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ARTICLE VI.

THE SABBATH IN THE OLD DISPENSATION, AND IN THE CHANGE OF OBSERVANCE FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE LORD'S DAY.

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

A PREVIOUS Article on the Sabbath under the Old Testament Dispensation,¹ we closed by replying to some objections. They were, that Christ did much toward abolishing the Sabbath of the decalogue by his teaching and by his sanction of Jewish secular festivities on that sacred day. Several incorrect statements, having the weight of objections, have been made by Jahn,² Horne,³ Lightfoot,⁴ and Wetstein.⁵ The last three of these writers depend on Luke xiv. 1 to maintain their claim. They all have misapprehended such passages as Ex. xv. 20, 21; 2 Sam. vi. 14; Neh. viii. 9, 10. We have already sufficiently replied to these objections. We may add a few words. Jahn's editor, Professor Upham, says that the practices which that author names were all religious. He should have added that none of his Scripture passages necessarily refer to the Sabbath at all. Horne quotes the standard text, Luke xiv. 1, and then refers to Lightfoot and Wetstein. They chiefly rely on the Mischna. But that is composed much of traditions relative to Jewish customs, was very meagre as late as the close of the second century, was not completed (the Babylonian one) until about the close of the fifth century, and that of Jerusalem, the inferior one, not much sooner, if as soon.⁶ It is poor au-

¹ Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvi. pp. 729-759.² Archaeology (2d ed.), p. 443.³ Introduction, Vol. iii. p. 292.⁴ Horne Heb. et Talmud (London, 1823), p. 142, Lev. xiv. 1.⁵ On Luke xiv. 1.⁶ Prof. Samuel Adler, Johnson's Encyclopaedia, "Talmud"; Rees's and Chambers' Encyclopaedias on "Talmud and Mischna."

thority on which to convict Jesus Christ of attending secular feasts on the Sabbath among the Jews, when its date is not at our Saviour's time, and the Jews had so much degenerated in national customs at the time of its date. Some of the practices attributed by these and other writers to the Jews of Christ's day, Philo, contemporary with him, denies, at least, with reference to the better class of Jews. Speaking of the joy the great lawgiver had provided in the Sabbath for the Hebrew people, and of their abstaining from secular labor and business on that day, he adds: "But not, as many do, running mad after the theatre, the mimes, and dances, but philosophizing in the highest sense."¹

But did the *apostles* teach that the fourth commandment was abrogated? They taught the binding nature of the whole moral law, without excepting that of a sacred day of rest. Paul, in one instance, names half the decalogue, and adds: "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). He says expressly: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. vii. 12); "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law" (Rom. iii. 31). The apostle never could have written thus, if one tenth of the decalogue—more than that in language and thought—were repealed, annulled, as F. W. Robertson and others say.² Paul could not have meant that the sacred seventh of time was, like circumcision and sacrifice, no longer needed, nor that all days should be equally devoted to the secular and religious. He himself still observed the seventh, and had added to it another religious day. Near the time he wrote the few sentences (Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10; Col. ii. 16, 17) which some think imply the abolition of the Sabbatic principle, "he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, as

¹ De Mose, iii. p. 167, quoted by Milman, *Hist. Jews*, Vol. i. p. 203, note.

² Robertson's *Sermons, Sydenham Palace and Sabbath* (Second Series); *Shad. and Sub. of Sab.* (First Series.)

his manner was" (Acts xviii. 4; xvii. 2; xvi. 13; xiii. 14, 44); and on each Lord's day where he tarried he met with the disciples for worship (Acts xx. 7); and he, or some other sacred writer, expressly enjoined on others to do likewise (Heb. x. 25). No evidence appears that he kept all days alike, or that he grew lax, and threw off the restraints of holy time. If the Saviour intended to repeal the real Sabbath, why do we not find him or his apostles instructing the disciples to disregard the fourth commandment? Why not find him or them engaged on that day in secular labor, or diverting themselves by fishing? Why no case of conflict between them and the Pharisees where the former set aside the sabbatic ordinances?

Do the following apostolic statements imply that the law is abolished? "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 15); "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law" (Gal. v. 18); "To redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 5); "Ye also are become dead to the law" (Rom. vii. 4); "We are delivered from the law" (Rom. vii. 6); "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). If in Christ we are not condemned by the law, nor in danger from its penalty, nor bound to seek justification by our own righteousness, nor longer burdened by ceremonial observances of the old dispensation; still, love constrains to obedience, the rule of the moral law is sweet to us, wherein we fail of obedience we obtain forgiveness, and, as Augustine says, "The law itself, by being fulfilled, becomes grace and truth"¹; and hence it is not abolished.

Objection: "The law written and engraven in stones, with all its glory, is done away."² *Reply:* Though the preceding sentence is from the pen of a respected and representative author, who believed it founded on Scripture, yet it is not Scripture. He refers to 2 Cor. iii. 7, 11. Why, and of what, does the apostle speak? Unquestionably, he had been charged with boasting (ver. 1) on account of some statements in his former Epistle (1 Cor. v. 9; xiv. 18; xv. 10). Replying,

¹ Manichean Heresy, p. 321. ² Dr. Geo. B. Bacon, Sabbath Question, p. 133.

he declares his joy at being a minister of the New Testament (ver. 6); and then, conceding much to the glory of the "ministration of death,"— of the letter of the law,— he exalts far above it the glory of the "ministration of the Spirit." The comparison is between the two ministrations, not, as some authors suppose, between the law and the Spirit. The former ministration was characterized by a law "written and engraven in stones" (ver. 7), and given through Moses in great glory (ver. 13); but that ministration and the dispensation lying back of it are passed away to give place to the ministration of the Spirit. This is not teaching that the law is abolished, but that it and its dispensation need no longer be relied upon as a way and means of salvation. Although the laws given by Jehovah to the Jews were not formally divided into kinds, they evidently had different offices. First, in general, they offered a way of righteousness and salvation for sinners. With such meaning the term "law" is often employed in the New Testament. As such it embraced the typical and ceremonial part; and more, the law of rectitude, the expression of God's will relative to right and wrong in his rational creatures. While the whole system of types, and the ceremonies pertaining thereto, was temporary, the laws, principles, and rules pertaining to the moral state and conduct are permanent. The chief duties required in the decalogue are, in general, ever required. They must be, since God is ever holy, and moral right and wrong will never change their nature. A ministration and its glory passing away is one thing; the abolition of that which ministers in some particular form is quite another thing. The law and its dispensation, as a dependence for redemption, is void; the law, so far as it is the divine expression concerning the moral state and conduct of men, is in force, and is imperishable. Certain writers tell us that the "law written and engraven in stone, with all its glory, is done away"¹; but all that the Scriptures tell us is that the glory of Moses' countenance "was to be done away," and that the glory of the "minis-

¹ Bacon, Sabbath Question, p. 133.

tration of condemnation is done away." Meyer, Stanley, De Wette, and Neander say that the two ministrations in this passage are compared, not the two religions of the two dispensations. De Wette (*in loc.*) suggests that the old dispensation lying back of the ministration shares in the removal; but that is not the law as a guide of life, but the dispensation as a reliance for life eternal. That is abolished, because a better takes its place. But there are no better principles and rules of duty to supersede the moral precepts of the decalogue; hence they are not abolished.

Objection second: The following three passages indicate the abolition of the entire Sabbath, with other Jewish festive days, at the close of the old dispensation: "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); "Ye observe days and months and times and years" (Gal. iv. 10); "Let no man, therefore, judge you in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days" (Col. ii. 16). *Reply:* The first two of these passages would hardly be thought to refer to the weekly Sabbath, were it not for the third. Does that refer to it? The word *Shabbath* — Sabbath = rest, and its derivative *Shabbathon* — a keeping of the Sabbath, a resting, a Sabbatism — are applied to five different days and the seventh year. The days are, the weekly Sabbath, the day of atonement (Lev. xxiii. 82), the feast of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24), and the first and eighth of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 39). One Seventh-Day Adventist author says there were "seven annual Sabbaths,"¹ besides the weekly one, as named in Lev. xxiii. His error is in reckoning the first and seventh days of unleavened bread and the day of pentecost as Sabbaths, which the sacred writer does not term such. Yet they were days of holy convocation, and this twenty-third chapter of Leviticus is a catalogue of such days.

With us the word "Sabbath" is a technical name, not always

¹ W. H. Littlejohn, *The Constitutional Amendment*, p. 114.

suggesting its literal meaning—a rest. With the Jews, accustomed to hear the Scriptures in the Hebrew, the literal idea was more prominent; and *Shabbath* and *Shabbathon* alike brought to their minds the thought of rest. Yet the weekly Sabbath and that of the atonement had a designation peculiar to themselves. In the fourth commandment it is, “day of the Sabbath” and “Sabbath of the Lord.” In Lev. xxiii. 3 it is, *Shabbath Shabbathon*, — *rest of resting, a Sabbath of rest*; and the same phrase occurs with reference to the day of atonement (Lev. xxiii. 32.) But in the case of the feast of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24), and in that of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 39) only the word *Shabbathon* — *a resting, a sabbatism* — is used. The Septuagint notes this distinction. Another difference is this: In respect to the weekly Sabbath and the day of atonement the command is, “Ye shall do no work” (Lev. xxiii. 3, 28); but in the case of the feast of trumpets and of the feast of tabernacles it is, “Ye shall do no *servile* work” (Lev. xxiii. 25, 26). By the former phrase all kinds of labor were forbidden — toil with the hands and business, trade; by the latter, labor with the hands was forbidden, while mere business and trade were allowed. But on each of the whole five days a holy convocation was enjoined, and also on the first and seventh days of the feast of unleavened bread, and at the feast of pentecost or the harvest (Lev. xxiii. 21). On these last three days, also, servile work was forbidden, but not all work. It seems certain that amid all these days of rest and convocation the apostle, by the word “Sabbaths,” rests, at least embraced the weekly Sabbath. It came so much more frequently than the yearly Sabbath or Sabbatisms, and seventh year Sabbath, that it were unreasonable to suppose the apostle by the term “Sabbaths” excluded it, and included them, without the least intimation of the omission. He would be more likely to exclude the Sabbatisms than the full Sabbaths, which were the one weekly day, and the one yearly day, the atonement. The seventh day was the only one of all usually called the Sabbath; the others had other

names. The reasons are much stronger for supposing the apostle meant, by the word "Sabbaths," the weekly days, rather than the yearly ones.

This word "Sabbaths," in Col. ii. 16, some suppose to be singular in meaning, — therefore referring to the weekly Sabbath only, — though plural in form, owing to one peculiar ending of the singular, which finally assumed the termination of the plural without its meaning. Adverse to that view is the fact that in a similar list of public occasions (Gal. iv. 10) the word "days" occurs in plural form, referring to sacred festivals, and perhaps including the Sabbath. In the list in Colossians there is a descending scale — yearly festivals, monthly ones, weekly ones. This scale is the more noticeable, because in Gal. iv. 10, pertaining to the same subject, there is an ascending scale from days to years — the same scale reversed.

Assuming, now, that the apostle, in Col. ii. 16, embraced the weekly day in the word "Sabbaths," does it show that the fourth commandment is obsolete? The apostles had to contend with Jews and the Judaizing Christians. Though the latter accepted Christ, and kept the first day of the week, they tenaciously held that Christians should continue the observance of some Jewish institutions, especially the seventh day. This Judaism was a stumbling to the Gentile Christians, and the cause of much discussion. The apostle's direction was: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. xiv. 5) in respect to the observance of these Jewish days. His practice was indicated by the fact that he circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi. 3) to facilitate his acceptance with the Jews, since it was the young disciple's privilege by being of Jewish descent on his mother's side; and refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. ii. 3-5), because he was a Gentile, and Christianity did not require it, and those who deemed it obligatory needed correction. The apostle was inspired to allow non-essentials to the Jewish, and to disallow their being made essentials to the Gentile, Christians. Among these non-essentials was the observance of the annual and

monthly religious feasts, and probably of the seventh day. Paul was taught by inspiration that circumcision was no longer necessary, and probably that the seventh day was no longer obligatory. But while the former was purely ceremonial and national, the latter was not wholly ceremonial or national or judicial. So far as it was Jewish, positive, it was set aside; as moral, it remained. In the moral were rest, hallowed time, worship, probably a day for worship¹ and holy convocations (Lev. xxiii. 3). In the positive were the septenary division, the seventh-day obligation, memorial of deliverance from Egypt (Gen. xxxi. 16), and the Jewish civil, ceremonial, and judicial relations; the last involving penalties for violation of sabbatic law. One evidence that the decalogue is moral, and was designed for man, is, that penalties are not annexed, and may therefore vary; as may also some specific duties not named in the decalogue itself. Doubtless the apostle was ignorant of these analytical distinctions; enough that he observed them, even if blindly, and as an inspired man could say, Christians need not keep the seventh, but should keep the first day, and on it observe their most sacred religious services. But if Paul rejected the Sabbath in any sense, it was merely the specific Jewish day, without embracing the moral elements of the real Sabbath: for he was contending with Jews and Judaizing Christians, who were busy with the superficial positive, not with the deep-laid moral and spiritual, which the apostle was especially observing in the Lord's day.

Objection third: Still, according to the apostle Paul, "We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held" (Rom. vii. 6); and therefore it is not binding upon us. For, as Archbishop Whately says, "There are very many passages relative to the Mosaic law occurring in the

¹ Holy convocation requires a particular time or day for the assembling; and, the evils of making only half of Sunday religious, and the remainder secular, as by the Continental method, seem to indicate that *natural* as well as revealed religion calls for a *whole*, and not a mere *half* stated day for holy rest and worship. And the tendencies of *true worship* in holy convocation are towards the sacred observance of the whole day.

writings of the apostle Paul, whose most obvious and simple interpretation, at least, would seem to imply the entire abolition of that law by the establishment of the gospel.”¹ *Reply*: Bengel, Alford, Lange, and Meyer affirm, and Whately admits, that the phrase “that being dead wherein we were held” should read, “we being dead to that law wherein we were held.” The law is not dead, or abolished, but believers are dead to it. Meyer even says: “Paul is not discussing the abrogation of the law, but the fact that the Christian as such is no longer under it.”² The apostle has just used the figure of the marriage relation. Believers are married to another, even Christ, and not to the law. In the law, with all its types, ceremonies, deeds, is not their hope; but it is in Christ Jesus. The extent of the apostle’s meaning in saying, “We are delivered from the law,” “Ye are not under the law” (Rom. vi. 14) is indicated by another of his statements: “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. v. 3). He must conform to all its ceremonial observances, and obey all its moral requirements. No other course is left him, if he insists on salvation by law. But believers, accepting grace, enjoy the Antitype, — types and ceremonies having passed away, — and delight in forgiveness for all violations of the moral law. Yet the law in its moral character and requirements, pointing out the way of duty, demanding holiness, and forbidding sin, is unabolished and unabolishable. As Dr. Bushnell says, “Plainly enough, the law of God never can be taken away from any world or creature; for with it, in close company, goes abroad all the conserving principle, moral and physical, in which God’s kingdom stands.”³

However, admit that it is all abolished. What then? Surely the apostles ought not to use it; we shall not find them using it. Alas for the theory! After Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, in which the foregoing passage occurs

¹ Difficulties, etc., p. 142.

² Com., Rom. vii. 1.

³ Forgiveness and Law, p. 119.

(Rom. vi. 14), he writes that to the Ephesians, in which he actually appeals to this abrogated law: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. vi. 1-3). He does not even stumble at using the Jewish promise of long life in Canaan; the principle in it makes it serviceable, applicable. Nor does he hesitate to employ this commandment in addressing Gentile, as well as Jewish Christians. He does not tell us that the law is abolished, that he refers to this command as only a law of nature; he summons it as embracing the authority of Jehovah descended upon Mount Sinai. More, in the same Epistle where we are told that "we are delivered from the law" (Rom. vii. 6), we find the apostle subsequently bringing forward the law itself, as still a law and obligatory: "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"; hence he is delivered from its condemnation. "For This, thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Thou shalt not covet; and and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Rom. xiii. 8, 9). He speaks of the second table. Is love abolished? Nay. Then all that which is condensed into love is not annulled. The apostle is consistent with himself, and must mean: If we love, we are delivered from the condemnation of the law, because now obedient, and forgiven for past disobedience; delivered from the ceremonies and deeds of the law as our hope, because salvation is offered on the easier condition of repentance and faith; not delivered from obligation to obey any of the law's moral precepts, yet privileged to obey them all by the one comprehensive principle of love. Nor is all this merely a Pauline peculiarity. The apostle James, at least twelve or fifteen years after the death of Christ, when the new dispensation had been more than fully inaugurated and established, appeals expressly to the decalogue as a rule of duty, in an address to believers, who are

dead to the law as a means of hope and merit: "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (ii. 9-11). Definite commands are referred to, not as abolished, but as though in force as much as ever. What the sovereign God hath *said* is appealed to—what he said on the mount, amid thunders and lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. It is in our dispensation, as it were in our time, that the apostles summon the law of Sinai to their aid in proclaiming the gospel; and it becomes uninspired men not to say any more that the law is abolished. If apostles of Jesus Christ may remind their hearers and readers of the commandments as still expressive of God's will, we need not recall our appeals to them, nor be troubled by the many assertions in our time that the decalogue and all the Old Testament laws are abrogated.

Moreover, twenty-seven years after Christ's death, and after the law was abolished by his death,—as some say,—the apostle Paul pronounces the law holy, and "the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. vii. 12), and points out the good services of the law in making him know his sins (vii. 7-11) and in making others know their sins (vii. 5). He refers to the ten commandments; for, by way of illustration, he names one of them—that of covetousness (vii. 7). Have we outgrown the good services of the law? Yet all this the apostle says just after declaring that believers "are not under the law" (vi. 14), "are delivered from the law" (vii. 6). Only one conclusion is rationally deducible: They who are risen with Christ are not under the law as their ground of salvation; yet are not delivered from the law as an instructor in the evils of sin and the fruits of righteousness. Further, if Christ abolished the law, how did he deliver from its

curse? If abolished, it had no curse; that, too, was abolished.¹

Objection fourth: Dr. Hopkins says: "Neither our divine Lord nor his apostles ever recognized the fourth commandment as containing a law for Christians."²

Reply: The fourth commandment stood by previous enactment. It did not need recognition in order to its continuance. The question is, Did Christ or his apostles ever reject it? 1. The apostles, so far as we learn, did not reject it. Both James and Paul directly appeal to the commandments; not naming all of them at any time, not rejecting any, not intimating that the fourth or any other was annulled. Had it been annulled, a fact so striking would have received attention. Paul's indication that no one might impose upon Christians the obligation to observe the seventh day, after the first had become the Lord's day (Col. ii. 16), is no evidence that the fourth commandment had become void. That command, analyzed, had the following parts: (1) A division or part of six days; (2) A division of one day immediately following the division of six; (3) An appointment for all secular work during the first division; (4) An appointment for rest and holy keeping of time during the second division; (5) A commemoration of God's creation of the world by the first division, and of his rest by the second division; (6) A reckoning of time that made the first division the first six days, and the second division the seventh day. The apostles never said aught to set aside any one of these first five parts. Their teaching and example simply affected the element of time, and gave an additional object of commemoration—that of Christ's resurrection. They did not revoke the commemoration of God's act of creation,

¹ After we had given the manuscript of this Article to the press, we found that the honored Rev. Amos A. Phelps, in a discussion held in the year 1840, made the clear distinction that the law is "done away as a means of justification," but is not done away "as a rule of duty;" and he is original in the manner in which he has applied that fundamental analysis to this subject. — See Phelps on the Perpetuity of the Sabbath, p. 11.

² Sabbath Question, p. 11.

nor of his rest; for still six days are devoted to labor, and one to rest. They put the original commemoration in the background by placing another before it. By changing the reckoning of time they did not make void the original commemoration; because, with such variation of time as the daily revolution of the earth gives, what is the seventh day to some is the first to others, and exact identity of observance would be impossible, and is not required. Though Paul taught that observance of the seventh day was optional (Col. ii. 16), he and the other apostles taught, by word and example, the duty and privilege of keeping the first day, and of laboring six days; and therefore in respect to its chief (the first four) elements, they "recognized the fourth commandment as containing a law for Christians," and did not teach or allow the doctrine that it is annulled. Even failure to reinforce the fourth commandment would not be its abolition.

2. If they were Christians who followed Christ during his earthly ministry, then he did repeatedly "recognize the fourth commandment as containing a law for Christians." Even his corrections of the abuses of the Sabbath were indirect recognitions of the validity of the fourth commandment. Not one word did he ever say against it.

A consideration of the decalogue has led us into the New Testament with the question: Has the decalogue or fourth commandment been abolished? Returning to the Old Testament, we should note the fact that the primal reasons given in both Genesis (ii. 1-3) and Exodus (xx. 11) for observing the Sabbath pertain to man, and not specifically to Jews, and that they agree well with Christ's declaration, that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mark ii. 27). The reasons, God rested, and he blessed and hallowed the Sabbath, are too broad and benevolent to be confined to one nation.

Objection: "The Sabbath is described as a sign between God and the people of Israel"; therefore, it seems, "the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and designed to

be so”¹ (Ex. xxxi. 16, 17; Ezek. xx. 12). “That rest, being only commemorative of their deliverance from Egyptian servitude, was not moral nor perpetual.”² *Reply*: Previous to the above from Dr. Paley and Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Heylin had said the same;³ and they all seem to have written without due consideration. The Sabbath may have been, and was, an especial sign of one thing to the Jews, and a sign of other things for all men. The former does not exclude the latter. The sign described in Ex. xxxi. 16, 17 is consonant with that in Ex. xx. 11; and the reasons in the latter instance show that it was for man, and not Jews only.

The Jewish nation existed as such long before the recognition of the Sabbath at the giving of manna in the wilderness. Who can say that the Sabbath was not a weekly sign long before, against all nations that served not the true God? No doubt the Egyptians robbed the Jews much of this badge of their consecration to Jehovah. Israel desired to go three days’ journey into the wilderness to “hold a feast unto the Lord” (Ex. x. 9). May not the feast have embraced a Sabbath, which was one of “the feasts of the Lord” (Lev. xxiii. 2, 3), and afterwards, at least, was a high feast day? The passover was an emphatic sign of Jewish nationality, and a marked memorial of Israel’s departure from Egypt (Ex. xii. 11, 27). But the law of the passover, being Jewish and temporary, was not put into the decalogue; while the law of the Sabbath was. The former was a memorial of deliverance from Egyptian bondage; the latter, of the creation. The reason of the former was limited; that of the latter was world-wide. The Sabbatic institution, in its whole range, seems to be commemorative of three events: First, of God’s rest, and the close of creation; secondly, of God’s special choice and appointment of the Jews; thirdly, of Christ’s resurrection, and the completion of redemption. The Sabbath of the Jews

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

² Jeremy Taylor, *Law and Conscience*, sec. 58.

³ *History of the Sabbath. Part i. chap. iv. sec. 6.*

in the wilderness, and to the end of the old dispensation, may not have been the exact successor of the sacred day instituted in the beginning, and observed by the patriarchs; though the latter, as well as the former, may have been the seventh by the current reckoning in its period. The weeks and days may have been disarranged during the Egyptian bondage, and a correction or re-dating may have been commenced at the giving of manna or at the institution of the passover, when a holy convocation was appointed.

Objection second: Archbishop Whately says: "The very law itself indicates, on the face of it, that the whole of its precepts were intended for the Israelites exclusively."¹ Dr. Thomas Arnold speaks doubtfully about it;² Dr. R. W. Dale implies that "the fourth commandment was given to the Jews" only;³ Dr. Geo. B. Bacon says the Sabbath commandment was "addressed not to the Christian church, but to the Jewish church";⁴ Bishop Robert Sanderson (born A.D. 1587) said "that no part of the law delivered by Moses to the Jews doth bind Christians under the gospel by virtue of that delivery — no, not the ten commandments themselves, but least of all the fourth, which all confess to be, at least in some part, ceremonial";⁵ and Jeremy Taylor speaks of "laws which were to separate the Jews from the Gentiles."

Reply: It was not the design of the Jewish laws, or of the Sabbath in particular, to separate the Gentiles from the Jews, if the former would forsake their idolatry, and embrace the true religion. The Sabbath being made for *man*, as most of these writers admit, it inevitably follows that the fourth commandment, which gave or confirmed the Sabbath, had in its moral part a binding force upon man. We prefer what Tertullian says: "For why should God, the Founder of the universe, the Governor of the whole world, the Fashioner of humanity, the Sower of universal nations, be believed to have given a law through Moses to one people, and not be said to

¹ Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul, p. 147.

² Sermons, Vol. iii. No. 22, pp. 255-258.

³ Ten Commandments, p. 93.

⁴ Sabbath Question, p. 97.

⁵ Dr. Hessey on Sunday, p. 327.

⁶ Christian Law and Conscience, sec. 44.

have assigned it to all nations? For, unless he had given it to all, by no means would he have habitually permitted even proselytes out of the nations to have access to it. But—as is congruous with the goodness of God and with his equity as the Fashioner of mankind—he gave to all nations the self-same law.”¹ Whether the Sabbath be for us or not, being made for man, at the time it was made it was not exclusively for Jews. Though the decalogue was *addressed* to the Israelites, that does not prove Whately’s claim that it was “*intended* for the Israelites exclusively.” The teaching of Christ and his apostles especially indicates that the Jews were as much bound to give the moral law to the world as Moses was to Israel from the mount. It has ever been God’s way to speak unto one, or a few, that they might communicate to the many. Bishop Sanderson may say that “no part of the law delivered by Moses to the Jews doth bind Christians under the gospel by virtue of that delivery”; but the apostles Paul and James reiterate that law as though binding alike on Jews and Gentiles as far as known to them, as though obtaining its divine force not from their lips, but from the voice of Jehovah, sounding in sublime peals from Sinai across the centuries.

8. The Sabbath, besides having its place in the decalogue, is throughout the old dispensation ranked with things moral, permanent, and highly important. It is placed above feasts, ceremonies, and sacrifices. Sacrifices and other solemnities are commanded to be observed upon it; but while it is admitted to the decalogue, they are not. In all parts of the Pentateuch it is treated as though worthy of its place in the first table of the moral law. Its essential and great importance is indicated by the fact that a wilful violation of it is made punishable with death (Ex. xxxi. 14). Its observance is ranked as an essential aid to the highest virtues, and as equally binding. Is Israel pointed to the first commandment as of especial significance? the fourth is placed by its side: “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and

¹ Ans. to the Jews, Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. xviii. p. 203.

the seventh day thou shalt rest ; And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect ; and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth " (Ex. xxiii. 12, 13). In another passage the first, second, and fifth commandments are ranged with the fourth," and the observance of them all is made requisite to holiness : " Ye shall be holy ; for I the Lord your God am holy. Ye shall fear every one his father and his mother, and keep my Sabbaths ; I am the Lord your God. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods : I am the Lord your God " (Lev. xix. 1-3). One passage declares that the Sabbath is a sign, and implies that it is a direct means for the sanctification of the people : " Verily, my Sabbaths ye shall keep ; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations ; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore ; for it is holy unto you " (Ex. xxxi. 13, 14). These Scripture facts unmistakably indicate that the Sabbath has in it very essential moral elements. It is not simply typical of a future rest ; it is an absolute means to the rest and peace of holiness, here and hereafter.

Farther on in Jewish history the true prophets are ever endeavoring to maintain the strict observance of the Sabbath in Israel. False and formal observances, ceremonies without the heart, the Lord through his prophets contemns (Isa. i. 11-14). But the highest divine favor is upon him that truly keeps the Sabbath. Its observance is ranked with keeping judgment and doing justice and keeping from evil : " Keep ye judgment, and do justice. . . . Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it ; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil " (Isa. lvi. 1, 2). And all strangers that observe the Sabbath have equal blessings with Israel : " For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant ; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than

of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Also, the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer" (Isa. lvi. 4-7). Keeping the Sabbath is ranked with making and keeping a covenant with God, and with loving the name of the Lord. Sabbath-keeping, when fully right, involves moral character, embraces the intent of the heart, and in itself must have moral elements. As Bishop Daniel Wilson says, the sanctification of the Sabbath is described as a main proof of essential piety.¹ It involved principles and services demanded by our relations to God, and taught us even in the nature of things.

9. A *moral law* pertains to the duties of rational beings, and has its reasons in the nature and relations of things. A *positive law* pertains also to the conduct of rational beings, but has not its reasons in the nature and relations of things, but in the will of a governmental authority. Moral and positive laws are often combined. There is a moral law against murder; the state makes it also a positive law. The decalogue is composed of laws having each a moral nature; but in respect to their enactment merely for the Jewish nation they were positive laws. The Jewish civil and ceremonial laws were positive, because enacted for that nation, and in part for that age of the world. Yet they had some moral elements. All moral laws and elements are binding, wherever applicable; but positive laws, so far as they are positive, are binding only on those for whom they were enacted. "Moral duties," says Bishop Butler, "arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command. Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and sub-

¹ Divine Authority and Perpetual Obligation of the Lord's Day, p. 75.

jects we are.”¹ The decalogue—given when God met the great Hebrew host, and spake to them from Mount Sinai, written twice by his finger on tables of stone, preserved in the ark of the covenant—received this amazing enactment as positive law to the Jews, because it was, in general, supreme moral law to mankind. “Moral precepts are precepts,” says Butler, “the reasons of which we see.” The reasons for labor, for rest, for keeping holy time, for worship, we can see; and thus far the fourth commandment is *moral* in its nature. The reasons for the proportions of time devoted to labor and to rest, and for the number of the day that shall be sacred, we cannot see until expressly told; and in these respects this command is of the nature of *positive* law. The decalogue as a whole is moral; as a merely national law for the Jews, positive, like their civil and ceremonial law. The penalties of the decalogue, not being in the commands themselves, but in positive enactments for the Jews, were binding only on them, and in the Jewish dispensation, except as they involved moral principles. Some duties pertaining to the several commands, not being stated in them, but growing out of positive laws, were binding only upon that people, except as they had a moral, and therefore permanent, nature.

All of the ten commandments, with penalties, were undoubtedly more or less in force before their engrossment at Sinai. The offerings to God by Abel, Noah, and others, implied a knowledge of the duty to love and serve him. Idolatry and the use of images were known to be evil; for Jacob required his household and all with him to put away the “strange gods” (Gen. xxxv. 2). The early frequent administration of oaths doubtless implies a knowledge of the third commandment. The honor due to parents is indicated by the conduct of Noah’s sons, and their father’s blessing and curse pronounced; and parental authority was honored in the fact that Abraham was blessed for commanding his children after him (Gen. xviii. 19). Cain was cursed for murder, and the world was destroyed by flood because of corruption and

¹ Complete Works, p. 176.

violence (Gen. vi. 11). Shechem suffered judgment for breaking what was afterwards the seventh commandment (Gen. xxxiv. 1-31). Four kings were smitten by Abram and his servants for breaking the eighth of the decalogue (Gen. xiv. 1-24); and Joseph's brethren protested against the charge of theft (Gen. xlv. 8). Abimelech remonstrated with Abraham for falsely testifying that his wife was his sister (Gen. xx.); and covetousness was a violation of law, and, especially with kings, a common sin. Enoch was translated, and Noah preserved from destruction, because they walked with God (Gen. v. 24; vi. 9); while Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire, because the men were sinners before the Lord exceedingly (xiii. 13). Previous to the giving of the law at Sinai nine commands of the decalogue had been given, and had been broken, times without number; the fourth commandment was probably no exception. Even Archbishop Whately, in arguing that the whole Mosaic code, including the decalogue, has been abrogated,¹ claims "that some Sabbatical institution, in memory of the creation, existed in the patriarchal times, that some kind of observance of the seventh day existed prior to the Mosaic law."² He also claims that, "though the Mosaic law does not bind us, our moral obligations exist quite independent of that law,"³ and that we find "the most ample evidence of the observance of the Lord's day as a Christian festival by the apostles and their immediate converts, whose example has been followed by all Christian churches down to this day."⁴ The decalogue, then, is abolished only so far as it was a system of positive laws for the Jews. Its moral character, in which are its more essential elements, remains, and is obligatory on us. Even the positive nature of the ante-Mosaic Sabbath — as its septenary character — continues, because unaffected by the abolition or fulfilment of Judaism. All Jewish positive laws were based on moral principles; as, the command to offer first-fruits, on the principle of thankful

¹ Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul, pp. 148, 150, 152. ² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

homage due the great Giver; and the requirement of sin-offerings, on the principle that there can be no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood—suffering. The positive laws may be temporary, while the principles are eternal.

Closing, now, this part of the discussion, we claim that a fair and full investigation shows that there was an ante-Mosaic sacred day, that the disbelievers in such a day fail to give a satisfactory account of the early septenary division of time, and modern researches in cuneiform inscriptions seem positively to confirm the other evidence of such a division, and of a genuine Sabbath; that none have shown that the decalogue, or even the fourth commandment, is abrogated, or that either was given solely for the Jews; that the whole decalogue stands on a plane superior to that of the Jewish civil and ceremonial law; that the apostle Paul in teaching that the observance of the seventh day in the new dispensation was optional, as was that of other sacred days and seasons of the old dispensation, did nothing to undermine the moral elements of the fourth commandment; and that all moral elements are permanent and universal in their application. Thus we come out of the old dispensation with the moral, which are the chief, elements of the original Sabbath undiminished, untarnished, enforced upon us by both reason and Scripture, and, dissolved from their former positive ordinal element of time-reckoning, likely to assume some new relation in the new dispensation.

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

Having considered the Sabbath of the old dispensation, it is intended now to consider whether there is divine authority for a change of the weekly sacred day in the new dispensation, and if there is, in what that authority consists.

1. The Lord's day has what is known in affairs of property as the right of possession, which should hold unless disproved. The Christian public generally, through many cen-

turies have kept the first day sacred ; and they should continue as they have been born and bred, unless they find reason for change. We observe the Fourth of July as that of the declaration of independence, not so much because we have individually examined history to see whether that is the true day, as because the example of our fathers has naturally led us to suppose it is the right one. For like reasons we observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath. But if thorough research should prove that the third of July and the seventh day of the week are the ones to be observed, we ought to change.

2. The change of institutions in the change from the old dispensation to the new was not sudden and violent, but gradual and rational ; the new institutions commencing, indeed, immediately, but the old ones disappearing gradually. The old institutions were not sinful, though the new had commenced, else they should have been at once abandoned. Hence time was taken for the people to think, and to change, not through force, but through principles. Baptism took the place, in a sense, of circumcision. Baptism was commenced immediately ; but circumcision was continued more or less by some of the Christians through many years. It was twenty years after the death of Christ — after the beginning of the new dispensation — that Paul circumcised Timothy. The Lord's supper took the place of the passover, and, instituted just as Christ was about to give his life for the world, it was intended to commemorate that act to the end of time. Yet the Christians did not immediately abandon the passover, but, with some subsequent modifications, kept it several centuries. Christ's sacrifice took the place of the many temple sacrifices. But the Christians a long time continued to attend the temple services held in connection with the sacrifices, even until the temple was destroyed, and there was no more place for sacrifice. Immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at pentecost the believers were continually in the temple praising God (Acts ii. 46, 47). When Peter healed a lame man, as he and John were going to the temple

at the hour of prayer, it was the evening hour for sacrifice. Twenty-seven years after the death of Christ we find Paul purifying himself, with four others that had a vow (Acts **xxi.** 26), and that ceremony involved offering sacrifice in the temple (Num. vi. 3-18). While doing this, then, as a matter of prudence with the Jews, he adopted principles and practices that contributed to the final abandonment of all sacrifices. We must conclude that while the institutions of the new dispensation were commenced at its beginning, those of the old were not immediately forsaken. And by analogy, if we find that the apostles and primitive saints kept the first day, we shall also find that they did not at once give up all observance of the seventh day.

3. Our authority for the change from the institutions of the old dispensation to those of the new does not come so much by the explicit commands of the apostles as by their examples. We have Christ's distinct command to be baptized, but neither his nor his apostles' command to discontinue circumcision. Yet the apostles taught that circumcision was not necessary to salvation, and under that principle it ceased. We have no command from either Christ or apostles to cease the observance of the passover. Christ gave command to his apostles to observe the Lord's supper; but he did not give that command to all believers, nor did his apostles. We infer the duty and privilege of all Christians to observe it from the example of the apostles in administering it to all Christians of their time, which indicates their understanding of Christ's original command to observe it. In such things apostolic example is equal to command. We have no inspired command to cease offering sacrifices; but from principles set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and from the example of the apostles, and of the Christians under their instructions, in finally omitting sacrifices altogether, we conclude that it would be wrong in us now to offer sacrifices as under the old dispensation. By parity of reasoning, if the first day takes the place of the seventh, we shall not find a command to cease observing the seventh, and

shall find inspired *example* in keeping the first day, rather than distinct *command* to keep it. Whatever the apostles of Christ taught by example, while under inspiration, we are bound to observe. If they and the Christians with them carefully and steadily kept sacred the first day of the week, then, of course, the apostles gave instruction to those around them so to do; and that example and instruction are authoritative. We cannot think it right to go contrary to the universal apostolic instruction and example. From their example we get the light of duty.

4. A change of time for the sacred day from the seventh to the first day of the week is presumptively possible and probable. (1) So far as the original Sabbath pertained to the seventh day of the week, it admitted the possibility of a change. If changed, it would still read, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." So far as the day was *positive*, it was mutable. (2) Nothing in its nature forbade a change. Its time was not different in kind from that of other days. It could as well be a blessing to man on the first as on the seventh day if the Lord changed it. (3) Exact identity in observance of time is, and ever has been, a practical impossibility never required. The world turns around; men do not keep the same time that we do either in Europe or California. God could therefore change the time without a violation of his own law in the constitution of the day. Travelling westward the days lengthen, and continuing around the globe in that direction, we should lose one day, and of necessity must make a change in order to be in accord with other Sabbath worshippers. Going north of the Arctic circle we should have but one day and one night in the year, if measured by the visibility of the sun, and could not have a Sabbath in unison with those nearer the equator. Two parties encircling the earth by going in different directions, east and west, will be two days apart when they meet at the point whence they started. An English ship touched at Pitcairn's Island in the Pacific on a Saturday, and found the islanders keeping Sunday. The explanation was in the fact that they had gone thither from the

same home-land by sailing in opposite directions. Though differing one day in time, each party was in God's sight acceptably keeping the Lord's day, if either was; yet, continuing together, an adjustment so as to keep the same time would be important and proper. (4) The essential chief point in the fourth commandment is not keeping a particular seventh day, but devoting six days to the general purposes of labor, and one — a seventh — to holy rest; ¹ and the seventh day might be termed the first, or the first the seventh. (5) The objects of rest could as well be secured on another day than the seventh, if God so direct. One of those objects is worship, which is not dependent on a particular time, though it should be conformed to the divine plan. Dr. Dale objects: "The law required rest; it did not require worship."² And Professor Moses Stuart says: "There was no provision for social worship among the Hebrews on the Sabbath."³ The truth is, a "holy convocation" for public worship was expressly appointed for the Sabbath before the Israelites broke up their encampment at Sinai (Lev. xxiii. 3).⁴ Nor were they ignorant of holy convocations previous to that time. We find in Ex. xii. 16 that "an holy convocation" was appointed for both the first and the seventh days of the passover feast when it was instituted, before the Jews left Egypt. In their minds, doubtless, keeping the Sabbath "holy" implied a "holy convocation." (6) The command does not absolutely preclude a change of day; since it does not read, "Remember the seventh day," but "the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." Though on the seventh day then, it need not be always. The seventh was subsidiary to the Sabbath, and might, by divine appointment, give place to another day. (7) The seventh day was chosen to commemorate a particular event — the creation. A change might be made, to commemorate a greater event, on another day. (8) An event greater, in some aspects, has occurred — the resurrection of Jesus Christ — the climax of his redemptive work. "If Christ be

¹ Dr. Schaff, *Apostolical Church*, p. 556. ² *Ten Commandments*, p. 99.

³ *Old Test. Canon*, pp. 66, 67.

⁴ See *in loc.*, Kalisch, Lange, and Murphy.

not risen, your faith is vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). "I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. lxv. 17). The new creation is the beginning of the new dispensation. The original Sabbath commemorated the completion of the first creation; the Lord's day commemorates that of the second creation. Here are two great events, and two special days commemorating them. But the events and the origin of the days are in different eras and dispensations; yet both days pertain to weekly time. As the latter dispensation takes the place of the former, it might be expected that the commemorative day of the latter would take the place of that of the former. (9) Yet the change of time, while specially commemorating the new event, — the Redeemer's resurrection, — would not wholly discard the commemoration of the original event — the creation. For still there would be the six days' labor in memory of God's creative work, and the one day of rest in memory of his rest. (10) The original Sabbath having been given in part to develop and sanctify man's religious nature, and the Lord's day being better fitted now in the new dispensation to accomplish the same purpose, it might be expected that it would be put in the place of the original day. (11) The fact that Christ, as Lord of the Sabbath, absolved himself and followers from Jewish Sabbatic perversions, and from slavery to the letter of Sabbatic law, without abolishing the Sabbath, suggests the probability that he will change the time of the sacred day if sufficient reasons for it should arise. (12) The fact that through several centuries previous to the coming of Christ many Jews perverted the Sabbath, and in its name bound upon themselves and others many burdens grievous to be borne, suggests that the Lord of the Sabbath *may* change the time of the sacred day to relieve it from those multiform abuses, and to give his new church a new and free day for its most precious religious festivals, the commemoration of Christ's death, by the Lord's supper, and that of his resurrection, the completion of his redemption, by the new day itself.

(To be continued.)