

ARTICLE VII.

SEPTENARY TIME AND THE ORIGIN OF THE
SABBATH.

BY THE REV. JOHN Q. BITTINGER, HAVERHILL, N. H.

WHILST the obligation of the Sabbath rests for its claim to acceptance upon reasons derived chiefly from the Bible, these may be supplemented by others which are drawn from the beneficent fruits of Sabbath observance. The correspondence between the promise of good as set forth in the Bible in connection with the Sabbath, and the realization of such good in human experience, is evidence that the Fourth Commandment has its foundation in the highest wisdom and benevolence. It also strengthens the belief in the day as co-eval with man and as a perpetual enjoinder on his regard.

The primeval origin of the Sabbath has been assaulted, and its institution placed at a period much later than the creation. Recent disclosures from researches in remote antiquity give new interest and force to this aspect of the subject, and it will be the aim of these pages to collate and examine the facts in regard to septenary time; and to point out their bearing, if any, upon the question of the origin of the Sabbath. There is no dispute as regards the wide prevalence of the seven-day week amongst nations. "Whatever controversies exist respecting the origin of the week, there can be none about the great antiquity of measuring time by a period of seven days. . . . Its antiquity is so great, its observance so wide-spread,

that it has been very generally thrown back as far as the creation of man."¹

It can hardly be accidental that nations of widely separate existence, both in time and territory, should have fallen upon this division of time. The fact calls for the reason of it. Either the custom had its origin in some circumstance or event which acted independently upon different nations; or, having been adopted by some nation from a circumstance or event peculiar to itself, it was thence transmitted to surrounding peoples by international intercourse; or, the fact is suggestive of some common source, dating back of any special ethnic circumstance or natural phenomena, from which the custom sprang.

The question, then, presents itself, Is there any relationship between the week of nations and the primitive institution of the Sabbath? It is admitted,² that if upon trustworthy investigation it should be found that the observance of one day in seven is universal amongst nations which could not have derived their knowledge of the day from the Bible, such a fact would in the highest degree be indicative of some marked primitive event in which the custom must have originated.

This claim is too exacting. Universal prevalence of a custom is not necessary to give currency to rational belief in its origin in some remote event. No tradition is more wide-spread amongst nations than that of the Flood, and this fact is generally accepted as indicating some occurrence in primitive human history which gave rise to it. However, if the test of universality is to prevail, the conclusion of scholars in regard to the origin of this tradition must be rejected; for traces of it have been sought in vain amongst the populations of Africa and Oceania.³

Now, all that is required to make the argument reasonably presumptive, is, first, a general prevalence of the

¹ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. "Week."

² Origin of Septenary Institutions, p. 16.

³ Lenormant's Beginnings of History, p. 382.

septenary period; or, second, a period, though of varying length, of exact recurrence.

In 1790, after the Revolution, the French on economic grounds changed the seventh-day Sabbath to a Sabbath once in ten days. Now bring back in imagination the French nation to the period of Assyria or Babylon, and read upon her records at that early date the observance of one day of rest in every ten, and it would be as fair to cite this case as an argument against the French origin of Sabbatic observance, on the ground of variation of time, as to cite the varying week, for example, of Peru and China, against the common origin of weekly time.

In reference to the division of time into yearly, monthly, and daily periods, the case presents altogether different aspects. No obscurity of origin hangs over these. No controversy is carried on in regard to the reason of their adoption. *These divisions of time prevail with marked unanimity everywhere and in all ages.* The sun and the earth in their relation to each other are subject to changes which are cognizable in both hemispheres of the globe. It was early observed that the movement of the sun from his extreme summer solstice till his return to the same point occurred at regular intervals.⁴ The year of three hundred and sixty days seems to have been adopted even from an antiquity as remote as the time of Noah;⁵ at least a year of equal length was very unanimously observed amongst the nations of the earth.

Similarly, the length of the month and that of the day were determined.⁶ These divisions of time are as old as that of the year; indeed, they must have been determined

⁴ Smith's Ancient History of the East, p. 401.

⁵ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, "Year," "Chronology." See also Smith's "Chaldean Account of Genesis," chap. 5, translation of the "Fifth Tablet of Creation Legend," where there is a distinct mention of the year and other divisions of time. These tablets, according to the same authority, chap. ii., "Babylonian and Assyrian Literature," are Assyrian copies of ancient Babylonian documents supposed to have been written B.C. 2000.

⁶ De Goguet's Origin of Laws, Vol. i. p. 233.

even at an earlier period, since the phases of the moon and the course of the sun across the heavens, on account of their greater frequency, would afford readier data from which to calculate their length.⁷ Accordingly, at a very remote age mankind were acquainted with a month of thirty days, and a day of twenty-four hours.⁸ Any other determination of these periods would be impossible, since they had their origin in natural phenomena, in the movements of the planetary system, which are the same to the inhabitants in every part of the globe.⁹

Now, as regards the weekly division of time, no such explanation of general acceptance has been adopted, and, as a consequence, considerable diversity of opinion prevails as to the way it came into wide-spread observance. It has given birth to much speculation, and various causes have been assigned for its existence; but in this variety of causes is furnished conclusive evidence that the week could not have had its origin in a cause acting as invariably upon the human mind in all ages and latitudes as those which secured the adoption of other divisions of time. Besides, measures of time having their origin in permanent natural causes would be less likely to be disturbed, since the means

⁷ The moon, in accordance with the astronomy of the Babylonians, was made more prominent than the sun. This fact may suggest a hint that the month was earlier fixed than the year.—Chaldean Genesis, p. 53, etc. At any rate the month was observed by the Babylonians at a very remote period, as is evident from the fourteenth line of the "Fifth Tablet," already referred to, in which Anu, the ruler and god of heaven, addresses the moon thus: "Every month without break observe thy circle."

⁸ The ancient Mexicans divided their year into eighteen months of twenty days each. The twenty-day month, it is thought, came into use after the lunar month. This origin is hinted at in one of the names given to the civil calendar, derived from two words, one signifying *twenty*, the other *festival*, on account of the twenty festivals celebrated during the civil year.—Humboldt's Researches, Vol. i. p. 281.

⁹ This origin of the division of time into years, months, and days, may be compared with Gen. i. 14, 16, where "to rule" has the root idea of defining, limiting, bounding, as when a prince rules his people, brings them within governmental control.

of correction are always at hand to restore the period to its original length.

The question has been raised, whether the week which is recognized in the record of creation and in the Fourth Commandment, gave sacredness to the number seven, or whether the ascendancy of the number helped to determine the dimension of the week. The latter view is supposed to rest on a variety of grounds, as the seven planets of ancient astronomy, the quarterly changes of the moon, and other things which in a marked way attract attention.¹⁰

1. The origin of the week has been referred to lunar changes. These changes occurring nearly every seven days, are thought to furnish a sufficient basis for the wide prevalence of septenary time. But certainly there is no such obvious line of demarcation between the four quarters as to call particular attention to them. The new moon, as is the case even now, would naturally attract attention; so the half lunation is conspicuous, but the other quarters are too vaguely defined to arrest special attention.

Indeed, if the moon, in addition to being the occasion of the monthly division of time, could have served in securing amongst mankind the adoption of any other division, it would be a half-moon period, as marking the dividing line between the days of her increase and those of her decrease. Such a period, or one corresponding nearly to it, prevails in Japan and in the Burman Empire, and according to an authority which Humboldt cites, also prevailed amongst the ancient Peruvians.¹¹

2. Another view has received greater emphasis. According to the astronomy of the ancient world, the planets were seven in number; and, the names of these luminaries having been given to successive days, the week grew out of that fact. This would assume that ancient astronomy was

¹⁰ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. "Week."

¹¹ Researches, Vol. i. p. 283.

known to the antediluvian world. The year and the day, it is generally conceded, were known in Noah's time, but whether the week as a distinct period was recognized as early as the Flood, has been questioned." *That*, however, seems to be indicated in a peculiar form of language employed in the account of the Flood. Noah is said to have "stayed yet other seven" ¹³ "days," literally, "seven of days," equivalent in meaning to a heptad of days, in which is implied the idea of periodicity. Jacob abode with Laban "the space of a month," ¹⁴ "the moon of days." Here there can be no question that the term "moon" was used to denote a well-defined division of time; and it may be safe to infer that the repetition of the phrase "seven days" above noted also denotes a division of time of common observance.

Now, as to the names of the days, the Israelites had no distinct names for the days of the week,—*that* division of time being determined by the Sabbath,—and the days, so far as is known, were distinguished by the ordinal numbers. Keeping, then, in view: (1) The fact that the Israelites designated their days of the week by ordinals; (2) That Abraham came from the seat of earliest astronomical discoveries; (3) That he would more likely than otherwise have brought with him from the land of Chaldea whatever names of the week were then in use; (4) That these names would more likely than otherwise have

¹² This seems to be the position of Schrader, "Cuneiform Inscription," p. 19; and also of Professor Brown, *Presbyterian Review*, 1882.

¹³ Gen. viii. 10, 12.

¹⁴ Gen. xxix. 14; Deut. xxi. 13.

¹⁵ The author of "Eight Studies on the Lord's Day," in Study iv., has gone into a critical review of the account of the Deluge in Genesis. He maintains that the Noachian Calendar was made up of lunar months, alternating twenty-nine and thirty days, and when applied to the incidents of the narrative of the Flood, reveals the reason of the different dates. If we assume that the day on which God announced to Noah his purpose to destroy the world was the day of rest in honor of the creation, then all the other dates fall upon that day, and this would harmonize with the idea that on the rest-day God was wont to communicate with his loyal subjects.

survived through his posterity,—is not Moses' designation of the days¹⁶ of the week by ordinals suggestive of what the custom amongst his ancestors was at a time as remote as when Abraham "went from Ur of the Chaldeans"? Now this is exactly what we find. The Chaldeans made use of ordinals to distinguish the days of the week.¹⁷

Color for such usage is found in the fact that the Egyptians at one time, according to De Goguet,¹⁸ designated the month by ordinals. This was also the custom amongst the Israelites;¹⁹ later, when names were given to the months, the *ordinals were often added, showing that the former were of more recent origin.*²⁰ The ancient Babylonians also designated the days of the week by ordinals.²¹

How, then, do we account for the planetary nomenclature of the week? Simply this: The names of the days

¹⁶ Ex. i. 15; xvi. 23, 29.

¹⁷ A similar usage is found in other languages, as Arabic, Syriac; Amharic, Falasha, Galla (Abyssian dialects); Persian, Turkish, Pushto (Afghanistan), Malay, etc. Variations are met with in some. Appended are a few of the principal languages of Asia and Africa, illustrating the mode of distinguishing the days of the week; the seventh, being some form of the word "Sabbath," is omitted. The list is taken from an elaborate table or chart prepared by W. M. Jones, entitled, "The Sabbath in the Language of Nations."

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Arabic.....	The One.	Tue Two.	The Three.	The Four.	The Fifth.	The Assembly Day.
Amharic.....	Oae.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Fifth.	Eve of the Sabbath.
Persian.....	Oae to the Sabbath.	Two to the Sabbath.	Three to the Sabbath.	Four to the Sabbath.	Five to the Sabbath.	Religious Day.
Turkish.....	Market Day.	Morrow after Market.	Third Day.	Four to Sabbath.	Five to Sabbath.	Assembly Day.
Malay.....	Day One.	Day Second.	Day Third.	Day Fourth.	Day Fifth.	Assembly Day.
Assyrian.....	First.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Fifth.	Sixth.

¹⁸ Origin of Laws, Vol. i. p. 229.

¹⁹ Gen. vii. 11; viii. 13.

²⁰ 1 Kings vi. 1; Esth. viii. 9.

²¹ So the days are numbered in the intercalary month Elul by Professor Sayce in "The Hibbert Lectures," 1887, p. 76.

being at first designated by ordinals, *these* gave way to the names of the seven planets of ancient astronomy, when that science came into prominence.”

Rejecting, then, both explanations of the origin of septenary time—that from lunar changes, and that from the seven planets of ancient astronomy—as being wholly inadequate, whence came the remarkable division of time known as the week, so old and wide-spread? It could not have been accidental. It must have had some marked event in the world’s history. No such phenomenon has ever been known as the prevalence of a national custom or institution without some great fact in a people’s life on which it rests. All history is an attestation of the origin of customs and observances in events which form landmarks in a nation’s experience, as the Feast of the Passover amongst the Israelites, and the celebration of the Eucharist in Christian communities. Surely a custom of as general prevalence and as widely spread as that of septenary time points to some great event as its fountain-head. If for any reason this remarkable practice amongst nations could be explained, on the ground of derivation from the Israelites, from the institution of the week at Mount Sinai, the question would be easy enough of solution. Christian nations find their seven-day week in the Bible. But when we go back to hoary antiquity, to the nations which were either cotemporaneous with the Israelites, or antedate them by many centuries, no such explanation is admissible.

Did the nations borrow it from one another? If it was dominant on the Nile as early as the time of the Exodus, and if the days of the week were designated by astronomical terms, *these* names were not copied by Moses in his direction in reference to the gathering of manna. Clearly the Chaldeans could not have borrowed it from the Israelites, nor from its recognition and announcement in the Decalogue, since the week was well known to the former

¹¹ The names of the days of the week amongst the Indo-European nations also show a change. They are astronomic and mythologic in character.

at a period as remote, at least, as B. C. 2000,²³ which was earlier by five centuries than the giving of the law.

A knowledge of the Decalogue was confined strictly to the Israelites. In their forty years' wandering they were remarkably isolated from the surrounding nations, coming in contact with them only in a hostile manner. Their aim during this period precluded any missionary enterprises or commercial intercourse. There was, therefore, no dissemination of the law amongst foreign peoples, and the institution of the Sabbath at Sinai was a secret. Their journey carried them directly away from the land of bondage, and the terrible experience of the Egyptians at the Red Sea held out to them no inducement to spy out the course or life of the escaped nation.

Nor is it supposable that the Israelites communicated the week to the Egyptians during the period of their bondage. Such an explanation of its origin would be in contravention of the law of ethnic influence. Subordinate civilizations, as a rule, do not impress their rules and customs upon higher and more powerful ones. Everywhere are traces of Egyptian influence on the Israelites.²⁴ Northern barbarians broke through the barriers of the Alps, and took possession of Imperial Rome, but her art and religious culture were too much for the fierce hordes of Alaric and Attala. The Saxon invasion of Briton was, in the end, an uplift of the aborigines of England, and in time the Anglo-Saxons received a new impulse from the more cultured and advanced Normans. It could hardly be expected that a servile race, even supposing Sabbatic observance had been maintained amongst them, would impress their customs upon their masters, who were proud of their civilization, and amongst whom everything tended to permanency and changelessness. Egyptian isolation was most marked. "Nothing is more striking throughout the ancient Egyptian inscriptions and writings than the bit-

²³ Chaldean Genesis, pp. 56, 89, 308.

²⁴ Ex. xxxii. 4; Ezek. xx. 7, 8.

ter dislike of most foreigners, especially the Easterns."²⁵

According to the Bible, septenary time was ordained at the close of the six days' creation, and the seventh day as a period of rest was sacredly imposed upon man. There is no reason to doubt that, from the time the Sabbath was instituted at the creation till it was re-enacted in solemn demonstration from Mount Sinai, it was observed in some form by the Old Testament saints as a part of their religious experience.

Regarding the week as having its origin in the event revealed in Gen. ii. 1-3, and accepting the Bible as authentic history, then the knowledge of a septenary time must, at one period of the human race, have been limited to a single family of eight persons. From that family sprang all the nations of the earth. Whatever institutions and customs survived the destruction of the race by the Flood, would necessarily descend through Noah and his three sons to posterity. Is there any evidence that a periodic day, either as a religious or festal occasion, was observed after that catastrophe?

Now it will hardly be claimed that the planetary system of ancient astronomy gave rise to the observance of one day in seven *as a day of rest*. If, at that remote period, such a custom prevailed amongst the Accadians, so resembling the day which Moses five hundred years later announced to the Israelites, it would be safe to infer that it came down from the Flood through the descendants of Noah.²⁶

On the supposition, then, that Noah brought from the ark a knowledge of the Sabbath, we should expect to find amongst nations traces of it in some form, either as regards the character of the day, or the period of recurrent time, precisely as is indicated in the week of nations and

²⁵ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. "Egypt."

²⁶ It is a suggestive fact that the word "Sabbath" in various modified forms has kept its place in most of the languages of nations. In the ancient Egyptian it appears in the form "Seb," in the Malay, "Ari-Sabtu."

corroborated in the disclosures of Assyrian inscriptions.²⁷

The author of "Chaldean Account of Genesis" remarks that "the number seven was a sacred number among the Accadians, who invented the week of seven days, and kept a seventh-day Sabbath."²⁸ The Accadians were the earliest inhabitants of Babylon, and their records, now brought to light and interpreted, reach back to within a few centuries of the Flood. "There can be no doubt that the Sabbath was an Accadian institution, intimately connected with the worship of the seven planets. The astronomical tablets show that the seven-day week was of Accadian origin, each day of it being dedicated to the sun, moon, and five planets, and the word 'Sabbath' itself, under the form of *Sabbattu*, was known to the Assyrians, and explained by them as 'a day of rest for the heart.' .

. . . The Accadian word by which the idea of Sabbath is denoted, literally meaning 'a day on which work is unlawful,' is interpreted in the bilingual tablets as signifying 'a day of peace' or 'completion of labors.'"²⁹ In a hymn put in the mouth of Merodach, God of Babylon, allusion is made to a fabulous serpent of "seven heads;" and in the same hymn Merodach's sword is described as "the striker of mountains, the fish with seven

²⁷ Schrader considers the week as an ancient Babylonian institution which the Hebrews brought with them from the stay in South Babylonia.—*Cuneiform Inscriptions*, Vol. i. p. 19.

²⁸ *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 56.

²⁹ *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 89. The Sabbath in their calendar of saints' days was rigidly enjoined upon the king in these words:—

"A Sabbath: the prince of many nations the flesh of animals and cooked food may not eat.

The garments of his body he may not change.

White robes he may not put on.

Sacrifices he may not offer.

The king may not ride in his chariot.

In royal fashion he may not legislate.

A view of the army the general may not hold.

Medicine for the sickness of his body he may not apply.—pp. 89, 90.

See also *Records of the Past*, Vol. vii. p. 157.

tails," "the feathered monster of seven heads, like the huge serpent of seven heads," "the devastation of fearful battles, the weapon of seven heads." Elsewhere, in the "Legend of Creation," the number "seven" repeatedly occurs, and also in the "Epic of Izdubar," which contains the Chaldean story of the Flood.

According to Professor Wilson, writing on "Hindoo Festivals," in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*," fasting is held to be meritorious on the day consecrated to Adyta (sun), and also "every seventh lunar day is considered sacred." In Hindoo prayers the word "seven" is conspicuous. Saptami, the great seven, is thus addressed: "Mother of all creatures, Saptami, who art one with the lords of the seven courses, and the seven mystic words." Also the sun,— "Glory to thee who delighteth in the chariot drawn by seven steeds, the illuminator of the seven worlds. Glory to thee on the seven lunar days."

The famous capital pagodas of India are composed of seven square enclosures, one within the other;" and this is the usual style in which these religious monuments of an ancient people are built." The same authority notes the fact that on the coast of Coromandel is a temple-ruin which bears the name of "Seven Pagodas."

Undoubtedly, the most important fact bearing upon the question of septenary time and the origin of the Sabbath, is the revelation of a day which is called a Sabbath or a festal day in the old Babylonian inscriptions. The only question is, whether we have the biblical Sabbath, or simply a day having some correspondence with it. On this point authorities differ. Professor Brown, in a very careful review of the subject, thinks we are not authorized

²⁰ Vol. ix. p. 86.

²¹ Orme's Military Transactions in Hindostan, Vol. i. p. 178.

²² "All the pagodas on the coast of Coromandel are built in the same general plan."—*Ibid.*, Vol. i. p. 117. A French writer points out the fact that on the south of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, on a platform prepared for them, are six smaller pyramids at equal distance apart and of equal size.—Septenary Institutions.

to infer that the Sabbath in the Babylonian inscriptions is parallel with the Hebrew Sabbath." Professor Sayce, however, maintains that the Sabbath was known to the Assyrians.²³ There is certainly a striking resemblance. The Hebrew word for Sabbath has at its base the idea of *rest, completeness*. A like root-idea lies at the base of the word in the inscription which is translated *Sabbath or a festal day*.

Here, then, if the interpretation is correct, we have a common idea belonging to the Hebrew and the Accadian term for a Sabbath or festal day. Now the relationship of Sabbath and festal day is not so remote as may be supposed, if we divest ourselves of traditional ideas. A festal day presupposes a day of withdrawal from ordinary occupation; so does the Sabbath.

Also worthy of note is the prominence of seven in the inscriptions, and in the fact that a Sabbath or festal day falls on each seventh day after the new moon. Here is recurrence of time, though not without variation, viz., the insertion of an extra Sabbath for the 19th of the intercalary month and the fragment of a week to complete the month.

What, now, is the state of the question thus far examined? 1. A careful investigation of the facts in regard to the customs of nations—from the Nile to the Ganges—shows that amongst these peoples the use of weekly-time was prevalent. 2. It prevailed in connection with a Sabbath or festal day, at least amongst the Chaldeans, from a period stretching back to the confines of the Deluge, and long before the law was announced from Sinai. 3. There is no reason for believing that the nations within these limits derived it from the Israelites or from each other. 4. There are traces of septenary time before the Flood. 5. Noah recognized the week in the intervals of sending forth the doves. And, 6, unless there is positive evidence

²³ "The Sabbath in the Cuneiform Records," *Presbyterian Review*, 1882.

²⁴ The Hibbert Lectures, p. 76.

that those nations, the nearest and most direct descendants of Noah, derived their week from some well-established local source, all the circumstances and conditions of the case point to the conclusion that septenary observance dates from antediluvian ages.

From these data and conclusions now there is practically no dissent. The fact of septenary time is admitted as prevalent within defined latitudes and longitudes. The only question is as to its origin. But, it is said, "when we pass the Himalayan Mountains, or in proportion as we recede in any direction from Egypt and India or the countries lying between them, we lose all traces of a seven-day week."²⁴

This statement, whilst it may be admitted to be correct to a certain degree, does not state the case exactly as it is. Exceptions must be taken to its sweeping character. There is reason for believing that the Chinese once observed a week of seven days. This is the testimony of Humboldt: "The week is in use among the Chinese, who seem also aborigines of the elevated plain of Tartary."²⁵ In a book, called "Book of Diagrams," ascribed to Fuh-he, who lived about B. C. 2000 years, occurs this passage, "Every seven days comes the revolution." This singular sentence was first pointed out by Dr. Legge of Hong Kong.²⁶ Also in Chinese almanacs four days of a month are marked, corresponding to our Sunday.²⁷

On trustworthy authority, too, weekly-time, it would seem, was observed on the west coast of Africa, at a period when the inhabitants of that region had no intercourse

²⁴ Origin of Septenary Institutions, p. 14.

²⁵ Researches, Vol. i. p. 235. "Many occurrences of the number of seven days have been noticed in the popular customs, rites, superstitions, and traditions of the nations. . . . All these are probably the relics of a very ancient observance of a seven-days period, or, it may be, of a Sabbath in prehistoric ages.—Chinese Recorder, July, 1871.

²⁶ Gillespie's Land of Sinim, pp. 161-162.

²⁷ There is some doubt as to the antiquity of marking the four days in the Chinese Imperial Almanac.—Chinese Recorder, July 1871.

with Europeans. "The division of time into weeks of seven days seems to have prevailed among the Negroes before they had any intercourse with the Europeans, *since the different days are distinguished by significant names in the language of the Negroes*. . . . Every man dedicates one day in the week to the honor of his tutelary divinity." The inhabitants on the coast of Guinea set apart a seventh day for the worship of their gods." "The seventh day they leave working, and reckon that to be their day of ease and abstinence from work, or their Sunday. . . . They have a priest. . . . He sits before the altar. . . . All the men, women, and children come and sit around him and he speaketh unto them."³⁹ Indeed, according to one of these authorities,⁴⁰ the usage of the week amongst the western tribes of Africa, from Guinea southward, was very general, and their day of rest was both religious and festal.

Traces of a seventh-day period are also found in the extreme East. In Pegu, a province of the Ganges, Monday was devoted to religious worship, and priests called Tallopoise were appointed to give the people instruction.⁴¹ And a similar custom, according to the same authority, seems to have been observed in the provinces of Siam and Laos, whose priests bear the same name as those of Pegu. In Ceylon the people hold a yearly festival, beginning at the full moon and lasting *seven days*.⁴² The Tonguinnesse observed the 1st and 15th days of the month,⁴³ and the Japanese week consisted of fourteen days, which was also the week in the Burman Empire.⁴⁴ In addition to their market-week of five days, the people of Java also had a seven-day week.⁴⁵

³⁹ Bell's Geography Vol. iv. p. 30. ⁴⁰ Hurd's Religious Rites, p. 455.

⁴¹ Purchas' Pilgrimage, Book vii. chap. 2, sec. 4.

⁴² Bell's Geography, Vol. iv. p. 30.

⁴³ Religious Rites, p. 90. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁶ Bell, Vol. v. p. 225.

⁴⁷ Sir Stamford Raffles, Governor General of Java.

It has been supposed that the seven-day week of the Javans was confined to the religious festivals of the Buddhists, who brought it to Java from India. Indeed, how far the influence of ancient India made itself felt in the nations of the East, is difficult to determine: and any traces of septenary time now found amongst them must be accepted with caution as evidence of the independent origin of it amongst the aborigines of that region. Such traces may be only the remnant of the ancient Hindoo week.

The facts in regard to a week as gathered in the western hemisphere do not differ materially from those which are gathered from the eastern. A week of five days was observed by the ancient people of Mexico, on the last of which they held their public fair—a market-day." "Of the calendar of the Peruvians little is known," says Prescott, who remarks, however, that they had a week, "but of what length, whether of seven, nine, ten, days, is uncertain." "On the authority which Humboldt cites—Polo—the week of the Hindoos was known to the Peruvians; but, "according to an ancient law of the Inca Pacacutec," given by Garcilasso in his history of the Incas, "the people are to work not seven, but eight consecutive days, and rest the ninth." "

Now, although the facts as regards septenary time gathered from nations outside the limits of the Ganges and the Nile, may not be so satisfactory as those which Mesopotamian people present, they are in the same line, and show at least the untrustworthiness of the claim that "when we pass the Himalayan Mountains, or in proportion as we recede in any direction from Egypt and India, or the countries that lie between them, we lose all traces of a seven-day week."

The state of the case, then, is this: The nations from

⁴⁰ Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, Vol. i. p. 120; Bancroft's *Native Races*, Vol. ii. p. 385.

⁴¹ *Conquest of Peru*, Vol. i. p. 125.

⁴² *Researches*, Vol. i. p. 285.

the Nile to the Ganges have observed a seven-day week from a period so early that the preponderance of evidence goes to show that it came down from the Flood. The nations beyond those limits, generally classed as Turanian and Mongolian in Asia, have observed a week of varying length. A similar week is found to have prevailed in the western hemisphere.

Now, then, Is there any relationship between the seven-day week or our Sabbath, and these varying weeks? First, the time of each is periodic. This is an important element. No nation observes a week, part of the time of one length, part of the time of another. Second, the element of rest in the Sabbath is also found in the varying week. The Peruvians rested after eight days' work. And, third, where the week ends with a market-day, or fair-day, it has in it exactly what public fairs and markets proffer to-day. It was less a day of toil than of sport. *It was practically a day of rest.* And, in view of all these facts and circumstances, we think that the conclusion is legitimate that both the varying week of nations, as well as the seven-day week of nations, has a relationship to the Sabbath."

1. How a knowledge of the week and day of rest was preserved to the human race from the creation to the Deluge there is no means of knowing. Except the scanty history of man preserved in the first eight chapters of Genesis, no light is cast upon that long period of over 1600 years. It was the opinion of Grotius that a precept of commemorating the creation was enjoined upon the antediluvian saints and transmitted to their posterity."⁴¹ If any records such as we now find in Egypt and in Baby-

⁴¹ Nor has it been overlooked as regards Africa, and also Asia to the further east, how far any traces of a seven-day week may owe its origin to primitive missionary influences. Still, interposing all this, there is room to allow the argument to stand.

⁴² Cox's Literature of the Sabbath, Vol i. pp. 175, 219.

lonian ruins were made by antediluvian peoples, they have not as yet come to light. However, since the Flood, annals of man, which go back to an antiquity bordering on the Great Catastrophe, are coming to light, and these annals reveal to us the existence of a day corresponding to the Sabbath fully five hundred years before the law was given. But it is not necessary that records of any sort should have been preserved in regard to that or any other institution in order to keep them from entire decay or destruction. The Bible plainly indicates that God communicated immediately in those primitive ages with man." Besides, the Sabbath may have been committed to a channel of communication which has always been found sufficiently trustworthy in other matters. Tradition has proved wonderfully tenacious in transmitting from age to age the customs and lore of nations. "Homer's ballads must have passed for several hundred years from mouth to mouth; and, stranger still, stories which were first told somewhere by the banks of the Oxus or the Jaxartes by distant ancestors of ours, are told to this very day, little altered, by peasants in remote parts of England and Scotland."⁴⁴ "Those who have studied the Bedouin tribes know that there is no contradiction between their wild habits and an elaborate though purely traditional system of social and legal observances. "Arabia," says Burkhardt, "has preserved, for a long succession of ages, its primitive laws in all their rigor. But of the origin of these laws nothing is known."⁴⁵

2. And yet, whilst tradition is thus tenacious and trustworthy in preserving institutions and customs during many ages, often under exceedingly disturbing circumstances, there is, in the slight divergence in some nations from a seven-day week, and in the changed character of the rest-day, precisely such a result as might be looked for. And furthermore, in the course of ages under the mode of

⁴⁴ Gen. ix. 8, 12.

⁴⁵ Keavy's Dawn of History, p. 52.

⁴⁶ Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, p. 180.

life in which mankind then lived, nomadic and pastoral, the length of the week would be far more likely to diverge from the original standard than that the essential idea of the Sabbath would be lost. The Mongolian week and that of other peoples, of which so much is made, is not at all singular. Confusion would be likely to prevail at this point if anywhere. Pestilence, famine, war, might easily introduce irregularities and error; and when we consider those vast surges of populations which from time to time swayed to and fro on the northern wastes of Asia,¹⁴—the Great Wall of China standing as the monument of such migrations,—it might not be a matter of surprise if the traditional Sabbath, transmitted after the Flood, should have been modified and impaired by these tremendous tumults and revolutions. The marvel is that any traces of it were preserved amongst peoples fierce and barbaric.

3. And in contrast with this mobile condition of society is the easily-suggestive fact that the nations which uniformly kept a seven-day week are also the nations which possessed the best developed literatures and most advanced civilizations. What, under such circumstances, would be the chances of septenary time being preserved unimpaired, if after the Flood it was left as a legacy to posterity? Certainly, it would not be exposed to the hazards of change and mobility inseparable from the life of wild and barbaric nations. Pertinent, too, is the fact that these civilized nations are distinguished for the permanent material in which their records and literatures were kept. The great Alexandrian Library, formed of perishable material, carried with it in its destruction whatever secrets may have awaited coming ages. The gypsum slabs of Nineveh and the bricks of Babylon are telling a strange and fascinating story of those hoary ages after a silence of 3,500 years. Institutions and customs written in stone

¹⁴A vivid picture of the indescribable suffering, confusion, and ruin which attend such ethnic movements over the immense steppes of Asia, is presented in De Quincey's "Flight of the Tartars."

are surviving the mutations of time. Under precisely these conditions of favorableness for perpetuity we find the seven-day week, and, in one case at least, the preservation of a day resembling the Sabbath in biblical proportions. Any deviation from the week of Gen. ii. 1-3 under such circumstances must have taken place either by legislation, as in France, or from powerful revolutions, and not from those natural infirmities of preservation which are inseparable from less stable limitations of national life. Had the old Chaldean libraries been written upon papyrus or parchment when the demon of fire wrapped them in flames, where now would be the positive evidence that the ancient people on the Euphrates observed the week of seven days and a Sabbath?

4. Changes in institutions, at least modifications, are so well known that they excite no distrust as to the originals whence they sprung. The daily breaking of bread in the early Christian church passed into the weekly, monthly, and quarterly observance of the Lord's Supper of later times. The Sabbath of the seventh day before the Christian era was changed into the Sabbath of the first day after the resurrection of Christ. The various Jewish feasts were compressed into a single festival in the time of Jeroboam," and the remarkable example of France in substituting by legislation for a seventh-day Sabbath one every tenth day is fresh in mind.

Nor should it be a matter of surprise that in the festal days of many pagan nations there are little or no traces of a religious character; nor that these periodic seasons should have, in the lapse of ages, been appropriated to other purposes. The Sabbath even at the present time has been changed to nearly an equal extent. The bull-fights of Spain and the theatre habits of France and other European countries are as great departures from the Christian standard as the market-days of China and Java are. Repeatedly the day fell into gross abuse, if not en-

⁴¹ 1 Kings xii. 32-33.

tire disuse, amongst the Jews. Isaiah utters solemn warnings against profaning the Sabbath, and promises large blessings to those who shall rightly observe it." In the age of Jeremiah there seems to have been an habitual violation of it, even to the carrying on of commerce." According to Ezekiel the profanation of the Sabbath in the wilderness was placed foremost amongst the national sins of the Jews."

With such historic precedents in view, it may be safely claimed that, wherever there is either a departure in the length of the week from the scriptural standard, or any modification of the seventh-day rest in its purpose, such departure and modification may be referred to causes analogous to those mentioned above, or to the unstable and disturbed conditions of civilized life. Consequently, in the light of all the facts, what event so simple and rational, to account for the wide-spread and ancient use of the week, as the event recorded in Gen. ii. 1-3?

This view of septenary time having its origin at the creation and being handed down through tradition amongst the nations of antiquity, finds its parallel in the existence of stories and legends which have a striking resemblance to events recorded in the Bible. These stories, according to the best authorities in antiquarian research, antedate the Mosaic record by many centuries, and are, consequently, independent of biblical origin. Professor Lenormant, the distinguished Assyriologist, has traced these stories in the traditions and literatures of oriental peoples. Speaking of the belief in an age of Edenic happiness in the infancy of mankind as universal amongst the three Noahic streams of the human family, he⁴⁰ remarks: "This belief may be found among all peoples of the Aryan or Japhetic races. It was among the beliefs held by them anterior to their dispersion, and it has been long since remarked by all scholars that this is one of the

⁴⁰ Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

⁴¹ Jer. xvii. 21-27.

⁴² Ezek. xx. 12-24.

⁴³ *Beginnings of History*, p. 67.

points where their traditions find themselves most evidently on common ground with the Semitic stories which we find in Genesis." Accordingly, in referring septenary time to the creation, we only put it upon the same footing with other legends, such as the Creation of Man, the Fall, the Edenic Happiness, the Flaming Sword, the Tree of Life, the Deluge, etc., which prevailed so extensively in remote ages, and which are found with such remarkable persistency in their chief characteristics in the traditions and literatures of the East.

ARTICLE VIII.

ATTRIBUTIVE AORIST PARTICIPLES IN PROTASIS, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BALLANTINE, D.D., OBERLIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

It is a familiar principle of Greek grammar that a participle preceded by the article may be used substantively and is then equivalent to *he who* or *those who* with a finite verb.¹ Accordingly we have *ὁ κλέπτων, he who steals, ὁ πιστεύων, he who believes, ὁ ἀγαπᾶν, he who loves*, and similar expressions without number. The large majority of such participles are in the present tense, but those of the other tenses are not infrequent. It is the purpose of this inquiry to account for the tense in a certain class of cases when the participle is in the aorist. Incidentally, for the sake of discrimination, it will be necessary to consider somewhat the other uses of the aorist and those of the present.

¹ Goodwin's Greek Grammar, § 276.2; Hadley and Allen's Greek Grammar, § 966.