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ARTICLE III.

THE SABBATH: DID THE EARLY FATHERS HOLD THAT
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS ABOLISHED?

BY REV. WILLIAM DE LOSS LOVE, D.D., SOUTH HADLEY, MASS.

HAVING shown from the apostolic and succeeding fathers of the primitive era that the Christians of their time kept sacred the first day of the week, and did not regard the seventh day as binding for holy observance, we come to a third and more difficult question: Did the early fathers teach that setting aside the seventh day involved, in form or in substance, the abrogation of the fourth commandment? Two parties in opinion here come distinctly before us. One party is made up of two divisions, of which one says that the fourth commandment is in form abolished; that the Scriptures so teach, and the fathers also. The other division, not going so far, says that the early fathers did not found the observance of the first day on the fourth commandment, and we cannot; and that in substance that command is not in force, except analogically by its principle;—there was a sacred seventh day in the old dispensation, and there is another in the new. The second party holds that we properly *can* base the observance of the Lord's day on the fourth commandment; but are disposed to confess that we have to do it despite the views and testimony of the early fathers. They in consequence claim that the patristical writings on this subject are not trustworthy, since they stand adverse, as they think, to the doctrine of the Christian Sabbath as depending on the fourth command. They confess, even many of the most intelligent men on the Sabbath question confess, that in this one respect of patristical evidence, the cause of a sacred Sabbath is weak. The two parties understand the fathers alike in this respect, as wholly rejecting any sacred

day based on the fourth commandment. But, while one party so understands them to the detriment of the command, the other understands them to the detriment of the fathers themselves. We do not fully agree with either party, but believe that the true apprehension of the language of the fathers casts no detriment on either themselves or the command, and is entirely consistent with a Christian Sabbath founded on both the command and the teaching and example of the apostles, which is the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Hessey says, "The early church never appealed to the fourth commandment as a ground for observing Sunday."¹ Again, he says that none of the "early fathers" "refer to the fourth commandment, or to God's rest after the creation, for the sanctions of the Lord's day."² Dr. Hopkins, of Auburn Theological Seminary, says, "neither Christ nor his apostles, nor the primitive fathers taught that the fourth commandment was of moral and permanent obligation."³ The recently published volume, entitled "Sabbath Essays," of the Massachusetts Sabbath Conventions in one of its articles says: "Paul, I think, we must believe, gave his pagan converts no command to keep the first day of the week as a sabbath of the law. Nor is it put in any such relation, so far as I am aware, by any teacher of the Christian church in the early centuries."⁴ *Reply*: These statements, even though wholly true, are only negatives. Any number of these would fail to equal one positive. These authors do not affirm that the early fathers declared the fourth commandment abolished, yet they lean towards that conclusion. They imply, at least the first two authors imply, that since the fathers did not undertake to found the Christian Sabbath on the fourth commandment, we may not. But that conclusion we think is not warranted. The fathers may not have brought this precise point under their investigation, except a few of them in isolated instances. Their circumstances may not have led them to do so. They may not have known as much on this

¹ Sunday, p. 203.

² Pittsburgh Evangelical Alliance Address.

³ Ibid., pp. 53, 54.

⁴ Sabbath Essays, p. 227.

particular question as we ought to know. The author of the article in "Sabbath Essays" just referred to, wisely says of the fathers: "We are in a better position than were they to see the true relations of the new economy to the old."¹ In consequence of this truth we claim that we may base the observance of the Lord's day on the fourth commandment, though the Christian teachers of the early centuries did not. We expect to show that it would have been unnatural for them to do so, though natural for us.

But some go farther, and say that the fathers taught that the fourth commandment is actually abolished. Dr. Hopkins says: "The universal sentiment of the early Christian church was that the fourth commandment had been abrogated as a law, together with the rest of the Jewish ritual to which it belonged."² From this we dissent, and expect to prove it to be an error. We therefore attempt to show:

The early fathers, in rejecting the seventh-day sabbath of their time did not discard the moral elements of the original Sabbath, nor the septennial proportional positive element, but only the septennial *ordinal* positive time element.³ That is, their question of debate was, whether the seventh day or the first should be kept sacred. Yet, not so much whether the first should be, for that was in general assumed and declared, but whether the seventh was still binding. Now, it were possible for them to have that simple question in mind,— what really pertained to the ordinal time element,— without at the same time discussing whether one tenth part of the decalogue was abolished. They might even, in appealing or referring to the fourth commandment, do so merely to show that it did not require unalterable observance of the seventh day; that God was not inconsistent with himself in causing the seventh day to be set aside and the first to be kept; that the sacredness of the seventh day was not such that it could not be cancelled. They might discuss that question without discussing whether the whole fourth

¹ Sabbath Essays, p. 230.

² Pittsburgh Address.

³ See Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. pp. 164, 430, 431, 434, 435.

commandment in its entire length and breadth were abrogated; and that we claim was the phase of the discussion. Had they contended that the fourth commandment was abolished they would have had far more opposition than they did, and the discussions preserved to us, and even the mere allusions to the subject would show it. The Christians of that age, holding to the sacredness of the Old Testament as they did, could not have maintained themselves against the Jews and Judaizing Christians if they had been understood to hold and teach that one tenth part of the decalogue was stricken out.

But many of the allusions to this subject by the early fathers occur in their addresses to pagan rulers and philosophers, in which they speak of the Christian custom and rule of keeping Sunday as the Lord's day. And in all that was said to *them* there was no occasion to involve more than the ordinal time element. They had with the pagans no reason to go farther back for their authority than to the apostles and Christ. And that same authority, so near at hand, and so thoroughly accepted by even all Judaizing Christians, was their all-sufficient appeal. Jesus had risen from the dead; thenceforth the day was sacred; that was enough; there was no occasion in their minds to get authority from the decalogue. Hence, their references to the fourth commandment were in rebutting objections, and were generally or always to this point—the obligation to keep the seventh day can be remitted. And that simple question touches only the *ordinal* time element, and does not involve the question whether what God gave as his law on Mount Sinai, written in tables of stone, were in one tenth part effaced. With us it is quite different. The early fathers looked back only a few years for their authority. One or more of them had touched the hands of an apostle; with others there was only one between themselves and him. But we at the best must look back nearly two thousand years. Looking thus more than half way to Sinai, our minds inevitably demand that we look to Sinai itself. Having no visible personal

authority, as the earlier of the fathers had, nor any with only one or two generations between them and it, as others of the fathers had, and being obliged to rest on written testimony and authority, we necessarily demand all that can be had. And therefore Christians of this day summon not only Christ's resurrection and the apostles' teaching and example, but they instinctively demand also Sinai's law. Besides, they cannot bear to admit that the moral law given by Jehovah, in any of its elements wherever found, is abolished. Times and seasons and dispensations may change, but the intuitive feeling is, that a moral truth or law is never repealed. These things we say, not to be accepted without proofs, but as preparatory to a right understanding of the fathers on the question whether in discarding the seventh day they discarded also the fourth commandment.

It was assumed by all of the early Christians, that their first or Lord's day was to come as often as the seventh day had. In effect they assumed that the septennial *proportional* time element was to remain. This came by intuitive deductions and divine assumptions, and therefore was not debated. They also assumed that their sacred day was to be devoted to sacred, or devotional and sacred, commemorative purposes. The modern view of some, that keeping every day alike (Rom. xiv. 5) involved no special observance of the Lord's day not only had no favor, but seems to have had scarcely a thought from the fathers. The more reliable commentators, as Ellicott,¹ Meyer,² Lightfoot,³ agree that the Pauline reference in Romans, to which we have just referred, pertains only to Judaistic ceremonial days. And since the fathers, as far back as the apostolic era, as we have shown,⁴ undividedly agree as to the observance of the Lord's day, they could have had no sympathy with the thought of keeping no day at all, or all days the same.

¹ Com. Gal. iv. 10 (Am. ed.).

² Com. Gal. iv. 10, and his reference to Origen.

⁴ Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. xxxvii. pp. 662-679.

³ Com. Rom. xiv. 5.

No adequate conception of this subject can be obtained without a view of the seventh-day Sabbath as it was generally regarded and observed by the Jews in the patristic era. Jesus made various corrections of abuses of the Sabbath, but we are not to understand that those reforms widely prevailed among the Jewish people of that age, or that the Christians, even, so far adopted them as to have all their false notions and practices immediately corrected.

The Rabbinical doctors still taught, and the people still believed, the strangest absurdities respecting Sabbath desecration. The Rabbins enumerated thirty-nine principal prohibited works, each having its long list of secondary or subordinate works, performing any one of which was a violation of the Sabbath. The principal were such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, healing, hunting, bearing burdens, etc. Hence, teachers and people in general still believed it unlawful to heal a sick man (John v. 16) or to lose a crippled woman from her bonds (Luke xiii. 14) on the Sabbath; unlawful for the healed one to carry a light cushion on which he had been resting, as he went to his home (John v. 10); unlawful on the Sabbath to pick a head of wheat and shell it in the hand to appease hunger, for that would be both reaping and threshing; unlawful to walk on the grass, for the bruising of the tender leaves would be a kind of grinding;¹ unlawful to wear shoes with nails in them, for that would be bearing a burden, and so be a violation, they said, of the divine precept in Neh. xiii. 19; unlawful to carry *any* burden, except upon *both* shoulders instead of upon one, the former rendering the task so light that it would not really be a burden; unlawful to carry water to any animal, for that would be bearing a burden, though *lawful* to fill a trough with water and lead the animal to watering (Luke xiii. 15), for then the animal would carry the water; unlawful to put an ointment or plaster on a diseased eye for the purpose of healing it, though allowable to do it to allay the pain; unlawful, as the Essenes held, to remove a dish or any vessel out

¹ Jennings Jewish Antiquities, Vol. ii. p. 157.

of its place ;¹ or, as one class of Samaritans held, to remove one's self on the seventh day from the place or posture in which sunset found him on the sixth day.²

Other superstitious notions were subsequently added, some of them in the time of the fathers ; as, an animal fallen into a ditch should not be removed on the Sabbath, though some nourishment might be thrown to it ; no one might whistle a tune or play on an instrument ; no Jew might milk his kine on the Sabbath day, but might get another to do it, and then purchase the milk ; the lame might use a staff on the Sabbath, but the blind might not ; no one might carry money in his purse or pocket ; no one should knock at a door with a ring or hammer ; no one might walk through a stream on stilts, for he would carry the stilts ; a tailor must not go out on Friday afternoon with his needle fastened to his raiment, lest he forget it and carry that burden on the Sabbath ; a cock must not have a ribbon on its leg, for that would be carrying a burden ; a physician must not be sent for on the Sabbath ; one suffering from rheumatism must not have the afflicted part rubbed or fomented, for that would be labor ; no one must wear a false tooth, for that might necessitate labor ;³ no one catch a flea while it hopped about, for that would be a kind of hunting ; and still other strictures were put upon the Sabbath-life, too trivial or too offensive to mention.

Such was the Sabbath known to both Jews and Christian converts from Judaism in the early Christian era ; such the Pharisaic Jews insisted should be observed, and the Judaizing Christians complained of their Christian brethren if they did not observe it. In these circumstances it were preposterous to suppose that the Jewish Sabbath, as known to the

¹ Heylins's Hist. Sab. Part i. chap. 8. sec. 2.

² Smith's Bible Dict., p. 2759 ; also, Farrar's Life of Christ, Vol. i. p. 432.

³ Respecting "a false tooth and a tooth of gold," there were two rulings given in a passage relating to women ; one by a Rabbi *allowing* a person to wear such tooth ; the other made by his superiors, — the wise men, — *forbidding* a woman to wear it on going out of her house on the Sabbath, because there would be a possibility of its falling out of her mouth ; in which case she would be obliged to resort to *labor* in order to restore it. — Mishna, Sabbath, chap. vi. 5, Rev. Selah Merrill, D.D.

fathers in the early Christian era was identical with that of the fourth commandment. It was rather like the 'Sabbaths which God could not away with' in the prophet's time (Isa. i. 13); it was the Jewish *positive*, and did not contain the moral and holy elements which the Lord placed in the Sabbath of the decalogue. In such associations even the *name* "Sabbath" had lost much of the sweetness it was originally designed always to have. The early Christians turned with pleasure to the new name, and new institution in part, the Lord's day. The existing Jewish Sabbath had become a reproach; and after Christ and his apostles had given such significance to the first day, it were easy for earnest and simple believers to transfer to it their affections for the one sacred day. Especially so, when the current of their thoughts and feelings was turning from types to the antitype, and the Jews and Judaizing nominal Christians were more or less absorbed, and wished to absorb others, with the mere outward and ceremonial of the Sabbath, and of other Jewish institutions. The fathers did not stop to philosophize on what they did, in some respects they knew not what they did; yet, emphatically, it was not the Sabbath as an institution that they fully rejected, but the Sabbath as an ordinal day, the Jewish seventh-day.

Though the fathers did not attempt to philosophize on this subject, there was a philosophy in their conduct. They engaged in the practical question of protecting the churches against Judaism, against the efforts of some to impose on the Christian conscience Rabbinic superstitions, and Judaic institutions that had accomplished their end and passed away. The chief of these were sacrifice, circumcision, Judaic feasts, and the Jewish Sabbath of that time. But neither apostles nor fathers said aught against these until for animal sacrifice was substituted the blood of Christ; for circumcision of the flesh that of the heart, and for baptism in respect to the seal of the covenant; for the Passover feast, the Lord's supper, and for the Jewish or seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's day. The apostolic and patristic aim was to bring Christians

away from the old to the new. Clearly, they were only Jewish institutions which they sought to displace. If there are other sabbatic elements than the merely Jewish — and we have seen that there are¹ — of those the fathers did not treat. All principles and institutions that are *common to man* they left untouched. They opposed sabbatizing only as they opposed Judaizing. Their testimony bears at this day only against Saturday sabbatarianism, not against the Lord's-day Sabbath. Even Robertson, who says that Paul declared the Sabbath "abrogated,"² says also of the apostle Paul's teaching: "To urge the observance of the Sabbath as indispensable to salvation, was, according to him, to Judaize; 'to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherewith they desired to be in bondage.'"³ Of course the Christian fathers rejected *such* observance of the seventh-day Sabbath; but in that rejection they did *not* embrace the rejection of the whole fourth commandment. We must examine in detail.

One writer, to sustain his theory of "the emancipation of Christians from the fourth commandment as a law,"⁴ refers to Barnabas. This is the passage from which he quotes: "Furthermore, he saith unto them, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot away with.' Look ye how he saith, 'Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable unto me, but the Sabbath which I have made, in the which, when I have finished all things, I will make the beginning of the eighth day, which is the beginning of the new world.' Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day unto gladness, in the which Jesus also rose from the dead, and, after that he had been manifested, ascended into the heavens."⁵ One inference drawn from this by Prof. Hopkins is, — "That as an outward ceremonial observance God rejected it" [the Sabbath].

¹ Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. pp. 154-173; 437-439.

² Sermons (Second Series), pp. 201, 202, 209; also (First Series), pp. 116, 118.

³ Ibid. (Second Series), p. 204.

⁴ Prof. S. M. Hopkins, Pittsbrugh Alliance Address.

⁵ Apostolic Fathers (Jackson and Fisher's ed.), p. 97; see also, Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. i. p. 128.

Reply: 1. He did reject the mere formal Sabbath in Isaiah's time (Isa. i. 13). 2. The argument of Barnabas is to the point, that God rejected the formal Jewish Sabbaths in his own time. What he says makes no decision on the true Sabbath of the fourth commandment, except by implication that the seventh day was not to be kept by Christians.

Another inference made is, "That even under the Old Testament it [the Sabbath] was to be kept holy chiefly as a symbol of future good." *Reply*: 1. The Lord's day taking substantially the place of the Sabbath, might also be a symbol of future good, even of the heavenly rest. 2. Barnabas seems to have a conception that the Lord's day, "the eighth day," is a kind of Sabbath. He says: "But the Sabbath which I have made," as Jackson and Fisher translate. Although the word "Sabbath" is not expressed in the original, it seems clearly to be implied, and to have some relation to the "eighth day," as though that took the place of the Sabbath in the new dispensation. A third inference by Prof. Hopkins is, — Barnabas teaches that the import of the Sabbath of the old dispensation "was realized in the blessings of the gospel." *Reply*: Not realized without one sacred day in seven; "Wherefore also we keep the eighth day." From all this we conclude, that since the formal Sabbaths of Isaiah's time did not emancipate the Jews from the real Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the Jewish Sabbath of Barnabas's time did not emancipate Christians from that command, except from the observance of the seventh day. All other principles in that command stand unchanged. The direction concerning the "six days" is untouched. The observance of a proportional seventh part of time is unaffected, because that is had in the keeping of the "eighth day." The element of "convocation" remains, for Justin Martyr particularly tells us of the public services held by Christians on "Sunday." The date of Barnabas's epistle is conceded by late and able editors to have been within the first quarter of the second century.¹ The writer must have been living when

¹ Apostolic Fathers (Jackson and Fisher's ed.), p. 88.

the apostle John died. His conception of the Jewish Sabbath of that time probably accorded with the one then current among Christians. Therefore, his view is initial and representative, and as a key it may assist in understanding others of the fathers.

Another writer has recently cited Ignatius in favor of the view that the fourth commandment was "limited as a statute" to the old dispensation; is "no longer literally binding," "no longer formally prescriptive," "not for us an outward ordinance." Yet, he does not go as far as some. He holds that the fourth commandment is "a revelation to us of a creative counsel and purpose of God in which we have a part as well as the chosen people," that it "suggests universal maxims," "is still directory," "discloses permanent and authoritative principles, to be conscientiously applied as principles."¹ Reply: 1. We think there is an inconsistency in saying that the fourth commandment was "limited as a statute" "to the old dispensation," and "is still directory" under the new. For whatever is divinely directory, is it not substantially a statute? There is also an inconsistency in saying that that command is "no longer literally binding," and yet has, or "discloses, permanent and authoritative principles, to be conscientiously applied." Where are the principles to be thus applied, except in itself? And are not those principles moral elements? And if to be conscientiously applied, are they not "literally binding"?

The passage which he quotes from Ignatius is this: "Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to Jewish law we acknowledge that we have not received grace; for the divinest prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. . . . If, then, they who were conversant with ancient things came to newness of hope, no longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord's [day], on which also our life sprang up by him and his death, how can we live without him? Therefore, having become his disciples, let us learn to

¹ Sabbath Essays, pp. 235, 236.

live according to Christianity. For Christianity did not believe into Judaism, but Judaism into Christianity.”¹ *Reply*: 1. The part bearing distinctly on our subject is this phrase: “No longer sabbatizing.” It was the Jewish sabbatizing of that age; for that it was which Ignatius opposed. That sabbatizing did not involve the whole of the fourth commandment. It was simply the keeping of the seventh day after the Jewish manner of that time. The two were not the same any more than a vitiated part is the whole of a genuine and pure thing. Therefore the passage, we think, does not teach anything detrimental to the fourth commandment, except that the seventh day is not to be kept now that we are to live “according to the Lord’s day.” 2. Ignatius opposes the keeping of the Lord’s day to the keeping of the seventh day: “No longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord’s [day].” That fact emphatically suggests that the first day takes the place of the seventh. And as the Jewish vitiated seventh day of that time did not absorb the whole of the fourth commandment, — far from it, — the Lord’s day must and does fall into the place left vacant by the apostolic striking out of the ordinal seventh part.

The same author in “Sabbath Essays,” cites Justin Martyr, and says that he “nowhere alludes to the Lord’s day as a fulfilment of the Sabbath.”² *Reply*: 1. It was not a fulfilment of the original Sabbath in all respects. It had not the same ordinal time, nor the Jewish ceremonial observances which in the Jewish economy were added after the decalogue was given. But, 2. The question is not what Justin did not teach, but what he did teach. Did he teach that the fourth commandment is made void, as some say, or made void except as to “principles,” as this author believes? He taught neither; unless the “principles,” which are not revoked, embrace all but the ordinal seventh-day part. He did teach that the seventh day was no longer binding, and that the first day was. He did not analyze the elements as we now may;

¹ Sabbath Essays, pp. 227, 228; Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. i. pp. 179, 180, 181, 182, 183.

² Sabbath Essays, p. 228.

but what he actually did was, — he taught that the seventh day which the Jews held that the Christians, and all, ought to keep was no longer in force, as it was under the old dispensation. This he might teach without saying or holding that the fourth commandment was revoked, or revoked except some “principles.” What we wish to know is, whether in this day we may appeal to the fourth commandment. We fail to see that Justin taught that we cannot.

8. Consider how Justin approached Christianity and biblical truth. His father and grandfather seem to have been Romans.¹ In customs he seems to have been a Greek.² He evidently had no early instructions in the Scriptures. He studied various philosophies, found them unsatisfactory, learned of Christ and the prophecies concerning him, and there found rest,³ without coming into the Christian faith as we now generally do through the moral law. As a philosopher he begins to preach Christ. His most vigorous and learned opponents are Jews, and questions about the law he gets from them. He encounters Trypho, either in fact or in imagination, and debates with him. At the outset, Trypho, counselling him, begins thus: “If, then, you are willing to listen to me, first be circumcised, then observe what ordinances have been enacted with respect to the Sabbath, and the feasts, and the new moons of God; and, in a word, do all things which have been written in the law; and then perhaps you shall obtain mercy from “God.”⁴ What Sabbath did Trypho mean? Plainly, that which the unbelieving Jews then kept, and the Christians did not consider themselves bound to keep. Did Justin have any conception of it as the equivalent of the fourth commandment? It were violence to suppose it. See another jutting of evidence that it was the Jewish ceremonial day. Justin says to Trypho, “think it not strange that we drink hot water on the Sabbath,”⁵ indicating that the Christians did not regard the ritual law for-

¹ Address of First Apology; Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. p. 7.

² Discourse to Greeks; Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. p. 279.

³ Dialogue with Trypho; Ibid., p. 96.

⁴ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. p. 97.

⁵ Ibid., p. 123.

bidding fires on the Sabbath, as still binding. The Sabbath that Justin has in mind all through this discussion is that which the Jews would impose upon him. And that was no more the real Sabbath of the command than that formal and false one of apostate Jews in Isaiah's day.

And what was the law which Trypho had in mind in the foregoing passage? Clearly it was the ritual law: "Observe what ordinances have been enacted with respect to the Sabbath, and the feasts, and the new moons." If he had in mind the fourth commandment at all, it was the seventh-day part of it, which the Christians regarded as set aside, or which as Paul said should with each one be optional (Col. ii. 16). As the apostle joined feasts and new moons and Sabbaths in the same list, so repeatedly did Trypho and Justin,¹ and with like meaning, that of rites and ceremonies, and not of the decalogue. The only blame which Trypho casts upon the Christians is, as Justin says: "That we do not live after the law, and are not circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers were, and do not observe Sabbaths as you do."² And Trypho puts the same in this form: "And do not alter your mode of living from the nations, in that you observe no festivals or Sabbaths, and do not have the rite of circumcision; and further, resting your hopes on a man that was crucified, you yet expect to obtain some good thing from God, while you do not obey his commandments. Have you not read that that soul shall be cut off from his people who shall not have been circumcised on the eighth day?"³ By both Justin's and Trypho's representations, living "after the law" was being circumcised, keeping feasts, and keeping Sabbaths; and that, according to Trypho, was obeying God's "commandments." It was indeed true with the Jews of that day, in practice and widely in theory, that obeying the law was observing rites and ceremonies, and not the ten commandments. "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law" (Matt. xxiii. 23). Trypho, referring to circumcision on the eighth day,

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. pp. 97, 99, 109, 115. ² Ibid., p. 98. ³ Ibid., p. 99.

continues: "But you, despising this covenant, rashly reject the consequent duties," the duties implied by the covenant of circumcision. Continuing in this strain, he adds: "you do not observe the law," by which he means the ritual law. In the next chapter Justin replies, and sets forth the "new covenant," which takes the place of the old one, and quotes from Jeremiah (xxxi. 31, 32) the passage which the writer in Hebrews (viii. 8, 9) also quotes, in expounding the Scriptures concerning the covenant of the new dispensation. In the same chapter he speaks of a "final law," which "placed against law has abrogated that which is before it," and he calls Christ "the new law, and the new covenant."¹ The law against which Christ as the "eternal and final law" is placed, is only the ritual and ceremonial; never is he placed against the moral, or anything moral in the ten commandments. Justin says: "The law promulgated on Horeb is now old, and belongs to yourselves alone," by which he means the ritual, and not the moral law; because he afterwards indicates that Christ's summary of the ten commandments was for all, and is still obligatory: "I think that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ spoke well when he summed up all righteousness and piety in two commandments."² When Christ made that summary the fourth commandment stood unchanged; and so it did in Justin's opinion when he wrote, except that he said in substance that the Jewish seventh day was no longer binding. But in his first apology he represents the Sunday services to be full as many and sacred as ever were those of the seventh day; and in his Dialogue with Trypho he shows that the day itself was sacred, because he calls it "the first of all the days."³ He also speaks of it as "the first day after the Sabbath," apparently as though in his mind it in some sense took the place of the Sabbath, or seventh day in the commandment. Condemning the idea of fulfilling the law of God by eating unleavened bread, and of being pious by being idle on the Sabbath,⁴ he speaks of keeping "perpet-

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. p. 100.

² Ibid., p. 217.

³ Ibid., p. 139.

⁴ Ibid., p. 101.

nal Sabbath," and indicates that the office of the real Sabbath was to breathe a sacred influence and induce a genuine holiness that would last through all the week. Then, all sin repented of and put away, there would be "kept the sweet and true Sabbath of God." The new dispensation is not devoid of such a Sabbath, for it is better than the old; and the "perpetual Sabbath," which Justin says "the new law requires" us to keep, is not, as we have seen, destitute of a weekly sacred day.

Referring to Justin's statement that the prophets taught the keeping of Sabbaths as truly as did Moses, the writer in "Sabbath Essays" says: "It is clear that he had no idea that the Sabbath was hallowed in the worship offered by Christians on the Lord's day."¹ *Reply*: He had no idea that the Jewish seventh day and ritual Sabbath was hallowed on the Lord's day. But the fourth commandment has nothing about offering sacrifices, or renewing shewbread, or not building fires on the seventh day. Setting those all aside, and coming to the very spirit of worship and praise and to the keeping of sacred time — whether the seventh day or "the first of all the days," — and what difference is there between the two weekly seasons of hallowed time? Very little, or none. Having the latter now, what do we have but in substance all the moral, and one or more of the positive elements of the fourth commandment?

Dr. Hessey, commenting on Justin Martyr's writings on this theme, says that he "speaks of the whole of a Christian's life being a perpetual Sabbath, speaks also of Sunday being held in especial honor. It is obvious that, as holy Scripture does, he is in the one case spiritualizing the now defunct Jewish law, and in the other mentioning a Christian ordinance on its own independent grounds."² *Reply*: We have shown that when Justin speaks of the Sabbath with reference to law, he speaks of the "defunct" Jewish ritual law, and not of the moral law. Of course, Sunday has "its own independent grounds," in respect to the ordinal time-element, as

¹ *Sabbath Essays*, p. 229.

² *Sunday*, pp. 43, 44.

compared with the seventh-day Sabbath. But that does not imply that they have not both a common substratum of sacred religious purposes, and of proportional time-element, and of connection in the same commandment that gives injunction concerning the other six days of the week.

Dr. Hessey elsewhere has this remark: "No Israelite could observe the fourth commandment independently of its development in the remainder of the books of Moses."¹

Reply: With equal truth he might have added, that we in the Christian dispensation can observe Sunday in all the unaltered elements of the fourth commandment, independently of the ritual additions of any of the laws of Moses, and in accordance with all the new services given to the weekly sacred day in the new era of the church.

Professor Hopkins, in commenting on the name "Sunday," given by Justin to the Christian sacred day, and on the reasons which Justin assigns for observing it, says: "The explicit rejection here not only of the Jewish term 'Sabbath,' but of the reasons on which the law of the Sabbath in the decalogue was founded, are highly significant."²

Reply: 1. Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The Roman name for the first day of the week at that time was "Sunday." Justin in his account of Sunday, on which Professor Hopkins comments, addresses the Roman emperor, and two philosophers, one the son and the other the adopted son of the Roman emperor, and also the Roman senate, "with the whole people of the Romans." In such circumstances it was the most natural for him to use the Roman name, Sunday, for the Christians' sacred weekly day. And that he used the Roman name, we contend, is no good reason for supposing that Justin considered the fourth commandment abrogated. 2. With such controversy between the Jews and the Christians, and so much persecution by the former against the latter, the Christians would be likely to take a new name for their sacred day. 3. The Jewish superstitious and trivial notions respecting the day called the

¹ Sunday, p. 117.

² Pittsburgh Evangelical Alliance Address.

Sabbath, would inevitably tend to the use of another name among Christians for the weekly sacred day. And the use of such name would not necessarily or probably imply that they had set aside the fourth commandment in all its parts. 4. God had given them the name "Lord's day," which was far dearer than the name "Sabbath," and therefore they would not be likely to retain the name "Sabbath." 5. The reason for the Lord's day was Christ's resurrection. And that, so near the event, was reason enough. Subsequently, the fathers attempted to link the Lord's day also to the creation, as a part of its reason. The occasion was sufficient for a new day and a new name, but we fail to see that both together are enough to justify us in the conclusion that one whole command was blotted out; especially when the new day so well adjusts itself to the place once filled by the old — the seventh day. We contend that these writers fail to show that Justin held that the fourth commandment is abrogated, or abrogated in form, while some "principles" are left. He teaches on this point only this: that the seventh-day Sabbath is not binding, and that the first day, or Sunday, is.

Dr. Hessey, referring to Tertullian's testimony concerning the Lord's day, says: "I find in it nothing Sabbatarian."¹ *Reply*: Of course he finds nothing in it of the merely Jewish elements of the Sabbath at that time, but that does not prove that there was nothing of the fourth commandment in the Lord's day. In the Lord's day there were certainly some elements of the fourth commandment, or those so far like them as to make them identical.

Another writer,² concurring with Dr. Hessey, refers to this statement of Tertullian: "The Scriptures designate a Sabbath eternal and a Sabbath temporal."³ The writer infers that the temporal Sabbath was that enjoined in the fourth commandment in every respect. *Reply*: 1. If that were a just inference, then Tertullian's testimony were in effect, not that the *whole* of the fourth commandment is abolished, —

¹ Sunday, p. 46.

² Sabbath Essays, p. 229.

³ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. xviii. p. 211.

for that pertaining to six days would remain, — but that all the elements and parts of the Sabbath of that command were entirely annulled. Does Tertullian refer to the total Sabbath in every aspect of the fourth commandment, in such sense that the Lord's day could not come into the place of the seventh day? Turn to the next page of the same volume: "But the Jews are sure to say, that ever since this precept was given through Moses, the observance has been binding. Manifest accordingly it is, that the precept was not eternal nor spiritual, but temporal, would one day cease. In short, so true is it that it is not in the exemption from work on the Sabbath — that is of the seventh day — that the celebration of this solemnity is to consist, etc."¹ It was, according to Tertullian, merely the "seventh day," the ordinal time-element, of which he spoke. It was that which the Jews said was still "binding," and which Tertullian said was only temporary and not binding; and his whole argument in this connection is to show that there consistently could be the cessation of obligation to keep that day. That there was no special sacredness in the seventh-day time itself to forbid a termination of duty to keep it sacred, he argues from Joshua's march of seven successive days — including the seventh — around Jericho. Other Jewish history he brings to the same point. 2. Tertullian does not say that the fourth commandment is abolished, he does not intimate that we are released from obligation to do our secular work on six days; but, on the contrary, says elsewhere, that we should defer from the Lord's day "even our businesses, lest we give any place to the devil."² That statement is recognizing our obligation still to work six days and rest a seventh, which he claims is the first. 3. Tertullian says that Christians "ought to observe a Sabbath from all 'servile work' always, and not only every seventh day,"³ by which he calls attention to the spiritual significance of all Sabbaths, but does not thereby stultify himself by meaning that Chris-

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. xviii. p. 212.

² Ibid., Vol. xi. p. 199.

³ Ibid., Vol. xviii. p. 211.

tians should not sacredly observe one day in the week. He had said the contrary. 4. His especial care in speaking of the Sabbath, to say that he meant the "seventh day," as we have seen, seems nearly or quite to indicate the thought which was in his mind, that the Lord's day was very much like the original seventh-day Sabbath. 5. Tertullian did make a clear distinction between God's sabbaths and men's sabbaths, and hence he could consistently teach that certain Sabbaths were set aside without implying that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment was annulled. In his argument against Marcion, the heretic, he comments on God's language in Isaiah (i. 13, 14) thus: "Beckoning them as men's Sabbaths, not his own, because they were celebrated without the fear of God by a people full of iniquities."¹ And on the next page he speaks of the "Creator's Sabbaths," thus distinguishing them from the false. Others of the fathers had the same distinction in view. 6. Tertullian betrays an aversion to the use of the word "annul" respecting the true Sabbath. He says: "Good reason had the Lord in the annulling of the Sabbath (since that is the word which men will use)."² He refers to Joshua's continuing his march around Jericho on the Sabbath, and to Christ and his disciples' plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath, and to other acts which to some "seemed to annul the Sabbath," but which Tertullian claimed did not annul it. It would therefore seem that the true Sabbath of God, as embraced in the fourth commandment, he was never accustomed to consider "annulled," but merely "men's Sabbaths," and the "seventh day." His chief concern on this subject was to show that Christians were authorized to keep the Lord's day, and not bound to keep the seventh day.

Dr. Hessey quotes Irenaeus, and finds evidence, he thinks, of the "abolition of the Sabbath;"³ meaning, we suppose, the total abolition of the sabbatic institution of the fourth commandment. *Reply*: 1. We do not find, and Dr. Hessey does not show, that Irenaeus said that the Sabbath of the

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. vii. p. 219.
Vol. XXXVIII. No. 150.

² Ibid., p. 217.
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³ Sunday, p. 44.

fourth commandment is abolished. 2. Irenaeus says expressly that the "words of the decalogue remain permanently with us,"¹ which means that the decalogue is not abolished. Would he not have made exception of the fourth commandment, or of the purely sabbatic part of it, if he considered it in all respects annulled?

Dr. Hessey regards Irenaeus as teaching that the Sabbath was "temporary,"² and quotes as evidence this: "Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of Sabbaths, believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness."³ *Reply*: 1. We are in a better condition than Irenaeus was to judge whether Abraham was without Sabbaths. 2. Irenaeus has in mind the seventh-day Sabbath, which he argues is not now to be observed, but he does not come to the point of saying that all that was meant by the Sabbath in the fourth commandment is utterly abolished. He certainly held to the "Lord's day," the weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection; and concerning that in the testimony of the fathers, as Dr. Hessey says, "no diversity exists."⁴ 3. Irenaeus makes a clear distinction between the "decalogue" and the "laws of bondage,"⁵ and in the laws of bondage he places the Sabbath; and yet says that the decalogue is permanent, and that the laws of bondage—the ritual law—were "cancelled by the new covenant of liberty." Apparently, then, the Sabbath which he has in mind is not the pure one of the fourth commandment, but the ceremonial one of the Jews, which they insisted the Christians ought to keep. It had, indeed, its root in the commandment, but was sadly misshapen and perverted in its growth. Irenaeus and all the fathers could say that that was no longer binding; but not one of them, we think, says that either the fourth commandment or the total sabbatic part of it is abrogated. 4. Irenaeus takes the language of Paul in Col. ii. 16, and ascribing it to all the apostles, says: "The apostles ordained that we should not judge any one in respect to meat or drink,

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. v. p. 424.

² Sunday, p. 44.

³ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. v. pp. 422, 423.

⁴ Sunday, p. 45.

⁵ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. v. p. 425.

or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the Sabbaths."¹ It is certain that by "Sabbaths" he means the seventh day, the day that the Jews contended all ought to keep. Tertullian also quotes Col. ii. 16, with the same interpretation,² and teaches that the law "has been abolished"; but informs us that he refers to the "figurative types" of Christ, the ceremonial law. Yet he denies to Marcion his claim that there is any "breach of peace between the gospel and the law."³ He also in one instance, we have seen,⁴ explains that by the word "Sabbath" he means "seventh day." These two, Irenaeus and Tertullian, are among the most noted and reliable of the Fathers. Their interpretation of the passage in Colossians agrees with that we have heretofore given;⁵ and since they are so united and positive, that must have been the current view in the primitive era, and it utterly disallows seventh-day sabbatarianism. On the other hand, since by "Sabbath" they mean the seventh day merely, which the Jews kept in distinction from the Christian keeping of the first day, their view gives no sanction to the theory that the setting aside of the seventh day cancels the whole fourth commandment, or the whole sabbatic part of it. They by no means would give so much credit to the Jewish seventh day as to confess that dropping it was dropping one tenth part of the decalogue.

The writer in "Sabbath Essays" appeals to the fathers "as witnesses that the early church betrays no consciousness of a legal institution of the Lord's day by the apostles."⁶ *Reply*: 1. The apostles and early Christians did not regard their new law of love, or any part of it, as cold legalism. They had too much pleasure in keeping their "first of all the days"⁷ to look at it with the eye of mere legality. 2. Yet, we claim to have shown that they regarded it as one of their most serious obligations, as well as privileges, to observe "Sunday," or the "Lord's day."⁸ They traced that day to

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ix. p. 177. ² Ibid., Vol. vii. p. 473. ³ Ibid., p. 35.

⁴ See Vol. xxxviii. p. 272 of this Article. ⁵ Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. pp. 424-429

⁶ Page 230.

⁷ Justin Martyr; Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. ii. p. 139.

⁸ Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. pp. 662-677.

the apostles for its authority,¹ just as truly as Israel of old traced the seventh day observance to Sinai. Its establishment had with them the force of law.

The same author in "Sabbath Essays" says again: "I cannot but think it impossible that they [the apostles] should have appointed the Lord's day as a continuation of, or literal substitute for, the sabbath of the commandment, and the early churches have remained in ignorance of the fact, and the early fathers have written as they did."² *Reply*: 1. None claim that the Lord's day is "a continuation of, or literal substitute for the sabbath of the commandment." It is another day, and has another commemoration, and some other services. It has none of the peculiarly Jewish ceremonial services, which are not named in the command, but were added after it was given. 2. We think we have shown in a previous Article, that under apostolic direction a change of observance was made from the seventh to the first day of the week, the latter day taking its place in the weekly cycle as the former died, and having other elements of the fourth commandment. We think also, that thus far we find no testimony in the writings of the early fathers which presupposes or teaches that the fourth commandment is abolished, or even the whole sabbatic part of it. Hence, since the fourth commandment in a sense, or to some extent, still stands, while one sacred day in the week has been abrogated and another instituted, it is proper to suppose and say that the latter day has in substance, though not in full form, taken the place of the former, and it is both proper and obligatory to appeal to the fourth commandment as still binding, the modification of it being only in the ordinal time element. We are cut off from permission to dismiss the fourth commandment by various facts; among others by the one that the Lord's day pertains to the very week, so constantly recurring, which the original fourth commandment so strictly designated and adjusted. If the Lord's day did not at all touch the week so solemnly appointed and constituted by the decalogue, then

¹ Epiphanius; *Bib. Sac.*, Vol. xxxvii. p. 674; also Irenaeus, *Ibid.*, p. 667.

² Page 230.

we might say that it is wholly a new institution, and not a part of the old one. The moment we step on the threshold of the first day of the week, we tread on the ground which had the legislation of Sinai's fiat. And it is singularly felicitous that the *language* of the fourth commandment needs no change to suit it to the new circumstances. We have simply to understand the word "seventh" in the proportional, and not in both the proportional and ordinal sense. And the abrogation of the sacredness of the seventh day while another day in the week is made sacred, is a very different thing from the abrogation of the whole command, or of all in it that pertains to sacred time.

Victorinus, opposing the doctrine that the Jewish seventh day should be kept, said it was abolished; but he did not have in mind all septenary sacred time, for he advocated keeping the Lord's day,¹ in which he embraced like moral elements with those of the Sabbath. The non-Sabbath advocates, to sustain their views, have to assume that the Jewish seventh day under the new dispensation, is the same as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment under the old dispensation. We do not find that they have proved this assumption. When they do prove it they will have also in substance shown that the Jewish Sabbaths which in Isaiah's time the Lord could not endure, were like that Sabbath which he commanded at Sinai. The fact that the Fathers called the Jewish seventh day of their time the "Sabbath," does not settle the question. Did they embrace by that title then the Sabbath institution of at least fifteen hundred previous years? If they did, it seems strange they did not say it. We shall see they said something to the contrary. Even if they thought the outlawed Jewish Sabbath of their own time, were the Sinaitic Sabbath, did Jehovah know they were right?

Dr. Hopkins cites the Apostolical Constitutions—a work of uncertain date and author, though probably of not later date than the close of the fourth century—to sustain his view that Christians are emancipated from the fourth com-

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. xviii. p. 390.

mandment as a law, and he quotes thus: ¹ "He who formerly commanded to keep the Sabbath by resting thereon for the sake of meditating on his laws, has now commanded us to consider the work of creation and providence every day, and to return thanks to God."² *Reply*: 1. The foregoing language does not say that the fourth commandment is abolished. The author of it is speaking of modifications or enlargements of divine laws under the Christian dispensation. 'He who forbade murder now forbids causeless anger. He who forbade adultery now forbids unlawful lust. He who forbade revenge now commands long-suffering. So he who appointed religious reflections on one day now requires them on all days.' Thus the influence of even the seventh-day Sabbath is brought down to us. Yet this writer, like some others in the Eastern church, enjoined some observance of the seventh day, as well as of the first; ³ of the seventh particularly as a fast-day once a year, on the anniversary of Christ's lying in the grave.⁴ He has in mind the command merely in its seventh-day aspect. 2. This patristical author, treating of the law, says: "The law is the decalogue, which the Lord proclaimed to them with an audible voice. And the law is righteous, and therefore it is called law, because judgments are thence made according to the law of nature."⁵ "And he that was the Lawgiver became himself the fulfilling of the law; not taking away the law of nature, but abrogating those additional laws that were afterwards introduced, although not all of them neither."⁶ The next paragraph takes up various laws of the decalogue, apparently assuming that they were laws of nature, and in that paragraph is the passage quoted by Dr. Hopkins. Also in it the writer says, that the Lawgiver "abrogated circumcision, when he had himself fulfilled it." He does not say that he "abrogated" the fourth commandment, or any other of the decalogue. His thought evidently

¹ Pittsburgh Address.

² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ *Ant. Nic. Lib.*, Vol. xvii. p. 168.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 186.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 167, 168.

is, that the seventh day — which was the form of Sabbath known in the command — had received an amplification of its teaching to men, and an “abrogating of those additional laws that were afterwards introduced.” 3. It cannot be that this patristical author held that the fourth commandment, or even the sabbatic part of it, is really abrogated; because, as we have stated, he enjoined religious services and a fast on that day. He implied the continued existence of the Sabbath to an extent, and therefore did not hold that it was abolished. Yet he did not allow that day to come into competition with the Lord’s day. In the same short section on feast-days and fast-days, he speaks of the Lord’s day seven different times by that name, and repeatedly elsewhere. On that day he enjoins holding “solemn assemblies” and giving thanks and offering praise and being joyful without fasting,¹ and, while enjoining the celebration of Christ’s resurrection on the Lord’s day, he cautions against doing it “on any other day than a Sunday.”² 4. This author of the Apostolical Constitutions speaks four times, at least, of the “law” or “laws of nature”; twice affirming that they are not taken away, and twice implying it.³ In a fifth instance, referring to the same, he says: “He [the Lord] did not therefore take away the law from us, but the bonds.”⁴ That sentence is a key to the writer’s thought. The pure “law” was not taken away; the “bonds” were. In the bonds he included “those additional laws that were afterwards introduced,” and the seventh-day Sabbath doubtless more or less; yet not wholly, for he would still have it to some extent observed. He therefore could not have meant that the fourth commandment was wholly swept away. He must have regarded it in some sense as still a “law of nature,” and hence permanent. By “law of nature” he doubtless meant moral law. The laws of nature include all moral laws, but moral laws do not include all laws of nature; for example, none of the material laws. He must have been

¹ Ant. Nic. Lib., Vol. xvii. pp. 143, 166, 189.

² Ibid., pp. 163, 167, 168, 170.

³ Ibid., pp. 138, 186.

⁴ Ibid., p. 169.

ready to assent to this, — that the fourth commandment has some moral laws, or laws of nature. Those the Lord did “not take away.” Nearly all writers on this subject, in all ages, have claimed or confessed that there are moral elements in the fourth commandment. Dr. Richard Hooker, nearly three centuries ago, gave language relative to natural or moral laws, which has guided the thinking of many, and obtained the consent of all: “Even nature has taught the heathens first, that festival solemnities are a part of the exercise of religion; secondly, that praise, liberality, and rest are as natural elements whereof solemnities consist.”¹ The fourth commandment having those elements, and being apparently so recognized by the author of “Apostolical Constitutions,” and he having said that such laws or elements are not taken away, it will not be right for us to say that he held that the fourth command is abrogated, unless we trace such a sentiment to his pen. This we cannot do. Therefore we must conclude that that one of the Fathers, whoever he may have been, said nothing to justify the theory that Christians “are emancipated from the fourth commandment as a law.” Christians should accept the command with such changes as they find have been divinely made.

Another writer has said this: “The enforcement of a positive commandment like the fourth would have been an impossibility in the early propagation of such a religion. It would have been necessary to interpret the statutes in such subordination to the higher law of mercy as practically to have suspended its operation.”² *Reply*: 1. Whatever religious service the early Christians rendered, they gave from love, not compulsion. No doubt they faithfully observed the seventh day until the revelation came that its obligation was revoked. Even after that many of them attended its services. They had nothing of the modern spirit which begs off from as many religious services as possible. Neglecting to assemble together was left to the perverts, and other false

¹ Works, v. 70. 5; also Dr. Hessey on Sunday, p. 100.

² Sabbath Essays, p. 231.

professors. The complete transition from the seventh day to the first could not have been suddenly made. 2. But, when it came to be understood that the Lord's day was sacred, which must have been early, and as soon as it received that name, the reasons indicate that it was conscientiously observed. It is certain, as we have seen in a previous Article, that the apostles by precept and example taught its sacred character. The name of their "Lord" given to it was a guarantee for that. It being a sacred, religious day, the customs of the times required that it as a whole be to some extent at least sacredly observed. It certainly soon became the most sacred of all their days. The Christians would, then, so far as they could, keep it as sacredly as they had thought their most sacred days should be kept. They would therefore soon naturally refrain not only from all servile work, as on Jewish feast-days, but from all work, as on the Sabbath and day of atonement. Yet the Pharisaic superstitions respecting the Sabbath they would reject. Stillingfleet, about two centuries ago, said: "As an evidence of the solemnity of the times for worship, the Romans as well as other nations had their several *feriae*, their days set apart for the honor of their gods. If any work were done upon those days of rest, the day was polluted. By which we see as from the light of nature, that what days and times, whether weekly, monthly, or anniversary, were designed and appointed as *dies festi*, for the service of God, were to be set apart wholly in order to that end, and not to give some part to God and to take others to themselves."¹ We see no reason for believing that the early Christians only half kept the "Lord's day." Where Tertullian speaks of deferring business on the Lord's day,² we do not understand it as the inculcation of a new rule, but a prompting to vigilance in keeping an old one. The citation from Jerome by Dr. Hesse, which we have heretofore considered,³ respecting the

¹ Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Book i. chap. v. sect. 4 (London ed.), pp. 216, 217.

² *Ant. Nic. Lib.*, Vol. xi. p. 199.

³ *Bib. Sac.*, Vol. xxxvii. pp. 385, 386.

making of garments on Sunday in his time and locality, is sufficiently replied to by saying, that there is no evidence that it was common, or that it was done except in stress of circumstances for the poor, the sick, and the enslaved. The fact that Tertullian, nearly two centuries earlier, laid down the principle that Christians should be careful to defer all of their secular "businesses,"— which probably implied strictness much more to defer all secular *labor* from Sunday, according to Jewish customs,— forbids inferring even a partial secularization of the Lord's day in Jerome's time, unless there had been a falling away.

The same writer says again : " Moreover — and the fact I am about to state is very significant — the apostolic epistles and the early Christian literature bring to light many a question of practical duty about which the Christian mind of those days was more or less perplexed ; but there is no trace of such discussions as must inevitably have arisen had the law of abstinence from labor on the Lord's day for master and slave, and ox and ass, been regarded as obligatory upon Christians in the same way that it had been upon the Jews."¹

Reply : 1. Mark, that the Jewish sabbath laws which were superadded to the fourth commandment the Christians did by no means undertake to apply to the Lord's day. 2. Various elements of worship, rest, convocation, inhering in that command, they did embrace in their observance of the Lord's day. 3. The fact that Constantine and other emperors who ruled in favor of the Christians, did make laws emancipating them from secular sabbath employments, shows that the Christian mind of that age really demanded release from secularities on that day long before the laws were made. The emperors followed Christian sentiment, and did not create it. Constantine enacted that all suits and courts of justice should be suspended on Sunday, except to emancipate slaves. He also forbade all military exercises on that day, and gave the privilege of attending church to all Christian soldiers ;² and these things before his real conversion,

¹ Sabbath Essays, p. 231.

² Neander's Church History (American ed. 1852), Vol. ii. pp. 26, 300.

if he was converted at all, which fact indicates that he acted from public Christian opinion, and not from personal choice. The joint edict of Constantine and Licinius in behalf of religious freedom — which freedom is usually thought to be the product of modern civilization alone, — made A.D. 313, ran thus: "That each one, and the Christians among the rest, have the liberty to observe the religion of his choice, and his peculiar mode of worship."¹ This implies previous religious oppression toward the Christians; and consequently, that they often could not do as they would. The same restraint is doubtless alluded to in the twenty-ninth canon of the Council of Laodicea, in which it was declared that on the Lord's day "all Christians should abstain from their worldly business *if they were able.*"² This implies that abstinence from worldly business on Sunday was the desire, and the usual custom, of Christians in that age, if left to their choice. So it was, it would seem in Tertullian's time, which was half way back to the apostle John's day. 4. Now, where did this custom of sacredly keeping the Lord's day begin, if not in the beginning; during, at least, the apostolic era? We find the Lord's day most sacredly cherished through all the centuries back to the apostles; none of the fathers speaking more tenderly and reverently of it than did Ignatius, contemporary of the apostle John, and second bishop of the church at Antioch after the apostle Peter.³ At some time subsequent to him we know that the early Christians customarily refrained from business and labor on the Lord's day, and who can show that that sacred observance did not begin as soon as the day became sacred. We trace its sacredness in Christian esteem to the apostles. Who can show that its observance did not begin with them, and uninterruptedly continue, except as necessity made some breach upon the custom? We do find many traces of "discussions" about

¹ Eusebius, Bohn's Eccl. Lib., p. 406; Neander's Church History (ed. 1852), Vol. ii. p. 13.

² Bib. Sac., Vol. xxxvii. p. 676; Neander's Church History (ed. 1852), Vol. ii. p. 300.

³ Eusebius, Bohn's Eccl. Lib., p. 93.

keeping the seventh day ; but such " discussions " would naturally not exist in respect to the Lord's day among those who kept or observed it ; as so early fathers as Ignatius and Barnabas testify that the Christians of their time did. None but Christians were interested in the question of keeping that day. Universal agreement would prevent controversy among them. Universal custom required the sincere observance of all sacred days so far as practicable. Hence, few or no " discussions " on the question of keeping the Lord's day.

We have now examined all of the patristical passages adduced by three noted and able writers to show the abrogation of the fourth commandment, or its abrogation except some of its " principles." We do not recall, indeed, any publication besides theirs which discusses this specific subject beyond a mere notice of it. What do we find ?

1. These three authors fail to bring forward a single passage from the fathers which declares or indicates the belief of even one of them that the fourth commandment is abolished. No passage which they have cited refers at all to that part of the command which enjoins labor during six days of the week. We must infer that there is no patristical evidence in existence which shows or claims that the fourth commandment is wholly revoked.

2. Some of the passages which they cite do claim or indicate a partial abrogation of the fourth command, and men are now left to decide how large a part.

3. There are only two possible interpretations as to the part abolished ; one being the whole sabbatic part, and the other the ordinal seventh-day part.

4. We are bound to suppose that it is the least part, if that satisfies or exhausts the language respecting it.

5. The least part does exhaust the meaning of the language, for several reasons. (1) It was that part which was almost the whole theme of discussion between the Christians and the Jews respecting the Sabbath question. (2) It was almost the sole object of the Christians on this point, to have the Lord's day kept, and the seventh day not kept in any

sense as its rival. (3) In the nature of the case the Christian mind of that age would be satisfied to have the first day observed, and a release given from obligation to observe the seventh day. (4) After satisfying the Christian demand then, certain moral elements of the original Sabbath would remain. (5) Much of the patristic language concerning the Sabbath refers simply to the false Sabbaths observed by the Jews, and not to the "Creator's Sabbaths." (6) The patristic language which refers to the sabbatic part of the fourth commandment does not declare, assume, or imply that that part is totally annulled, not seeming to be directed to that precise point; just as it does not teach that the command itself is annulled. But (7) that language is devoted to two thoughts: first, that the seventh day, which was the Sabbath pointed out in that command, still subserves valuable ends, as the typifying of rest and of holiness, and hence is not utterly abolished; and, secondly, that the seventh day no longer held its regal place among all days, since the Lord's day had been given to Christians for them to observe as the chief of days. (8) The fathers do not expressly teach that the Lord's day took the place of the seventh day in the fourth commandment; but that is a latent idea with them, having subsequent development, and they teach nothing contrary to it. Their analysis and philosophy on the subject were not completed, and the circumstances did not then particularly call for the completion; for, the chief point was, to show that the divine recall of obligation to observe the seventh day was consistently possible in the new dispensation, and that such recall had been made, and that Christians by good right had another day to keep. Without saying all that might have been said on the subject, they were wonderfully preserved from saying what would have been inconsistent with the full truth on this point.

Murphy, Lange, Bush, the Septuagint, and the original Hebrew itself, make the injunction of "labor" in the fourth commandment positive to the extent of doing "all thy work" that thou hast to do. Since a part of the command remains,

shall it stand there defaced, mutilated, dishonored? Or, has it always been whole, honored, by receiving the Lord's day when the seventh day was recalled?

But the foregoing we regard as only the negative part of the argument, — a reply to three modern authors on this subject, whose writings and views we have quoted, and whose citations from the fathers we have considered. There is a positive side.

(To be continued.)

ARTICLE IV.

THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PENALTY.

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THIS subject will appear to many to be simple and easily handled, and there are authors whose statements and reasoning proceed upon that idea. There are, indeed, general definitions that can readily be adduced, and there are certain related ideas which are in everybody's mind. Penalty, it may be said, is some form of suffering inflicted by those in authority because of an infraction of law. Theologians refer to it as the punishment which God justly inflicts upon those who commit sin. But when we go below the surface, and inquire into the relationships of penalty, we find ourselves compelled to consider fundamental questions concerning justice, benevolence, law, and government. And the matter is the more complicated because law and government assume so many forms, physical and moral, parental, civil, and divine. And, to increase the difficulty, the course of divine providence and the declarations of Scripture bring to our notice a remedial as well as a purely legal system of government, to which penalty sustains some relation.

Penalty being an instrumentality of moral government, intended to aid in securing its special objects, it is necessary