necessity be binding, at least upon the descendants of Abraham. The proper view of the subject is, that all commands which occur before the time of Moses stand in the same relation to the New Testament as the law of Moses itself, under which name they are all referred to in the New Testament. In both cases the decision as to their being still binding, rests upon the investigation of the relation in which the commandment stands to the nature of the New Testament.

This investigation, however, so far as the Sabbath is concerned, must lead, *in all that is important*, to a favourable result. It is true that two things have been adduced with great plausibility, as showing that in the principal points, the Sabbath fails to harmonize with the New Testament times, and, therefore, Gen. ii. 1—3 cannot be regarded as applicable to them. But on a closer examination, it

becomes apparent that both of these are based upon an incorrect interpretation. 1. It is said, "The essence of the Sabbath, according to Gen. ii., consisted just in this, that it was instituted as a memorial of the creation. Because God worked six days for us, for whom the whole creation was intended, we were to cease from our work, from seeking our own interests on the seventh day, and devote it to him. Now, under the New Testament, the goodness of God in the creation has been cast into the shade by the grace of redemption. It would be to place redemption below creation, in opposition both to the Scriptures, and Christian consciousness, if a festival devoted to the latter were made the chief festival amongst Christians. Such a course, with all the show of Christianity, would lead to the principles of Deism, and be only justifiable by them." But it is an unfounded assertion that the Sabbath was instituted as a memorial of the creation. The observance of the seventh day was founded, not on the fact that God worked six days for us, but that he rested on the seventh day. 2. It is said that, "The rest on the Sabbath was, according to Gen. ii. 1—3 taken in connexion with the fourth commandment, first and chiefly an imitation of God, though it might have answered another end. It was a symbolical action. Whilst men by their work and rest followed the example of God, they copied the creation, and thus practically confessed that it was the work of God's almighty power." But this symbolical representation appears evidently calculated for a certain condition, with the termination of which it loses its importance, as much as the prohibition to eat blood. It no longer makes upon us, in whom the understanding is more predominant, the same impression which it made in ancient times, and especially in the East. And in addition to this, since Christianity possesses more effectual means for exciting the consciousness of God, it no longer needs for this purpose "the beggarly elements of the world." But we must dispute such a symbolical character in the rest enjoined on the Sabbath. This view is decidedly opposed to Lev. xxiii., where the rest of the Sabbath is placed on the same footing with the rest of the other festivals. It is not the rest of man, but that of God, which possesses this symbolical character. The rest of man serves to promote devotion, and that of God was designed to invite to it. This end it still subserves under the New Testament. And under this, too, the loving condescension with which God gave us a type both in work and rest, calls attention to the great importance of rest to the prosperity of the Church.

But the fact remains unchanged, that the passage in Genesis contains no command; and that if it did, it would not, *as a command*, be binding upon the Church of the New Testament. If these could not be established on general grounds, there would be a sufficient proof in the fact that it is not the observance of one day in seven which is commanded, but specially that of the seventh day. A command which requires to be divided and changed, before its validity can be enforced, may contain a rich store of instruction (and that is the case here, the temporary element being quite a subordinate one), but its authority as a command is gone.

The *second* strong argument for the perpetuity of the Sabbath, to which we now proceed, is founded on the fact that the *commandment to keep the Sabbath is placed amongst the ten commandments*. This, it is maintained, is an evidence that the Sabbath commandment belongs to *the moral law*; in which case it cannot have been abolished by Christ, who only repealed the ceremonial law.

We shall commence our examination of this argument by asking, *What is the Decalogue?* In what relation does it stand to the other laws of the Old Testament? English theologians reply,—The Decalogue differs entirely from the other laws of Moses. It contains the purely moral law, and is binding upon all men and all times. The arguments brought forward in defence of this are the following:—The rest of the law was written by Moses in a book; the Decalogue was first proclaimed by the voice of God, amidst fearful natural phenomena, which called attention to its importance, and then written by the finger of God upon tables of stone, the symbol of perpetuity.

But these arguments do not furnish the proof intended; full justice is done to them when we affirm, what every one will allow, that the Decalogue contains the kernel and quintessence of the whole code of laws of the Old Testament. It was important that, immediately after the covenant was concluded, the chief points in the arrangements of the new house should be sketched in rough lines upon the door-post. The Decalogue is the sketch of all the legislation which follows; and this is the filling up of the former—so that Calvin has adopted a correct method, when he adds to every commandment all that belongs to it throughout the Pentateuch. Thus he appends to the Sabbath command, not only all that occurs with direct reference to the Sabbath, but all that relates to the Sabbatic year, the year of jubilee and the festivals. From this view alone, that the Decalogue contained the quintessence of the whole of the Mosaic laws, is the appropriateness of

the symbol of the stone tables made sufficiently apparent, and the frequent allusions made to the ten commandments by Christ and the apostles, under the simple name of *the* commandments, explained. For if they were indeed the most important part of the Old Testament legislation, it follows that the kernel in them must be of greater worth than the shell—the eternal than that which was merely temporary; though it by no means follows that there was no shell at all in them, that no special ends were to be answered, and that they had no exclusive reference to the people to whom they were first given. On the contrary, there are several proofs that such a special purpose did exist; that the ten commandments are not to be applied in this unhesitating manner to the Christian Church; and that, in fact, regarded as *laws*, they are no more applicable to it than the rest of the Pentateuch. The words with which they are introduced—"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," are sufficient in themselves to prove this. These words establish the right of God to give the law, and the duty of Israel to obey it. This right is claimed by God, not on the ground of his general relation to the human race, but on that of the special relation into which he has entered to Israel. He has bought it at a great price from its former hard masters, the Egyptians, not that it may belong to itself, but that it may belong to him. This *ground* of obligation does not affect us, and therefore the obligation itself does not. This Luther saw, who, in general, like all the Reformers, understood the nature of the Decalogue far more correctly than many later theologians. He says, in his "Instructions how to make use of Moses,"—"It is thus clear enough that Moses was lawgiver to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles. For in this text Moses has given the Jews a sign, that, when they address God, they may conceive of him as the God who brought them out of Egypt. Christians have another sign, by which they conceive of God as the God who has made his own Son wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption to them." Moreover, even in those commandments, which seem to be the most general of all at first sight, a special Old Testament element is not to be mistaken. Only prejudice has ever led, or can lead, men to deny that the term "neighbour" denotes the members of the people of the covenant. Not as though this limitation gave permission to do wrong to those who were not Israelites. On the contrary, if we trace the special command to its idea, we see that it did apply to those who were not Israelites; just as in the command to love the brethren there lies wrapt up, also,

the command to love all men. But still the special reference made here to the members of the people of Israel in their relations to each other, shows that the letter of the Decalogue was intended for this people alone.

And not only does the Decalogue not contain a purely moral law, but the whole distinction between moral and ceremonial law, such as is generally made,—namely, that the first is for all ages, the latter entirely done away,—is not founded on the law itself, but is a mere invention of theologians, who fancied that to deny the validity of the moral commands of Moses was equivalent to cancelling the obligation to obey the moral law. The whole Mosaic law forms an indivisible whole; in one sense it is *all* abolished by Christ, and no longer affects the Church of the New Testament; in another sense it is all established by Christ, the ceremonial part no less than the moral.

These two are the principal arguments of our opponents. The others, adduced in support of these, are so unimportant, as to need no elaborate reply. “The perpetuity of the Sabbath,” they say, “is clearly taught in Isaiah lvi. 6—8. If the house of God is a house of prayer for all nations, then the Sabbath is a divine institution. And the house of God first became a house of prayer for all nations under the New Testament.” They might quite as correctly prove from this passage, that the temple of Jerusalem is to continue under the New Testament, in its former dignity (“I bring them—the heathen—to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer;”) and also the whole of the sacrificial worship (“their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar”). If, now, we must admit that, throughout, the prophet has clothed the idea, which belongs alike to the Old and New Testaments, in Old Testament drapery, according to the prophetic style; that he points out the kingdom of God by that which was its centre and seat under the Old Testament—the temple; and the acceptance of the homage rendered by a pure mind, by the well pleased acceptance of the sacrifices; how can any one be justified in, immediately after, pressing the *letter*, in reference to the Sabbath? The passage shows, undoubtedly, that the Old Testament commandment contains a germ which lives through all ages; but cannot prove, what is said to be proved, that the letter of this commandment retains its force in the Church of the New Testament.

The weakest argument is that which is founded on the 118th Psalm, ver. 24: “This is the day which the Lord hath made.” It is said to follow from this, that there was to be still a Sabbath under the gospel,

or after the resurrection of Christ; and, consequently, that it must continue to the end of the world (Dwight, p. 10). Now, supposing, what is by no means granted, that the Messianic interpretation of the psalm is the right one, the day cannot, certainly, be any other than the day of the deliverance or resurrection of the Messiah. But there is nothing said of the institution of a perpetual festival in honour of it; and if there were, still what connexion would there be between this and the Sabbath? The day, however, is rather the day on which the foundation stone of the temple was laid, in the second year after the return from exile. The Lord had made this day, inasmuch as his salvation had occasioned its celebration.

The last appeal is to the passage in Rev. i. 10: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." But the argument, "there was according to this passage a Lord's day under the New Testament; therefore the Old Testament Sabbath must be perpetual under the New Testament," is most unfortunate. The first thing to be proved is the exact identity of the Sabbath and the Lord's day; and that has not been done.

In the refutation of the arguments used for the perpetuity of the Sabbath, which we have just concluded, there have appeared several important proofs of the contrary, whose force we have only to strengthen by the following observations:—

The first thing which strikes us here, is the inconsistency of the advocates of the Sabbath. They, themselves, partially break the commandment, whose perpetual validity they uphold, and thus give a practical proof of the incorrectness of the doctrine.

It is certainly indisputable, that, if the proof of the perpetuity of the Sabbath is a conclusive one, it is not the first, but the *last day of the week which should be observed*. It must not be overlooked that the day enjoined in the Sabbatic law, even if not the chief thing, is not a matter of indifference. Because God rested on the *seventh* day, it is not one day in seven, but precisely the seventh day which is to be observed by rest. It was the seventh day which God blessed and sanctified. And to observe another day instead of it, is not to observe it at all.

In reply to this, our opponents say:—1. "That a distinction was made between the Sabbath, or the sacred rest, and the day on which it was held, even under the Old Testament. It is said expressly in the Decalogue: The Lord rested on the seventh day and blessed (not the seventh, but) the Sabbath day, and sanctified it; so that the blessing is not fixed to the day, but follows the Sabbath, to whatever day it is

transferred." But, to this we say, it is evident that *the* "Sabbath-day" is here the seventh, and no other, partly from the words contained in Gen. ii. 3, where it is expressly said, "And God blessed the seventh day;" partly from the article, *the* Sabbath-day, the precise day just spoken of; and partly also from the *therefore*. The connexion between the two parts, "he rested on the seventh day," and "he blessed the Sabbath," is only intelligible if Sabbath and seventh day are identical.

The opponents, indeed, are aware that, even if the correctness of this untenable position be granted, they will still have objections to meet. For if we may at will consider one part of the law as abrogated, it is not easy to see why others may not do the same with regard to other parts. But a law ceases to be a law, as soon as criticism has liberty to deal with it in this way. They declare, therefore (2), that the seventh day would still have to be observed, if it were not that we could produce an express declaration, on the part of the same authority by which the Sabbath was instituted, to the effect that it had been transferred from the seventh to the first day. Of this transfer they adduce the following proofs:—1. "In the nature of the case there is an *à priori* probability, that the Sabbath of the New Testament would be celebrated on a different day from that of the old. The blessings of God, to commemorate which the seventh day was kept under the Old Testament, namely the creation and the deliverance from Egypt, are infinitely surpassed in value by the redemption by Christ. After the accomplishment of this, therefore, the earlier observance ceases to be in its proper place." But this argument proves nothing in favour of the alteration of the day, but rather of the abolition of the Sabbath itself. If the creation and deliverance from Egypt no longer affect the Church of the New Testament, as they did that of the Old, then the ground on which the Sabbath was blessed and sanctified by God has no longer any force, so far as the former is concerned. But if it is, notwithstanding, still affirmed that the Sabbath continues under the New Testament, it can only be so by those who allow themselves at pleasure to remove some of the characteristic marks of the Sabbath of the Old Testament, and add new ones in their place. Now this was unlawful under the Old Testament; the law of the Sabbath must, therefore, necessarily stand in a different relation to the New Testament; and, therefore, as an outward letter, requiring unconditional obedience, is abolished. 2. It is said to be expressly predicted by Isaiah lxxv. 17, 18, "That the work of redemption is to be celebrated, rather than that of creation." The answer to this is the same as to the former. 3. "The

118th Psalm contains a direct prediction, that the day of Christ's resurrection will be the day on which the Sabbath will be observed under the gospel. 'This is the day which the Lord has made.' We have already remarked that here nothing is said of a perpetual celebration. And even if it were so, how can any one prove that this day is the Sabbath? 4. "The apostles taught, by their example, that the day of Christ's resurrection was to be the Christian Sabbath." In support of this, the well-known passages, Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Acts i. 10, are quoted. But in none of these is there any mention of the Sabbath being transferred to the Sunday. 5. "The transference of the Sabbath to the Sunday is evident from the important fact, that God has conferred so great a blessing upon the observance of this Christian Sabbath." This fact we have no wish to dispute; but it is no proof of the doctrine, unless we erroneously imagine that the Church of the New Testament is still in a state of Old Testament pupillage; and that every arrangement which it makes, without a direct command from God, is under the curse. And, even if we granted this, it would only follow that the Christian Sunday is of divine appointment; still nothing could be decided from this as to its relation to the Sabbath.

Every one can now decide for himself, whether our opponents have accomplished what they themselves confess that they are bound to perform; whether they have succeeded in proving the transference of the Sabbath to the first day of the week, from an express testimony on the part of God. And if it is evident that they have followed in this respect, not the commandment of the Old Testament, but their own views, how can they any longer maintain, in other respects, its binding power *as a law*?

But there is another thing still, in which the inconsistency of our opponents appears. We will not here lay stress upon the argument, that, since, as we have already shown, the distinction between the Decalogue and the rest of the laws is a purely arbitrary one, they ought, for the sake of consistency, to apply to themselves everything which occurs in them in reference to the Sabbath, everything which is decreed as to the *punishment* of a breach of it, and, in the same way, all the precepts relating to the Sabbatic year and year of jubilee, which are so closely connected with the Sabbath commandment; in fact, that they ought to return to the observance of the whole law, and again become perfect Jews. But we will, on the contrary, suppose that this theory of a separation between the Decalogue and the other laws is a correct one. Now, it is said in the fourth commandment, "Thou shalt

not do any *work*, thou and thy son," &c. The question occurs here, *What is work?* Even if the force of law is denied to the other Mosaic precepts in reference to the observance of the Sabbath, it must be confessed that they are to be regarded as the safest *commentary* upon the command in the Decalogue. Now let these other passages be compared, and it will be evident that this prohibition of all work (as the word itself shows, being used in distinction from labour) is to be taken in its strictest sense—a sense so strict that even the most zealous friends of the Sabbath do not follow it. Thus the lighting of fires and preparation of food belonged to the prohibited works; compare Exod. xxxv. 3, where this special prohibition is expressly mentioned as contained in the general prohibition of work. From this Michaelis correctly infers the restriction of the law of the Sabbath to Israel. In the East, where the time of the principal meal is the evening, and the want of food is less during the day on account of the great heat, and is altogether not so great as in our climate, this arrangement could easily be carried out; not so with us, at least not without interfering with the chief design of the Sabbath. And as the adaptation of the law of the Sabbath to the Old Testament alone is evident from its requiring abstinence from employments, which even the advocates of its perpetuity allow; so is it, also, from its laxity with regard to other things, which the earnest-minded man considers highly prejudicial on the day, which, under the New Testament, is devoted to God. There can be no doubt that sensual enjoyments are inconsistent with the idea of such a day; and yet these are not expressly forbidden, either in the commandment itself or the frequent repetitions of it. Michaelis, indeed, goes to the extreme in saying, "If some of the Israelites spent the Sabbath in the enjoyment of dancing, this was not only not opposed to the Mosaic institution, but even in accordance with its principal design." It can be shown that, if we trace the Sabbath commandment to its idea, which we shall presently do, the *moral* unlawfulness of sensual pleasures may be *inferred* from that idea. But the fact, that the *moral* obligation can only be inferred, and no *civil* obligation existed, whilst both the moral and civil obligation to abstain from work are expressly declared, and repeated again and again, proves that under the Old Testament the relation of the two to each other was different from that which exists under the New.

We have only to add, in order to complete our view of the inconsistency of our opponents, that the truths which were to occupy the minds of the Israelites during their outward rest were very different

from those which the Christian should make the theme of his meditation—*there* the creation and the deliverance from Egypt, *here* the redemption by Christ. It is true that Dwight observes, that “the Sabbath is still a memorial of the creation, though the institution is so enlarged as to take in the celebration of the redemption *also*.” But this “*also*” is unfounded, unless the facts, on which the observance under the Old Testament were based, still occupy the chief position. Since, however, this is not the case, but, on the contrary,—as the alteration of the day proves, and the consciousness of every Christian attests,—the redemption by Christ is the one great fact which is celebrated, whilst the other derives its importance only from its connexion with this, it will be readily seen that the advocates of the validity of the Sabbath commandment depart from their own principles, and ought, for the sake of consistency, to raise the celebration of the work of creation to its central position again.

The negative portion of our work is now complete. After destroying, it becomes our duty to build. It might appear, from what we have said, as though we denied the Old Testament basis of the observance of Sunday altogether. But this is not the case; and we believe that, in this respect, Luther and others have, in many cases, expressed themselves in an imprudent and one-sided manner. We must commence with an examination of the relation in which the Christian Church stands to the whole Mosaic law. If once we acknowledge this law as truly divine, we cannot possibly regard it as repealed, like the Code of Napoleon, or its precepts as no more affecting us than those of the Koran. Since the will of God is the expression of his nature, no caprice can be attributed to him, and it is impossible that any *merely temporary* laws can be given by him. Melancthon’s expression, “The law of Moses is not binding upon us, though some things which the law contains are binding, because they coincide with the law of nature,” is only partially correct. There certainly existed a temporary ingredient in the Mosaic law; and for this reason it has no longer any force as an outward letter, and may often be neglected with propriety, so far as the letter is concerned. But if this form, which was only intended to last for a time, be removed, and thus the spiritual element be obtained in its purity, the latter is of no less importance to us than to the people of the Old Testament. We are not free to choose whether we will follow it or not. To reject it, would be to resist God.

This view of the importance of the Mosaic law to the Church of the

New Testament, has been assented to by M. Weber, amongst modern theologians, but not fully developed. He confines it to the Decalogue, instead of extending it to the whole of the Mosaic law, not excluding that part of it which is commonly called the ceremonial law. The separation of the Decalogue from the rest of the Pentateuch, of the moral law from the ceremonial, is here also an arbitrary proceeding. The moral law is no less abolished than the ceremonial; the ceremonial law is as eternally binding as the moral. To maintain the opposite is to deny the divine origin of the former. For if it be divine, it must contain revelations of the nature and will of God, which are simply clothed in a form suited to the peculiar necessities of the people of Israel. But Weber's fundamental idea is perfectly correct, that the commandments are not simply binding, because they are coincident with the law of nature, but also because they are repeated by God in the Old Testament Scriptures. Bialloblotzky has attempted in vain a refutation of this. "If," says he, "a man observes only those laws of a legislator which appear good to him, and leaves the others at his pleasure, he does not follow this outward legislation, so much as himself, even though his actions express at times the purport of the law, in such a manner that he appears to regulate his life by it." If in this argument the supposition applies to the present case, the conclusion would be equally applicable. But is this the fact? It is not at pleasure that the eternal substance is separated from the temporal form, but according to fixed laws. To the latter, only that can belong, which can be proved from the nature of the theocracy to refer especially to it. There may be differences of opinion as to particular points; but where these do not arise, it is not left to a man's own pleasure to obey or not. He who does not obey, manifests his contempt of God, as clearly as a disobedient member of the old covenant. Upon this view the entire question of the validity of the Decalogue in the Christian Church rests. The effect which it has produced upon the Church in every country proves that its commands are something very different from friendly counsels. They are not subordinate to the law of nature, but on a par with it; the manner in which they are drawn up, the events which attended their promulgation, and the solemn sanction which they received from God, secure for them effects which the law of nature, however drawn up, will never produce. Many a man has been kept from the sin, by the law of Sinai, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," echoed loudly within him, when the law of nature, which is so easily obliterated and silenced, would never have preserved him from it.

We have so striking a confirmation of the views we have just stated, in an expression of Christ's, that we need not look for any further scriptural proofs. It is the passage contained in Matt. v. 17—19, "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. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The prophets are mentioned here, not as foretellers of the future, but as preachers of the law, as in ch. vii. 12, xxii. 40. This appears from the use of the word *or*, not "and," and is confirmed by the whole connexion, especially by the word *for* in ver. 18, in which the law and the prophets are classed under the general name of law. In ver. 19, too, only the commandments are mentioned; and the design of the whole paragraph, to which these verses serve as an introduction, is evidently to prevent a false opinion as to the relation of the law to the new economy; so that a reference to prediction would here be out of place. Destroying and fulfilling are the direct opposites the one of the other, and, therefore, the explanation given of the latter, that it consists in *doing* and *teaching*, shows that destroying denotes not doing, and not teaching. The former are performed first by Christ himself, and partly by his members. The parallel passage in Luke xvi. 17, explains what the Saviour means by, "till all be fulfilled;" where he says, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." From this it is evident that the simplest meaning is the correct one; namely, the law will continue for ever, and not fail in any point, till it is entirely satisfied.

Here, then, the perpetuity of the law, and its demands upon the members of the New Testament, are expressly maintained. And we have no right, arbitrarily, to restrict to one part of the law, the moral law, what is said of the *whole*. But there is just as little reason to understand "one jot or tittle," as meaning "one jot or tittle" of the letter. The words of Christ would then stand in direct and evident contradiction to other statements of the New Testament; but the discourse of Christ which immediately follows, demonstrates the fallacy of such an opinion. The Saviour, in this discourse, goes far beyond the letter of the Mosaic law; whilst he unfolds the idea, which Moses himself could not fully express, on account of the hardness of the

people's hearts. But, if that which is contained in the idea, is to be regarded as a real ingredient of the law, this mode of treatment must be consistently carried out, and the accidental be separated from the essential—the conditional from that which is independent of all conditions. And thus no jot or tittle of the true spirit of the law can fail.

What passes then, and what remains of the Sabbath commandment? If we follow Spencer and his school, very little remains. The "*keeping holy*" consists in his opinion only in the setting it apart for a certain object—devoting it to rest instead of work. The outward rest is not related in any way to the inward. It is simply a symbolical representation of the rest of God after the creation, except that it is designed to secure refreshment to slaves. This completed the observance of the Sabbath in his estimation. If any one, in addition to this, devoted the day to meditation on divine things, and the worship of God, he did it of his own accord.

According to this view, the law, under the Old Testament, was fully carried out by those who abstained from outward work; they might turn their thoughts and feelings entirely away from God, or even indulge in gross excesses, without breaking the law. But the expressions, "God *sanctified* the Sabbath," and, "Remember the Sabbath, to *sanctify* it," are in themselves sufficient to prove this to be false. This one word, "sanctify," expresses the whole idea of the Sabbath. The passages brought forward by Spencer are not sufficient to prove that *sanctifying* meant merely setting apart, nor are there any passages from which it can be proved. Who, for instance, can fail to see that the words of Joel, ii. 15, "sanctify a fast," mean not simply, fix a time for fasting, but appoint a *holy* fast; one which is, outwardly and inwardly, truly devoted to God? And again, the expression in Joshua xx. 7, "and they sanctified Kedesh in Galilee," indicates not only that they appointed it for an asylum, but that they consecrated it to God, so that it was an attack upon the rights of God, for any one to endeavour to execute his right of vengeance upon a fugitive who had fled thither? Sanctifying the seventh day, therefore, can only mean the dedication of it to God. How this is to be performed must be determined from the idea itself, and from the accounts contained in the records of the Old Testament religion. The offering of a special sacrifice, and the holding of a sacred assembly (Lev. xxiii. 3), are a sufficient proof that the observance of the Sabbath demanded something more than mere inactive repose.

The full extent and import of the *sanctification* enjoined were im-

pressed upon the people, who were too ready to rest satisfied with the outward observance, by the prophets, who were raised up as the legal expositors of the law. It is true, that, in cases in which men went so far as outwardly to break the law, this was punished as a gross exhibition of ungodliness, just as the murderer is punished without any mention of his neglect of the duties of Christian love. But even where the day was outwardly observed, they still declare, most emphatically, that this is not all, and that, in fact, it cannot be regarded as a fulfilment of the law at all, unless the inward emotions correspond. Isaiah says, that a merely outward observance of the Sabbath is an "abomination to God" (Isa. i. 13); and afterwards explains, in a positive manner, in what the true sanctification of the Sabbath consists: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing *thy* pleasure on *my* holy day, and callest the Sabbath a *delight*, the holy of the Lord, and honourest it, not doing thine own ways, nor seeking thine own pleasure, nor speaking words" (Isa. lviii. 13). In this passage the following points deserve to be noticed, as showing, in the clearest light, the prophet's idea of *sanctification*. He indicates as the opposite of this, doing one's own pleasure and one's own ways: these are, in his estimation, the real desecration of the Sabbath, a daring attack upon it, whilst the opposite is called "turning away the foot." He grasps so thoroughly the idea of doing one's own pleasure, following one's own inclination (for which Gesenius, in defiance of all the rules of interpretation, would substitute work, simply because the idea is too deep for him) in all its extent and depth, that he includes in it *speaking words*, that is, such words as are words only, mere gossip, and do not promote either the glory of God, or the improvement of one's self and others. The prophet lays such stress upon the feelings of the heart, that he requires that the Sabbath shall not be felt as a heavy *burden*, by which men are kept, against their will, from their own occupation; but as a *delight*, a gracious privilege, which God has given to his people, that they may turn to him amidst the distractions and cares of the world. And lastly, he requires that the Sabbath shall be *honoured*, because the Lord hath sanctified it; which honouring consists in this, "thou shalt abstain from thine own work, that God may have his work in thee." With this view of the nature of sanctification, which was evidently that held by the prophets, we may understand how it was that they held meetings for instruction on that day, to which the faithful came even from a great distance, of which a notice is contained in the narrative of the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 23).

This more spiritual meaning of the Mosaic institution was also recognised by the later Jews, and on that their custom, of devoting it to the exercises of worship, was founded. Philo, the Alexandrian, says :—"It is a custom received from 'our forefathers, and still continued, to consecrate this day to science, the study of the nature 'of things.'" And Josephus says :—"Moses commanded them not merely to read the law once, or twice, or more frequently, but to leave their other works every week, and meet together to hear the law." And it is no light thing to maintain, as Spencer does, that this view was embraced by the whole people from a misunderstanding of the law.

If now we have succeeded in ascertaining, in this way, the fundamental idea of the Sabbath under the Old Testament, it will not be difficult to determine to what extent it applies to us, and what duties it devolves upon us. 1. It shows us, that whilst God does not, like a Pharaoh of the moral law, demand without giving, yet he does not give without requiring, so that every one of his benefits brings with it the obligation that we sanctify ourselves to his service. If this obligation was so great under the Old Testament on account of the creation, and the deliverance from Egypt, how much greater must it be under the New Testament, in which "he spared not his only-begotten Son, but freely gave him up for us all!" 2. We learn from it, that human weakness, which is ever too ready to forget this duty, stands in need of fixed and periodical occasions, on which all outward hindrances are removed, that they may be devoted exclusively to the performance of it. The notion, that this want only existed under the Old Testament, that, because every day is a Sabbath to the Christian, the setting apart of certain days is only desirable for those who are merely outwardly members of the New Testament, but inwardly belong to the Old, will certainly find no advocate in the truly advanced Christian, but only in those who have been so absorbed in their *imaginary* self, as to lose sight of what they *really* are. The false spiritualism, from which such assertions spring, is a worm, which gnaws more destructively at our spiritual life than legality ever can. That which is true in theory, is not always true without restrictions when put into practice by individuals; and this is more than ever the case in our day, whose impurities are so great, whose faith is so feeble, and whose seeking for holiness is so destitute of earnestness. If we were members of Christ, and nothing else, we should no longer require to set apart certain times; for our whole life would be an uninterrupted worship. But the flesh still exists in us as well as the Spirit, and its

strength is always so much the greater in proportion to our unconsciousness of its existence. And, therefore, the louder and more confident a man's assertions that fixed times for assembling are superfluous, and the more he despises those who still think them necessary, as though they could not tell the signs of the times, the stronger is the proof that *he* needs them still. For flying, something more is required than simply to fancy we have wings. He who is conscious that he has none, and pursues his pilgrimage humbly leaning on his staff, will have made the greatest progress at the end. The continuance of sin in us brings with it always susceptibility to external impressions, and to the influence of evil around us, together with wanderings of mind. The spark may fall upon iron without danger, but not upon tinder. For this reason, in order that we may pray without ceasing, in a manner befitting our station, we must sometimes "enter into our chamber, and shut the door behind us;" and in order to keep every day as a day of the Lord, we must keep one day free from everything that can disturb our devotion. Such disturbance arises most of all from earthly employments. But the extent to which these should be avoided, and the measure of our obligation to abstain from them, must be regulated according to the position of the individual; and it is, therefore, impossible to lay down any general rules. But this must be noticed, that hard bodily labours, though generally regarded as most incompatible with the rest of the Sabbath, are generally less so than mental ones, even including such as relate to a learned research into the words and ways of God. These tend more than the others to occupy the whole man, both body and soul.

And with regard to this second particular, the Old Testament arrangement has gained in power. We have much more reason for observing everything with the greatest care, on which the health of our spiritual life depends. Cæsarius, of Arles (in the fifth century), said with propriety in this respect:—"I say with truth, that it is wrong, and indeed ungodly, for Christians to have less respect for the Lord's day, than they see the Jews show to the Sabbath. For if these unhappy men keep the Sabbath so strictly, that they avoid every earthly work on that day, how much more ought we, who are redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, to think of the price paid for us, and on the day of the resurrection to consecrate ourselves to God, and to reflect with the greater earnestness upon the salvation of our souls." We cannot infer the obligation to devote exactly one day in seven exclusively to the worship of God, with the

same certainty with which we conclude that there must be some times appointed. For it is doubtful whether this arrangement is founded upon a natural want, which is common to all, or whether it is only made with reference to the history of the creation, in which case it would lose its application to us. It seems, however, to be confirmed by the experience of every age, which has discovered the adaptation of this arrangement to the nature of man, both in the inferior and nobler nature, that whilst the reference to the creation is not to be lost sight of, it is founded upon the former also. Further study of this subject increases our conviction, that the dedication of one day in seven to the worship of God belongs to the essence of the commandment. The rest of God after the creation is not the real ground of the observance, but serves to recommend it.

3. We perceive from the law, that the appointment of certain seasons for worship is not only the duty of individuals, but also of the whole Church. Not only was the Sabbath kept by every one in his own house, but there were united religious services, the offering of the sacrifices, the holy assemblies, in which men were not inactive, but joined together in the praise of God, and acknowledgment of his ways. He who neglects the assembly, as some do, may be convinced of sin even from the Old Testament; and so also he who fancies that, having selected certain times, he has only to think of his own necessities.

It only remains now to examine the basis of the duty of the Christian, and the whole Church, to regard and observe *Sunday* in particular as a day set apart for edification. Two different views have been entertained on this subject. Some appeal to the custom of the Church. Thus an author who wrote in 1702* says:—"The fixing of one day in seven is a Divine ordinance, which cannot be overthrown; but the choice of Sunday is an agreement of the whole Church, which is not to be attributed to any private individual, still less to the Government." Others look upon this view as very suspicious. Thus Mosheim says:—"The Church, say they, has appointed Sunday, and we are bound to submit to it. How weak is this support! Jesus has made us free from the ordinances of men, and, therefore, the Church has no right to make laws." The advocates of this view appeal to a Divine command issued through the apostles.

There can be no doubt that the Sunday was generally observed as early as the days of the apostles. This can be proved from the New

* Unschuldige Nachrichten.

Testament. The three passages, which are commonly adduced in support of it, are each decisive on the matter; but they afford a much stronger proof, when taken in connexion with each other.

The first passage is Acts xx. 7. From this it appears that the church at Troas, at the time when Paul visited it, was in the habit of meeting for worship on the first day of the week. The same name is given to the day as to the day on which the Redeemer rose, in Matt. xxviii. 1, and John xx. 1. The different parts of the service alluded to are, the preaching, which was customary, as we find from Acts ii. 42, in the meetings of Christians, from the very first,—on this occasion, Paul took the place of the ordinary preacher,—the Lord's Supper and the feast of love. It is true that Franke and Neander both dispute the argument from this passage, thinking that the assembly was an extraordinary one, called in consequence of the apostle's intention to depart on the morrow; and that, therefore, it happened to fall on a Sunday. But a closer inspection of the passage will show, that the assembly, and the breaking of bread which was the chief object, were altogether independent of the apostle's departure, and only gave him the opportunity of speaking, and that at such great length.

The second passage is 1 Cor. xvi. 2; in which the apostle writes, that on the first day of the week every one is to lay by, according to his ability, for the contribution to the saints. Relieving the wants of the saints is an occupation worthy of the day. The heart is then more open, and inclined to give. The apostle's remark, that he had written the same to all the churches in Galatia, shows that there also the Sunday was already observed. Franke and Neander, indeed, remark here, that all this may be understood if we suppose it to refer merely to the ordinary commencement of the civil week. But it seems to be overlooked, that the church at Corinth, which consisted for the most part of Gentile Christians, had no civil commencement of the week, since the Jewish division of weeks was not customary amongst the Greeks and Romans. And if this had been the only reason for the apostle's fixing the first day, he would certainly have mentioned this, and would scarcely have spoken with such decision, but would rather have simply advised, and recommended it to their consideration. If we were required by any one to contribute on the Sunday to religious objects, no further explanation would be necessary; the reason for choosing this day would be obvious; but any one, wishing to fix on Monday, would certainly think it necessary to give a further explanation.

The third passage is Rev. i. 10: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's

day." That we are to understand by the Lord's day the Sunday, and not, as some do, Easter day, is evident from the fact, that the oldest Greek and Latin ecclesiastical writers universally apply the term, the Lord's day, to the Sunday, and never to Easter. This is now generally acknowledged. The application of this name to the Sunday, however, is closely connected with the observance of it; and the fact that the apostle was honoured on that day with extraordinary communications of the Holy Spirit, seems to indicate that he was then especially engaged in those exercises of devotion which prepared him for them; whilst, on the other hand, these communications necessarily helped to increase the sanctity of the day. For they contained a kind of practical declaration that the observance of this day was well pleasing to God.

We arrive at the same conclusion from an examination of the different sources of the earliest history of Christianity. Unless the observance of the Sunday originated in the days of the apostles, it is difficult to explain how it is that we find it, immediately after, in the most distant regions; whilst, amidst all divisions, secessions, and controversies, we meet with none affecting this question, and no heretical church had another day for meeting. We shall quote some of the most important witnesses. Pliny, in his well-known epistle, says that the Christians were in the habit of meeting for worship on one regular day. It is evident, from a comparison of this passage with statements made in other places, that this could not have been the Sabbath, as some have imagined. Barnabas, the disciple of the apostles, says, in his epistle, which has been suspected on insufficient ground, "The Christians no longer observe the Sabbath, which has been abolished, but they spend the first day of the week as a day of enjoyment, as the beginning of the new world, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead." In the epistle from the Corinthian bishop Dionysius, to the Roman bishop Soter, we read, "To-day we have kept the sacred day of the Lord." He says, too, that the Ebionites observe the Lord's day as a memorial of the Saviour's resurrection. So, also, Justin says that the observance of the day, on which God chased away darkness and chaos, and created the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead, is practised by all Christians.

But, even if it must be unreservedly admitted, that the Sunday was observed as early as the days of the apostles, under the eyes of the apostles, and that they approved of, and joined in the observance, it does not follow from this that a direct command had been given by

God. Such a command would certainly have been more clearly revealed to us, and not have been left to mere inference. And such a command would be as much opposed to the very nature of the New Testament Church, as the Old Testament law of the Sabbath, and would confound the two economies, not less than the literal transfer of that law. The Church of the New Testament has been brought to maturity by the Spirit of Christ, so far as all outward arrangements are concerned. If this is not the case, how is it that we find no directions, which are general in their form and valid for every age, with regard to the most important outward institutions, such as the constitution of the Church? To say, with the Puritans, that whatever arrangements the Church makes in this respect, are ordinances of men, in a bad sense, is only to set up an ordinance of one's own, namely, the baseless assumption that the law of the Old Testament ought to be transferred to the New without modification or change, and forces into a number of arbitrary practices. For, so far as those outward institutions are concerned, which we want to preserve, we are compelled to *invent* a direct sanction on the part of God, as is evident from the transfer of the Sabbath to the Sunday, and the change of the apostolic injunctions in reference to the constitution of the Church, which were evidently intended only for the apostles' times, into universal laws, which shall be valid under all circumstances. Nor is it less evident from the fact, that it is also necessary to do away with many things, whose retention is loudly demanded by the consciousness of Christians, such as the Christian festivals, the observance of which rests upon the same basis as that of the Sunday. If this is observed as a memorial of the resurrection of the Lord, why should not the anniversary of that event be observed as well; and if this, why not the day of his birth, of his death, of his ascension, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? The distinction which men feel themselves compelled to draw between things which must stand or fall together, ought to be sufficient to prove that the whole principle is false. The episcopal theologians, in their controversy with the Puritans, pointed out how, even under the Old Testament, the freedom of the Church was not so fettered, with reference to outward institutions, as some would have it now; as we may see from the feast of Purim, which was instituted by Esther and Mordecai, without a direct command from God; and the feast of Dedication, which was established at a period in which direct Divine communications had ceased, but which the Saviour himself, nevertheless, joined in celebrating.

How, then, are we to account for the origin of the observance of Sunday in the primitive Church? It arose, undoubtedly, in a spontaneous manner, on the same ground on which all nations, however unconnected, commemorate the birth and death of friends, or kings, or benefactors; a practice the more naturally complied with in this case, on account of the infinite extent to which father and mother, and child, and earthly kings or benefactors, are surpassed by our Lord and Saviour. Where this natural emotion found expression, it was encouraged by intercourse with those who had already adopted the practice of observing the Sunday. The apostles, who united in this observance, did so, not as apostles, but as standing, in this respect, on a perfect equality with the other members of the Church. Their example is only of importance to us, as it removes every doubt as to the fact, that it is a true and Christian feeling, from which the observance of the Sunday springs.

On what, then, is *our* duty founded, to select Sunday as the day to be observed, since, as we have shown, we cannot dispense with a fixed and regularly returning period, exclusively devoted to the worship of God? We reply, in the first place, on the same feeling which first dictated that selection. This reason must have the same force as ever, since Christ is still the same Saviour, and his resurrection, the climax of his whole work of redemption, must have the same importance for us, as for those who saw him, when risen, with their bodily eyes.

There is yet another reason, which was unknown to the primitive Church, and, therefore, gives the Sunday a stronger claim upon us, than it had in the days of the apostles. For now nearly eighteen centuries it has been observed as the Lord's day. The prayers and supplications of millions have been offered on it to the Lord; an infinite fulness of blessings has been poured out upon the Church on this day. It is still observed in every quarter of the globe by all peoples and tongues. By this observance of the Sunday we enter into the closest fellowship with the whole Christian Church of the present and the past; and the consciousness of this fellowship must of necessity exert a lively influence upon our devotion.

In closing this part of our work, and seeing the injurious effects which the neglect of the Lord's day is producing amongst us, a neglect which cannot but react upon the ungodliness from which it springs, we would summon every one, who has received from God strength and talents for the work, to help in this respect to rebuild the walls of Zion.

PART III.

Remedial Efforts Examined.

THE year 1850 was distinguished for the zeal and energy with which efforts were made to promote the observance of Sunday. Societies were formed, prizes offered, a periodical started, and a large number of publications issued, and put in circulation. We heartily rejoice in this fact. And if we venture to express some objections to the course pursued, we do so, not with the intention of impeding the movement, but with the sincere desire of assisting it.

We think, in the first place, that it is necessary to guard against overrating the effects which will be produced by these means. We admit that there is a certain truth in the assertion that "without a proper observance of the Sunday the Church will never be edified and restored to purity again;" but we believe that it would be more correct to say that, "unless the Church is built up and purified, there cannot be a proper observance of the Sunday at all." From the inward to the outward is the New Testament way, it was the way spoken of by Jeremiah,* under the Old Testament; and this, too, is the way peculiarly befitting the evangelical Church. From the experience of the past, derived from similar efforts, as, for example, those of temperance societies, we expect nothing like complete success, even with reference to the immediate object of this movement. But it will have this great advantage, that by thoroughly exposing the evils resulting from the habits of the people in this respect, it will help to bring them to a "knowledge of sin." And it may lead some to avail themselves of the means of grace. If anything beyond this could be effected by such outward means, how is the fact to be explained that the epistles to the Seven Churches, in the Revelation, are addressed

* Vid. ch. xxxi. 31—34.

exclusively to that which is within, and do not advance beyond the preaching of repentance, and that, in the whole of the New Testament, no commandment and no exhortation is given with reference to the Sunday? It brings us to this, that the really royal way to that which is outward, is through the heart; that the former will follow of itself, when once a man is right within. What has been said of kingdoms, is true of churches, "they are fortified by the same means by which they are founded." "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the proclamation which announced the kingdom of heaven; and when these words fail, with which the Saviour, like John the Baptist, began his work, very little will be accomplished by any other means. Still, in miserable times, we must be content with miserable success. Only it is necessary to guard against expecting too much, otherwise the enthusiasm will soon cool; and, what is worse, it will interfere with the concentration of all the strength upon the more important work, on the earnest prosecution of which the success even of this movement must depend.

The second thing is, that the agents of this movement are acting imprudently upon the principle, that "it is their duty to lay aside all fear and all learning, and to keep before them but one thing, namely, the miserable condition of both high and low amongst the people, who are wickedly robbing God of every seventh day," and are, therefore, without hesitation spreading publications amongst the people, which advocate the English view of the Sunday, a view which, according to our conscientious conviction, is opposed to the Scriptures, and which is certainly at variance with the doctrine held by our church, and with the view which prevailed throughout the early ages of Christianity. And this view they are themselves ready to adopt, thinking that "it is of little consequence whether it is theoretically right or wrong, seeing that practically the English view has certainly accredited itself." But we have not to do with human learning in this case, but with the knowledge of the word of God; and all indifference, in reference to this, is sin. Our people have specially the commission to explore the depths of the word of God; and everything which tends to draw them away from this work, in favour of a false estimate of the practical, must injure their souls. Moreover, just because this is our work, anything, which is theoretically weak and untenable, will be of far less service amongst us than elsewhere, as the groundwork of a solid practical edifice. It will not be long before criticism will begin its work; and the proverb will be verified, "lightly come, lightly go." And from

its indefensible position and weak foundation, the cause itself will fall into disgrace.

It is of the greatest importance that a clear idea be first obtained of the meaning of the fourth commandment; and when this is done, that the question be satisfactorily settled, whether (a strange question, which should never have been raised), and how far, this commandment affects the Church of Christ.

If this commandment contains the injunction to worship God, it is evident that we are not to content ourselves with the letter, "Remember the Sabbath day;" but that we can only regard the observance of the one day, as the climax of this worship, according to the plan usually adopted in the ten commandments. They generally select one out of a number of equally important examples. Thus, in the third commandment, literally only perjury is forbidden; but the chief design is to impress the importance of a sacred reverence for the name of God. And so, if we content ourselves with the Sabbath, and think that the worship of God is limited to that, this commandment would present a poor contrast to the grand declaration, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." How could it be possible to *worship* but once a week a God thus *loved*? Such an idea, too, would clash with the rest of the laws of Moses, which contain nothing of which the germ does not exist in the Decalogue. Even in these laws, the worship of God occupied a far larger space than this one day; for, by the side of the Sabbath, we find the observance of the festivals, and the morning and evening sacrifice, expressly required.

The complete fulfilment of this command, in spirit as well as in letter, is to be found in the life of Anna, of whom it is said, "She departed not from the temple, but served, with fastings and prayers, night and day." The injunction of Paul, "Pray without ceasing," contains, undoubtedly, the New Testament development of the spirit of the command. The opinion expressed in a prize essay, lately published, that, "the eternal and essential germ of the Sabbath commandment is this, that every seventh day is to be devoted to our heavenly calling, is too contracted." Such a view certainly resembles too much the righteousness of the Pharisees, so strongly condemned by Christ. And it is incorrect, inasmuch as it overlooks the fact, that the seventh day in the Old Testament was not merely the day of worship, but designed also to be the day of rest, of refreshment, and of humanity: qualities which should be distinguished from each other much more

than they generally are. The old Heidelberg catechism has certainly expressed the meaning of the commandment far more correctly and perfectly:* “First that I meet with the Church of God, &c. And besides, *that I keep every day of my life holy*, by abstaining from evil works, that I let God work in me by his Spirit, and thus begin in this life the Sabbath of eternity.”

If the commandment be thus understood, the observance of a day acquires, on the one hand, greater meaning and importance; in the same way as the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” is first seen in its true light, when we learn that even anger is criminal in the sight of God; and the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” when we consider the sentence pronounced by Christ upon its secret commencement in the heart. If, then, we ought to serve God without ceasing, what must be the condition of those who will not serve him at all, but who do all they can to keep back the least they could give him, the observance of a seventh day. On the other hand, however, the scruples of legality are prevented by this interpretation; since the seventh day is only separated from the others by a fading boundary line. In cases of *necessity*, and when it can be done without offending the consciences of others, the observance of it may be neglected. And that which has been *necessarily* left undone on the one day, can be performed at another time. Again, the more earnestly we seek to fulfil the commandment on other days, the less reason is there for scrupulous strictness with regard to this. The amount of obligation, to keep the day *strictly*, varies according to circumstances. It is strongest in reference to nations, times, and individuals, in whom the divine life, and, therefore, the worship of God, are at the lowest ebb. But the most enlightened Christian, and the most eminent church, are not altogether free from it.

Obedience to this command of God, however, requires in our day that we do something more than merely seek to promote the observance of Sunday. It demands as loudly that we seek to fill up the other days with the pleasant worship of God.

With this interpretation of the Old Testament command, the expressions of Paul completely harmonize, whilst those who favour the English opinion find them inconvenient, and seek by forced interpretations to explain them away. This is seen most clearly in the remarks of Haldane on “certain expressions in the New Testament.” No one,

* See page 64.

on reading his work, can help feeling that the author would be glad if these "certain expressions" were not there. In Rom. xiii. 5, 6, the apostle speaks indulgently of those who esteem one day above another. He has in his mind those, who do not seek to enforce upon others the practices which they cannot relinquish themselves; Christians, who have come over from Judaism, and who, therefore, require time before the new principle can have its perfect power. In Col. ii. 16, however, he warns them to beware of those who wish to judge others in meat, and drink, and festivals, and new moons, and Sabbaths, "which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," who gives his own people the power to rise above the Jewish, piecemeal religion—a religion not favoured by the Old Testament—and serve God without ceasing. But he speaks most strongly in Gal. iv. 9—11 :—"How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." The preference of certain days, whatever they may be, whether called Sundays or Sabbaths, or by any other name, appears here as a return to an elementary and child's religion, such as the Galatians had submitted to before, when in their heathen condition; and is denounced as unworthy of Christians, who are to be a godly people, walking constantly before God, and presenting themselves continually unto Him, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

These expressions are certainly opposed to every view of the Sunday, which leads to its being regarded as the only day of religion, the "pearl of days," the "light of the week," if by this is meant that the other days belong to man, and this alone to God. They show the fallacy of every view which supposes that God is satisfied with one day, and which, in order that this day may be invested with a brighter halo, allows deep shadows to rest upon the other days of the week. *Sacred days and hours are a part of Judaism*, not of the true religion even of the Old Testament; they are well suited for Rationalism, but not for the Christian Church. To seek to introduce them is to misunderstand Christ. It cannot, however, be doubted that those who hold the Sabbatarian view are inclined to this; although, by carrying it out, we frustrate the lofty aim which ought never to be lost sight of by the Christian Church.

With regard to individual Christians, these expressions show, as the Mosaic command also does, that the Sunday can only be regarded as a crutch, the use of which is rendered necessary by the weakness of men, though not in all cases to the same extent. Thus Bengel says, "For

those who are deeply engrossed in the business of the world, a fixed day is not only useful, but necessary ; but they who keep a constant Sabbath enjoy the greater liberty ;” to which, however, we must add that, in general, they require it most, who think they can do without it ; and that nothing is more repulsive than to hear men talk with boasting, as though they had reached the summit of Christianity, when they hardly possess the first elements of the Christian life and worship. It was not without good reason, that in a church of brethren, such as the primitive church was—whose earnest prayer was ever, “ Lord Jesus, come quickly ”—the Sunday stands out with far less prominence amidst the other days, than elsewhere ; and less in the Catholic Church, which has its services every day, than in the Evangelical. Nor is it without good reason, that in England the Sunday is held with almost a convulsive grasp. With this restless, busy people it is but the impulse to spiritual self-preservation which dictates this strict observance. And there is also good reason why, amongst us, zeal should be kindled for the observance of the Sunday, just at the time in which the stormy waves of worldly mindness are threatening to spread universal desolation. But we must avoid making a virtue of necessity, and gilding over the calamity, by upholding that which is only the result of a return to the imperfect condition of the Old Testament, as though it belonged peculiarly to the New ; and by picturing as an ideal condition that which in reality resembles the last effort of a drowning man. If the days of her first love could return to the Church, the difference between the Sunday and the other days would be scarcely perceptible. What could there be to distinguish the Sunday, where all were of one heart and of one soul, and were daily together in fellowship and breaking of bread ? Only as the first amongst equals could it possibly appear then.

With reference, however, to Sunday as the *chief day of worship*, the words of Chemnitz are important. “ Although the Christian meetings are not bound by any law or precept of the New Testament to a particular day, it would be an act of wanton caprice to refuse to observe, for the sake of order and union, the custom of the apostolic and primitive Church, since it certainly tends to the improvement of the Church, and does not interfere with Christian liberty.” Apart from a man’s own wants, it is a work of love, and a duty binding upon every member, as related to the whole body, to join with heart and soul in the meetings for worship on the Sunday, and in every respect so to spend the day that his example shall be beneficial to others.

He who neglects this, has not only *his own* fault to bear, but, in part, that of others also.

But we tremble at the mass of untenable arguments which are put in circulation in support of the strict Sabbatarian view of the Sunday. By these arguments, the observance of the Sunday is unhappily damaged by its friends; not less than its opponents. We regret to find many of these in Oschwald's prize essay, whose merits, in a practical point of view, we cheerfully admit; whilst that of Liebetrut, though it contains a smaller number, is not entirely free. Thus the injunction of Christ to his disciples, "Pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath," is brought forward as a proof of the stress laid upon the observance of Sunday in the New Testament, without the possibility of proving that the Sunday is ever called the Sabbath by the New Testament writers. It is also overlooked, that, if the meaning which is here attached to the words be the correct one, the Saviour is but helping to build up, what he always aimed to overthrow, the scruples of the Pharisees with regard to the outward observance of the Sabbath. All that can be gathered from this advice is, that the Sabbath was likely, from the arrangements of that time, to present as great an impediment to their flight as the winter itself. But if the modes of expression peculiar to the Saviour's discourses are lost sight of in this way, we shall be brought to the conclusion that, under certain circumstances, it is our duty to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right foot or right hand.

Let us not throw away our gifts, or prove unfaithful to our calling, when attracted by a mere delusion. Let us not overlook the fact, that the English Sunday, which has made so deep and favourable an impression upon many, as to enlist them as advocates of the theory which prevails there, is not the product of the theory itself, but results partly from the Christian fear of God, so deeply rooted in the hearts of the people; partly from the ceaseless bustle and restlessness, which characterise so large a part of the population both of England and America; and, lastly, from the love of law which is so prevalent there. This last, however, when applied to religion, has its dark, as well as its bright side, and easily leads men to despise the noblest cravings of the Christian life as impracticable idealism. To those who look deeper than the surface, even the English Sunday has its dark side.

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