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ARTICLE II.

THE SABBATH: THE CHANGE OF OBSERVANCE FROM
THE SEVENTH TO THE LORD'S DAY.

BY REV. WILLIAM DELOSS LOVE, D.D., SOUTH HADLEY, MASS.

(*k*) Within about thirty or thirty-five years after the date of Luke's treatise on the Acts of the Apostles, and of Paul's first Epistle to the church at Corinth, the first day of the week, as we learn from the apostle John (Rev. i. 10), had come to have a distinctive and sacred title, — the "Lord's day," — just as the commemoration of the sufferings and death of Christ had come to have the sacred title of "Lord's supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20). It was the Lord's supper, because he gave it, and it commemorated his propitiatory death; it was the Lord's day, because he gave it, and it commemorated his triumph over death and hell. He gave the supper in person, before his death; he evidently gave the day in person, after his death, by rising upon it, by appearing so much upon it, by producing in some way such an impression that the apostles and disciples immediately began to observe it, and appointed the most precious of all their religious services, the Lord's supper, upon it.

Objection: By the Lord's day may have been meant Easter-day, on which the Lord's resurrection was annually celebrated. *Reply:* None of the early fathers use the phrase with that meaning; and, since the day in the year for Easter was a long time in question, the apostle John did not refer to a doubtful day in addressing the churches on so important a matter.

Objection second: The apostle may have been speaking of the Sabbath, and may have given it a designation similar to that in Isa. lviii. 13: "my holy day."¹ *Reply:* If John

¹ Andrews' History of the Sabbath, pp. 188-192.

meant the Sabbath, he would doubtless have called it by its usual name. The early fathers used the term "Lord's day" for the first day of the week, copying, no doubt, from the apostle. They also were careful to distinguish between Sabbath and Lord's day; and we should not expect that their teacher, the apostle, would use a term of confusion, as he did if by Lord's day he meant the Sabbath. Besides, the phraseology for Lord's day, in this case, is peculiar to itself, as we shall see. It is never used elsewhere for the seventh-day Sabbath, either in the Greek of the Old Testament or that of the new. It is mere groundless assumption to say that it here means the Sabbath.

Objection third: By the Lord's day the apostle meant the day of judgment, often designated "the day of our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 8), "the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10), "the day of Christ" (2 Thess. ii. 2). *Reply:* John evidently speaks of a literal day; Peter and Paul, quite as evidently, of a great event, occupying more than a common day. The latter speak of a day in the unknown future; while John speaks of one in the known past. If Peter and Paul referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, — which is nearly impossible, — that does not answer to the day which John had for meditation and visions. Moreover, the phraseology of John is, *Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ*; while that of the other apostles is, *ἡμέρᾳ Κυρίου*, or the like; the adjective form, *Κυριακῇ*, being used in the former instance, and never in the latter in Scripture, pertaining to day, except in this case; which distinction the fathers also carefully observe.

On "the Lord's day" John was "in the Spirit" (Rev. i. 10), as if there were some similarity between that and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of pentecost. On that day the Lord appeared to the beloved apostle, and spake to to him (Rev. i. 10-18), much as he appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to the two that went to Emmaus, to Cephas, and to the ten, on the original first day; but more gloriously to John alone, the last of the twelve on earth. On that day the Saviour communicated to the apostle much

or all of the book known as the Revelation by John,* thus still more signalizing the first day of the week. Neander, referring to the early "special observance of Sunday in place of the Sabbath," says: "The first intimation of this change is in Acts xx. 7, where we find the church assembled on the first day of the week; a still later one is in Rev. i. 10, where by the Lord's day can hardly be understood the day of judgment."¹

That the Lord's day was one in special honor to Christ the Lord is indicated by usage in similar cases. The phrase "Lord's supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20) indicates a special supper in memory and honor of the Lord; the phrase "Lord's table" (1 Cor. x. 21) indicates a table spread to his honor; that of "apostles of the Lord," or Lord's apostles (2 Pet. iii. 2), means apostles devoted to his service and honor; that of "Lord's house" (Ps. cxvi. 19) means a house dedicated to his glory; that of "feasts of the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 4) implies the same honor to him; and "Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10) must mean a day in special honor of the Lord.

We have in these various citations from Scripture incontestable evidence that the first day of the week was at least one of special and sacred significance and observance to the apostles, and to Christians contemporary with them. What Christian having knowledge of these facts could consent not to keep the Lord's day? If to some not enough seems to be said on the subject in the New Testament, let them recall how little is said in the apostolic writings on baptism and the Lord's supper. The latter institutions are brought down to us in a connected chain of Christian example from the apostles themselves, and not less so the sacred Lord's day. The evidence acquires much strength from the fact that nowhere among the Christians immediately succeeding the apostles appears any doubt or neglect about observing the first day of the week.

Objection: The apostle Paul gives countenance to the theory and practice of not observing one day more than

¹ Church History, Vol. i. p. 295.

another. He says: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. xiv. 5).

Reply: The reference is to Jewish days and ceremonies, and not the least to the Lord's day. For, just preceding (vs. 1), doubtful disputations are spoken of, and no evidence appears that there was any disputation about keeping the Lord's day. Next (vs. 2, 3), questions about eating "herbs" and eating "all things" are spoken of; and those were Jewish questions, and not Christian, except as it was important that the Christian conscience should get released from superstitions concerning them. Then the observing of days is classed with eating or not eating, and both were Jewish. The passage teaches that the observing of such Jewish ceremonies and days is optional. But Alford says: "I therefore infer that sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolic times."¹ Yet he does not disclaim all obligation to observe the Lord's day. But concerning the claim that Rom. xiv. 5 refers to Jewish days only, he declares that it is "a quibble of the poorest kind." We need not be moved by this assertion; since the more accurate Ellicott, referring to Alford's remark, says: "It, however, can scarcely be considered exegetically exact to urge this verse against any theory of a Christian Sabbath, when the apostle is only speaking of legal and Judaizing observances."²

(1) The attempt has been made by modern review writers, as by Bishop Hooper more than three centuries ago,³ to render the Greek phrase *εἰς μίαν σαββάτων* (Matt. xxviii. 1, and in parallel passages) "on one of the Sabbaths"; thence inferring that the New Testament writers recognized as a Sabbath the first, as well as the seventh, day of the week. That construction ignores Hebraistic usage, which was to date each day of the week from the Sabbath; and read, for our Sunday, first day after the Sabbath, or between the Sabbaths;

¹ New Test. for English Readers, Rom. xiv. 5.

² Com., Gal. iv. 10.

³ Early Writings, p. 342.

for our Monday, second day after the Sabbath; and so on through the six days. This attempt to find the first day of the week recognized by the New Testament writers as one of the Sabbaths is defeated by the fact that Jewish writers, as in the Talmud, uniformly designate the first, second, etc. day of the week by giving the required numeral, and following it the word for Sabbath, as in the Greek phrase before us.¹ They seem to have had no other way for specifying any day of the week, except the Sabbath. The fact that the plural for Sabbath is used indicates either the two Sabbaths at the two extremes of the six days, or a transfer of the Aramaean form, or a plural of distinction, after the analogy of the names of festivals.² The plural is certainly sometimes used when only one Sabbath is referred to (Matt. xii. 1; Luke iv. 16). The foregoing Jewish method of designating the days of the week seems to have prevailed long before Christ came and by his resurrection signalized the first day of the week. Previous to that the first day could not have been thought of as a Sabbath. A passage illustrating the ancient usage occurs in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho. Justin speaks of Christ's resurrection as occurring on the first day after the Sabbath, *μία τῶν σαββάτων*.³ If we render this "in one of the Sabbaths," as some would, we are in immediate difficulty. Justin is endeavoring to tell on what day the resurrection occurred, and by that rendering he simply says it was on one of two days. Besides, in the next sentence he repeats the same phrase, and adds concerning the day, remaining (*μένουσα*) the first or chief (*πρώτη*). If he means, "one of the Sabbaths," which one? If he means the first after the Sabbath, that is intelligible. That he did mean the first after the Sabbath, is proved by the fact that he immediately says, "It is called, however, the eighth (*ὀγδόη*)."³ Justin must have written this within less than a century after the Gospels were

¹ See Lightfoot's *Horæ Heb. et Tal.* on Matt. xxviii. 1.

² Winer's *New Test. Grammar*, pp. 176, 177.

³ *Patrologiæ*, Tom. vi. p. 566. *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judæo*, c. 41; *Ant. Nic. Lib.*, Vol. ii. p. 139.

written, only forty or fifty years after the apostle John's death, and the passage makes the usage of that time very evident. Besides, the meaning cannot be one Sabbath of the Sabbaths, because *σαββάτων* is neuter, and *μία* feminine. It must be one day (*ἡμέρα*) of the Sabbaths, which is awkward and improbable; or else one day after the Sabbath, or the first between the Sabbaths, either of which is natural and probable.

(*m*) We now turn to ask, What were the example and precept of the apostles respecting the seventh day? Their continuing for a time after pentecost to attend meetings of the Jews on that day is no proof that they regarded, and would continue to regard, the seventh day as the more sacred in the new dispensation. The fact that no record appears of their holding a distinctively Christian service on the seventh day, while it does appear that they held such services on the first day, indicates that there was probably a change in respect to the sacredness of the two days; and we may well look for some evidence that the seventh day had lost its strong hold upon the intelligent and unbiased Christian mind.

Does such evidence appear? Turn to Col. ii. 16: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days." Much depends upon the meaning of this one verse. Two quite different classes unite in holding that the word "Sabbaths" (*σαββάτων*) does not refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, but to other Jewish festivals. They are, first, the Seventh-day Sabbatarians, who contend that their Sabbath cannot be meant; and secondly, those who sacredly observe the Lord's day under the impression that if in the New Testament any release is given from observing the day there called "Sabbaths," it negatives all argument to show that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath. A third class hinge much on this verse, to show that the fourth commandment is abrogated. We deem all three classes wrong. Whoever may be wrong, and whatever the true interpretation, this passage is the Rosetta stone of the new dispensation on the Sabbath question. It

has not a tri-lingual inscription, like the Egyptian stone found at Rosetta, but receives a tri-lingual application. And as that ancient stone contained the elements of a key to the hieroglyphics in Egypt, so this text, by its true meaning, has a key to the right understanding of the Scriptures pertaining to the Sabbath. Some seventh-day Sabbatarians acknowledge that if the word "Sabbaths" in this verse does refer to the seventh day, then that settles the case against them. And all non-sabbath Lord's day men might well acknowledge that if this verse does not teach that the fourth commandment is abolished, then the case is settled against them. If its help is denied them, they cannot sustain their opinion.

Andrews¹ and other seventh-day Sabbatarian authors, in their endeavor to show that "Sabbaths" means Hebrew festivals other than the weekly Sabbath, are, unfortunately for the truth, we think, able to ally important names to their cause. There do join them eminent Lord's-day Sabbath advocates. These scholars vary in the degree of positiveness with which they hold their opinions on this point; but among those who more or less entertain them are the following: Albert Barnes,² Dr. Justin Edwards,³ Dr. Pond,⁴ President Timothy Dwight,⁵ Professor Moses Stuart,⁶ and apparently Dr. Charles Hodge.⁷ And it is no small item in the conception of the seventh-day Sabbatarians that two noted publishing societies come to the aid of their opinions on this question: the American Tract Society, in two publications,⁸ and the Congregational Publishing Society.⁹

If the interpretation of the foregoing authors is correct, then where is there aught in the New Testament to release us from observing the seventh day still, even though we also keep the Lord's day? That they are not correct, — that the word *σαββάτων* in Col. ii. 16 does not refer to ceremonial

¹ Hist. Sal. pp. 87, 138, 159.

² Com., Col. ii. 16. pp. 306, 307.

³ Com. Fam. Test., p. 328; Sab. Manual, pp. 135, 136.

⁴ Christian Theology, p. 631.

⁵ Theology, Vol. iii. p. 258.

⁶ Com., Rom. xiv. 5.

⁷ Systematic Theology, Vol. iii p. 332.

⁸ Family Test., with notes, Col. ii. 16; New Test., with notes, Col. ii. 16.

⁹ Dr. Pond's Theology, p. 631.

feast-days, but to the weekly Sabbath, — seems to be certain for the following reasons : 1. Another word in the verse, that for “ holy day ” (*έορτή*) means feast ; is in numerous instances used to signify feast ; is applied to the Jewish ceremonial feasts (to the passover, Luke ii. 41 ; John xiii. 1 ; to the feast of tabernacles, John vii. 2, 8, 10, 11, 14, 37 ; feasts not specified, Matt. xxvi. 5 ; xxvii. 15 ; Mark xiv. 2 ; xv. 6 ; Luke xxiii. 17 ; John iv. 45) ; is translated “ feast ” in the twenty-seven instances of its occurrence in the New Testament, except in this one case of Col. ii. 16, and ought to be so translated here. The Lord seems not to have inspired men to use two words with precisely the same meaning in the same catalogue of ceremonial days or other objects, and inspired men seem not to have done it. 2. The word *σαββάτων*, though frequently occurring, does not in any other instance in the New Testament mean Jewish ceremonial days, and the natural inference is that it does not here. The common reader, and all readers, would naturally suppose that it means here what it does everywhere else. 3. The ceremonial feast-days of the Jews, though often spoken of in the New Testament, never take the name, nature, or entire observance of the weekly Sabbath. Each has its own distinctive name and character, and never has occasion to take “ Sabbath ” for its name. There is no gleam of evidence that the Jews of the apostles’ time, or any of the people to whom he wrote, had ever heard the feast-days called “ Sabbaths.” He would not in one Epistle originate a new name for them. 4. None of those feast-days are ever called Sabbaths in the Old Testament Hebrew, save the day of atonement in two instances (Lev. xvi. 31 ; xxiii. 32), and possibly the first day of convocation in the passover feast in one passage (Lev. xxiii. 11, 15). In the latter case, however, there can be no positive proof that the convocation day is called a “ Sabbath,”¹ and in either case it was not to give the day the name “ Sabbath,” but to indicate that it was to be more sacredly kept than other ceremonial feast-days. That difference seems to have been

¹ Subject discussed, p. 368.

simply between doing no work, and no *servile* work. The single word שַׁבָּת, used to designate the seventh day, or Sabbath, in the fourth commandment, is not even applied to the day of atonement without the qualifying or defining word יוֹם־שַׁבָּת accompanying it. And that fact weighs still more against the supposition that, as used in locating the feast of first-fruits (Lev. xxiii. 11, 15), it refers to the first day of convocation in the passover feast. 5. In the single instance where the feast of trumpets is in the English called a "Sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 24), and in the one verse where the feast of tabernacles is twice called a "Sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 39), there is a mistranslation. The Hebrew for "Sabbath" is *Shabbath*, or *Shabbath Shabbathon*. The day of atonement is given the latter, the double name, *rest of resting*. But the feasts of trumpets and tabernacles are called merely *Shabbathon*, a Sabbatism, a partial rest day. 6. This difference is very clearly noted in the Septuagint, where the seventh day, the day of atonement, and the seventh year are termed Sabbaths, and the two feast-days merely *rest days*; the former being translated by the Greek σαββάτων, and the latter by ἀνάπαυσις, *rest*. Therefore there is no authority for calling those two feast-days ceremonial Sabbaths. They were called Sabbatisms merely to describe them as days to be kept in *part* like the weekly Sabbath. 7. A prominent member of the Old Testament Bible Revision Committee has recently said, "The distinction between שַׁבָּת and יוֹם־שַׁבָּת, in Lev. xxiii., will be marked in the new revision by a difference of expression. What it will be, I am not at liberty to say." 8. The translations of the Pentateuch into the Chaldee language, which are called the Targums, make the same distinctions that the Septuagint does between Sabbaths and Sabbatisms, or mere *rest* days, showing that the ancient Jews never called their ordinary feast-days by the name "Sabbath." 9. So far as English, Greek, and Hebrew concordances reveal the use of the word "Sabbath," or "Sabbaths," it is always applied to the seventh-day Sabbath, in both the Old and New Testaments, outside of one chapter in the book of Leviticus

(xxiii.), and one verse in a second chapter (xvi. 31), with the exception of the Sabbatic *year*, and the application to the year seems to be confined to Leviticus, and a single verse elsewhere (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). The single verse now under discussion (Col. ii. 16), is, of course, excepted. With a use of the word "Sabbath," applied to feast-days, so very limited, is it probable that a single other case,—removed from the former by more than fifteen hundred years in time, and by nearly all the books in the Bible,—is an exception to the great rule of usage? We think not. 10. In Col. ii. 16 the phraseology, "Of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days," is, in substance, a copy of Ezek. xlv. 17, where we read, "In the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the Sabbaths." The difference in English is between "holy day," in the former instance, and "feasts" in the latter. But we have seen that "holy day" should have been rendered "feast."¹ Besides, "holy day" often really means ceremonial "feast," as in Neh. viii. 9–11, where the feast of tabernacles is spoken of. Six other instances occur in the Old Testament, besides this in Ezekiel, where the word "Sabbaths" is joined to those of "feast" and "new moon." And in each of these seven cases the word for "Sabbath" or "Sabbaths" is not the Hebrew for *Sabbatism*, or mere *rest day*, but is that for the weekly Sabbath. Now, it is nearly or quite certain that the apostle borrowed his phrase in Col. ii. 16, from the like phrases in the Old Testament, and also that he meant by the word "Sabbaths" what is meant by it whence he borrowed—the seventh-day Sabbath. 11. The word "Sabbath" or "Sabbaths" in the New Testament, Greek or English (Col. ii. 16 aside), being never applied to feast-days, is, nevertheless, applied to the seventh day at least fifty-nine times. Is it not arbitrary and unreasonable to take the word in the sixtieth instance, and declare that it means feast-days! Is it not an error to even *suppose* that it means feast-days? 12. There are only two instances in the whole Bible where the word "Sabbath" is certainly applied to a ceremonial feast-day, and

¹ pp. 425, 426.

even there not unqualified ; and there are nearly one hundred and fifty instances where the word " Sabbath " or " Sabbath-day," singular or plural, is applied to the weekly seventh day. One hundred and fifty against two. The day of atonement occurred once, while the weekly Sabbath occurred fifty-two times. In respect to passages, one hundred and fifty against two, or, at the most, three ; and in respect to days in the year, fifty-two against one, or, at the utmost, two ! What ! on this basis, say that in the one lone passage left the word " Sabbaths " means ceremonial feast-days, and does not mean the weekly Sabbath ! This seems like doing violence to the word of God. Can Christian men longer consent to do it, when they consider the facts in the case ? No preconceived or cherished opinions can justify us in holding any doctrine inconsistent with light that comes from the sacred page. " Let no man, therefore, judge you in respect of the Sabbath days." It is agreed by all that this makes it optional with us whether or not to keep the " Sabbath days." If the term means seventh-day Sabbaths, then it is left to our choice, and there is no obligation upon us to keep them. This being the apostolic teaching, and apostolic teaching and example enjoining us to sacredly regard the Lord's day, it inevitably follows that we have here evidence of a change of the sacred weekly day in early Christianity. The evidence may have come suddenly upon us, we may have found it where we least expected it, but, unless there is essential defect in the foregoing data and reasoning, we have come to proof of a change of observance in the sacred weekly day under the apostolic supervision. The example, as well as the instructions, of the apostles, on such a question, must be ample authority to all those who accept them as inspired teachers sent from God.

(n) We must conclude that Christ first, and his apostles following him, gave absolute authority for the universal special observance among Christians of the first day of the week, at least to some extent. That the apostles had full authority from their Lord to direct on this subject, is unquestionable.

They had delegated power to bind and to loose, in affairs of the church (Matt. xviii. 18). They could remit sins, and were sent by Christ, as he was sent of the Father (John xx. 21-23). The Holy Ghost would teach them and bring all things to their remembrance (John xiv. 26). They were authorized to pronounce men accursed (Gal. i. 8); under their ministry Ananias and Sapphira were smitten dead (Acts v. 5, 10); Hymeneus and Alexander for their heresy were delivered unto Satan (1 Tim. i. 20). The apostles gave direction as to discipline in the church (1 Cor. v. 13); they corrected abuses that crept into the observance of her ordinances (1 Cor. xi. 20-30); they absolved Christian converts from ceremonial observances of the law (Acts xv. 24, 29); and surely they had authority to say whether in the Christian dispensation, the seventh or the first day of the week was to be kept sacred.

(o) Next comes one of the most fundamental of all questions pertaining to the whole subject. Does the apostolic authority releasing from obligation to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, abolish the fourth commandment, or render it inapplicable to the Lord's day? This we have heretofore discussed, when considering whether the apostles taught that the Decalogue, or even the fourth commandment, has been abrogated.¹ We may here give an outline of the view there presented, with some addition. First, the command to keep the seventh day is not exactly the same with the fourth commandment; therefore, the one may be set aside without wholly annulling the other. The command pertained to the seventh day; but we have shown that there might be a change of day without abrogating the command.² We have found a new weekly day observed, at least to some extent, called the "Lord's day." We need to observe the distinction between proportional and ordinal. We have, in the new dispensation, a proportional seventh of time to be held as sacred. We have not the ordinal seventh. The former is by far the greater. It holds in itself all the *moral elements* of the command. The seventh ordinal was con-

¹ Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. (Jan. 1890), pp. 154-168. ² Ibid., pp. 176-178.

tinued until the first ordinal was instituted. No matter whether the primitive saints and the apostles understood all this. The apostles in due time knew and taught that the Lord's day was thenceforth to be the best of all days, and that the seventh day must retire from the chief position.

Mr. Joseph Cook says : " The whole scope of the Sermon on the Mount shows that the moral spirit of the whole Decalogue is re-instituted. This is as true of the fourth commandment as of the fifth, sixth, or seventh."¹ This is not enough to meet those who say that the Decalogue or the fourth commandment is abolished ; for they say it was abolished with Christ's death. Nor was it intended distinctively for them. Where is the evidence that Christ ever " re-instituted " the moral part of any portion of God's word ? He recognized it ; that is enough ; it stands by his own first fiat. But the men who claim the abolition of the fourth commandment, or of the Decalogue, say that nothing of these now stand, save what the apostles " re-instituted." Where is the evidence that *they* re-instituted the law ? They, too, recognized much ; yet nothing of the law stands by virtue of their recognition, but by its original enactment. Their recognition confirms the original enactment ; that is our blessing. Mr. Cook says, again, " The teaching and example of the apostles and our Lord substituted for the seventh the first day of the week." True ; but we must say more to those who claim that nothing of the moral law stands except what the apostles " re-instituted." We must deny that the moral law was ever abolished. Then we must demand proof that the apostles ever speak as though they were " re-instituting " any divine moral laws. Christ gave a new commandment (John xiii. 34), and the apostles rehearsed it (1 John iii. 23), but not as re-instituting it. Just so they repeated the commands of the Decalogue, not as re-enacting them, but as appealing to them for divine authority.

That the apostles held to the binding and permanent nature of the Decalogue, is evident from the following : Paul,

¹ Boston Lectures.

in Rom. xiii. 9, teaches the obligation to observe the last five commandments, naming the subject of each; and James teaches the same by one comprehensive declaration (ii. 8), and specifies the sixth and seventh (ii. 11). Paul, in Eph. vi. 2, teaches the duty of keeping the fifth commandment; and James (v. 12) specifically teaches the obligation to observe the third commandment; and Paul again, in 1 Cor. vi. 9, and viii. 4-6, shows the duty of obeying the second, and in Rom. i. 18-25, that of obeying the first commandment. Concerning the fourth, Paul teaches exemption from the former seventh-day Sabbath (Col. ii. 16), but he, and the whole history of the church subsequent to Christ's resurrection, so far as given in the New Testament, teach both the privilege and the duty to keep sacred a new seventh day, in commemoration of that resurrection, the completion of redemption. Now, in respect to the abolition of the seventh day as of binding nature, Paul does speak as if giving a new message (Col. ii. 16); and also in respect to the first day (1 Cor. xvi. 2). But how is it with reference to the other commands? Paul refers to the "law" and the "commandment," given of old, as existing still (Rom. xiii. 8, 9; Eph. vi. 2), and James speaks more emphatically of the "royal law according to the Scripture" (ii. 8), and of the "duty to keep the whole law" (ii. 10), and of the great Sovereign who gave the law, as, "he that said" (ii. 11), implying that as he commanded, so it should be done, and so the law would remain. Dr. Hessey tells us that "we are nowhere told that we are to obey the commandments called moral *because* they are contained in the Decalogue."¹ What telling would he have besides these repeated appeals to the Decalogue by two inspired apostles?

Further, that the moral law is nowhere, and in no part, abrogated, may be inferred from the apparent fact that no holiness, or state of mind, on the part of any human beings, is ever acceptable to God, unless in it is embraced the spirit of full obedience by the active powers, by which we do not

¹ Sunday, p. 152.

mean full sanctification ; nor, necessarily obedience with the greatest possible strength ; yet, without any conscious disobedience or known reservation. "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression" (Ezek. xxxiii.12) ; "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity" (Ps. cxix. 2, 3) ; "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 24) ; "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10) ; "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13) ; "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John iii. 20). The Old and New Testament are agreed on this point. Able men have so understood the Scriptures in regard to it. Calvin, commenting on Matt. vi. 24, says : "Since God everywhere commends sincerity, while a double heart is abominable, all those are deceived who think he will be contented with half of their heart."¹ President Edwards says : "If there be a full compliance of will, the person has done his duty."² "If a man, in the state and acts of his will and inclination, does properly and directly fall in with these duties, he therein performs them."³ This assumes that full obedience of the will is necessary to true virtue and acceptance with God. The Westminster Confession of Faith says : "The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof. . . . Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation."⁴ The modern doctrine that Christ by his death, or by his apostles, "abolished," as Robertson and others say, the moral law, or Decalogue, or that he both abolished it and renewed it, as some say, would have seemed a strange opinion to those Westminster divines. Baxter said, "If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves and all that you

¹ Com., *in loc.*

² Works, Vol. ii. p. 104 ; Freedom of the Will, Part iii. sec. iv.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 105, sec. v.

⁴ Chap. xix. sec. v.

have, to God.”¹ President Edwards says, of the surrender in conversion: “Giving up ourselves with all that we have, wholly and forever unto Christ, without keeping back anything or making any reserve.”² The Assembly’s Larger Catechism says of the penitent: “He so grieves for, and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.”³ Such is evangelical preaching everywhere. But can we be fully accepted with God after conversion with less obedience than at conversion? Impossible! God is not changeable. He always requires what Edwards calls “a full compliance of will,” in the sense of full obedience of will to his will, to his moral law. Without that “full compliance,” we can not be fully accepted with him. It was so in the old dispensation and is so in the new. But, has that will of God, that moral law, been once interrupted by its abolition? What cause for its abrogation could there have been in Christ’s death? And what proof is there that there was such a cause or such a fact? But this moral will and law of God is much of it revealed in the Old Testament, the once Jewish Scriptures. What occasion is there, therefore, to say, with Dr. Dale, that “the Jewish revelation has become obsolete;”⁴ or, with Dr. G. B. Bacon, that “Christianity superseded the whole of the Jewish law;”⁵ or even with Dr. Thomas Arnold, to question whether “The law itself be done away in Christ?”⁶

When Paul changed the fifth commandment, by extending its reward beyond long life in Canaan to long life “on the earth” (Eph. vi. 2, 3), he did not revoke the duty to honor father and mother. When he and the other apostles, under the guidance of their Saviour, instituted an order of services in the apostolic churches, which made the first or Lord’s day

¹ Orme’s *Life of Baxter*, Vol. ii. p. 82. See also, Prof. Morgan on “The Holiness acceptable to God,” p. 66, etc.

² *Works*, Vol. iii. p. 189; *Religious Affections*, Twelfth Sign.

³ *Ques. 76, Ana.*; see also *Westminster Con. of Faith*, chap. xv. sec. ii.

⁴ *Ten Commandments (Fourth)*, p. 93.

⁵ *Sabbath Question*, p. 101.

⁶ *Works*, Vol. iii. p. 257: *Sermon xxii., The Lord’s day.*

sacred, and left the observance of the seventh day optional, they did by no means revoke anything in the fourth commandment which did not pertain to the seventh day in its ordinal sense. So far as we know, they never uttered one word against the fourth commandment, nor even assumed that they set it aside. We know very well that all they who now reject the seventh and keep the first day, and with that simple change, endeavor strictly to obey the fourth commandment, do find something of that commandment left to them. Therefore it would seem that there is something in the fourth commandment besides the ordinal element of the seventh day. The sacredness of the seventh day is separable from the rest; and therefore, when Paul, and doubtless all the apostles previously, formally released men from keeping holy the seventh day, he did not annul or proclaim annulled, the whole fourth commandment. What is separable in practice is in theory separable. Assume it as a fact, that when Paul announced release from the obligation to observe the seventh day, the Christians were actually devoting the first day to religious services, and to religious joy on account of Christ's resurrection, were they not in effect, keeping the fourth commandment with the exception of the ordinal seventh-day feature of it? Then who has the right to say, that when the apostle gave his direction in Col. ii. 16, he substantially revoked the fourth commandment? The Christians were in substance keeping the greater part of it. That Paul did not cite it and say that in the main it was binding still, does not justify the assumption that it was all annulled. It was to stand until repealed. When the Lord, through the apostle Paul, released the whole Christian world thereafter from the obligation to observe the seventh day, did he at the same time revoke the command, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work" (Ex. xx. 9)? Who will say he did, and give us proof of it? No proof can be given. But what about the remaining part of the fourth command? We find the church under the apostolic supervision released from the ordinal seventh-day feature, and we find that at least a few

years previous to that, the first day with them was noted, and devoted in part to religious purposes, with no evidence that the whole of it was not held sacred. From these premises sound reasoning will not justify the inference, that the whole of the fourth commandment is made null and void. And if not, then are we not driven to the conclusion, that by divine authority, through inspired men, a change has been made in the time, in the ordinal religious element, of the weekly religious day? We can not say that the new is to be kept as was the old in all particulars. For, while apostles supervised still, we find the Sabbatic sacrifices in the temple not transferred to the Lord's day, and we find observed on that day the Lord's supper, which did not pertain to any commemorations or transactions of the seventh-day Sabbath. The clause in the command which requires us to restrain our children and servants from labor during more than six days in seven, is that, too, annulled? Are we left without a "Thus saith the Lord" for our own benefit and that of our families in respect to the time for labor? No, we are not thus left. Releasing from the ordinal seventh day observance does not release from this part of the command. But, why not keep the command precisely as it reads? Because we find another day taking in substance the place of the former one in this new dispensation.

In all this the Lord's-day Sabbath advocates are not usurping authority to change the fourth commandment; but they are taking care not to change it, or unlawfully to announce it abolished, or no longer in force. It is not a question whether devoted Christians would observe the Lord's day if there were no fourth commandment. But it is a question whether Christians of little experience and knowledge, and those of small devotion, will faithfully observe it, if they understand that no real authority can be brought from the Decalogue enjoining the observance of the Lord's day. It is a question whether the world must reel and totter and fall into ruin, because it has no such law as the fourth commandment contains. Long enough some have tried the method of

having no law for the Sabbath, nothing but the good instincts and principles of the partially sanctified, and the prudence of self-interest, and the vain conceits and the godless notions of an impenitent world. The Christian spirit in our land is shivering and shuddering at the prospect and fear of the coming of the Continental sabbath, the fruit of unsound Sabbatic doctrine. Hence, the strongest obligation rests upon all Christians to yield no inch of ground to error on this subject, to tenaciously hold every element and thought of truth pertaining to one sacred day in seven.

Objection: We cannot distinguish in the fourth commandment both moral and positive elements, and properly claim permanence and authority for the former and not for the latter, and yet include in the former the requirement to suspend all labor one day in seven. *Reply:* We admit that one part of the septenary feature in the fourth command is positive; but we are not to assume that *all* of the positive in the command is repealed. The ordinal septennial element is repealed, according to Paul's inspired word (Col. ii. 16). The proportional septennial element is not repealed, because the primitive church, while under apostolic supervision, did, at least to some extent, sacredly regard the first day, which is as truly septennial in the proportional as the seventh day, and no evidence appears that they did not regard it as wholly sacred. That there are moral elements in the fourth commandment pertaining to rest, worship, spiritual culture, and holiness, it would seem that no thoughtful person can deny. Its company in the Decalogue is a guarantee for its moral nature in part. If it were wholly positive, we should have no right to assume its abolition without divine instruction to that end. If we knew it was wholly both positive and transient, we should not look for it where it is. But its moral elements existed before even the formal command itself. They were combined and crystallized in it.

Bishop Butler says: "Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command."¹

¹ Complete Works, p. 176.

Those moral elements are also permanent. Archbishop Whately says, that moral precepts are binding on all in all ages.¹ It is not needful to make a very studied division between the moral and positive in this command, because revelation comes to our aid. It tells us, and subsequent evidence tells us, that the primitive church, under the guidance of the apostles, while they were under the guidance of Christ, changed their chief weekly sacred day from the seventh to the first of the week. We are not left simply to take the moral elements, and be guided by them as well as we may. We are blessed by the inspired singling out for us of other positive elements, and the locating of them in the Lord's day.

In all of the chief institutions of the old and new dispensations, there are certain underlying moral principles that unite them. And wherever these moral principles appear, they have, as Whately implies, a binding force on us. There was the principle of a covenant with God, entered into by Abel, by Noah (Gen. ix. 9), especially developed in Abraham (Gen. xvii. 2), made anew and amplified in the new dispensation (Heb. viii. 6). But the constituent elements of it on God's part are everlasting. Wherever it appears in the divine word, it makes an obligatory injunction on us, and that because of its moral and eternal nature. The articles of that covenant are distinctly declared to be the Ten Commandments (Deut. iv. 13). They were very conspicuously promulgated. Their nature is such that all moral beings must be bound by them in general. A slight change in them to adapt them to the world, instead of to the Jews merely, has been made. But that does not render them inapplicable to us. The fourth, where the chief change has been made, is still applicable and obligatory as it stands changed, because the covenant in its elementary part is everlasting. The principle of sacrifice is another great underlying bond, uniting the two dispensations. It took the form of animal, symbolic sacrifices in the old, and was perfected and finished

¹ Difficulties in Writings of St. Paul, p. 159.

on God's part by Christ's sacrifice in the new. It remains for believers ever to hold him as their sacrifice (1 Cor. v. 7) before the Father, and to be themselves a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. xii. 1). So, the law of the Sabbath has certain moral constituent parts, joining the two hemispheres of the world's redemptive history. It appeared in the seventh day previous to the Decalogue, and held its course all the way until in Christ Jesus it was made anew. Its inner nature even unites the two worlds, present and future; its rest here being a symbol of the rest that remaineth to the people of God (Heb. iv. 9). It has not sunken from human sight, for we find the substance of it in the Lord's day now. Its moral elements, along with those of the other commands, were codified and chiseled into tables of stone, that they might forever be written in human hearts. Their importance is too great, and it is now too late, to suppose that they have become inoperative or been abolished.

Rev. Newman Smyth is understood in his last volume to sanction the view that the fourth commandment is abolished. He says: "His [Christ's] word, 'the Sabbath was made for man,' finally makes the glorious Christian privilege break loose from the restraints of the law."¹ Mr. Smyth's own words convict him of error. He says: "A wonderful revolution was wrought in the transference of the sanctity of their Sabbath to the Lord's day."² Transference is not abolition. The "moral leadership of the Bible," "moral good," "moral progress," are with him favorite thoughts.³ He says again: "Man's moral sentiments, and their growth, come from the Father of lights, or all is darkness."⁴ He evidently believes that moral truth is eternal. He cannot, then, consistently believe that the moral element, "the sanctity" of the fourth commandment, is abrogated; or, that men can legitimately, "break loose from the restraints of the [moral] law.'

¹ *Old Faiths in New Lights*, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 354.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 78, 80; 67, 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

(To be continued.)