

are in Christ Jesus, he passes at once—passes by a present, immediate passing—passes from being under the law to being under grace—passes from a state of condemnation to a state of justification—passes now through the opened door, from out of the kingdom of darkness into the salvation of which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

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ART. VI.—THE LAW OF THE SABBATH. (PART II.)

IN our present paper we push our inquiries into the New Testament. Our task has to include, *first*, an investigation into the meaning of the term "Sabbath," in the various places in which it is found; *secondly*, the attitude of our Blessed Lord towards the Sabbath; *thirdly*, the attitude of the Apostles, especially of St. Paul, towards it.

I. First, as to the meaning of the term "Sabbath" in the New Testament. The word "Σάββατον" is simply the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word. The usage of the plural "τὰ σάββατα" is of uncertain account. It *may* have sprung from the similarity of the sound of the Chaldaic form Šabbatha,¹ with the neuter-plural termination. The two Greek forms are employed promiscuously to denote the seventh day, and the seven days taken together. The plural is the commoner, when denoting the week. In the following passages the plural occurs in the sense of *a week*: St. Matt. xxviii. 1; St. Mark xvi. 2; St. Luke xxiv. 1; St. John xx. 1 19; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The singular is found only twice in this sense; viz., St. Mark xvi. 9; St. Luke xviii. 22. The explanation of the plural is that it indicates "the space of time lying between two

¹ שַׁבָּתִים or שַׁבָּתַיִם. This applies to its usage for *the day*. The plural as referring to the week is accounted for below. The heterodolitical dative, σάββασι, is found in several places as a variation with σάββατοις, as in St. Matt. xii. 1, 5, 12; St. Mark i. 21. Σαββάτοις is found in the Septuagint, 1 Chron. xxiii. 31; 2 Chron. ii. 4, viii. 13; Ezek. xlvi. 3. Also in Josephus, Ant. xvi. 6, 4. From σάββατον we find only gen., sing. and plur., and dat., sing. and plural. v. Winer, Gr., pt. ii., sect. viii.

As an alternative with the transliteration of σάββατα from שַׁבָּתַיִם, Winer suggests, that the plural may be formed after the analogy of names of festivals, e.g., Saturnalia, Panathenæa. Considering the presence of this form in the Septuagint, this seems hardly a commendable alternative.

It is, perhaps, not easy to say why the plural (used for "Sabbath") is found chiefly in the first two evangelists, the singular in the last two.

Sabbaths." The singular is accounted for by the transference of the name of the chief day to the whole week, which is reckoned from it.¹

The Sabbath is mentioned in the following places of the New Testament. One reference is deemed sufficient to a passage where it is mentioned in one connection more than once.

St. Matt. xii. 1-8	St. Luke vi. 1-5
" " 10-12	" " 6-9
" " xxiv. 20	" " xiii. 10-16
" " xxviii. 1	" " xiv. 1-5
St. Mark i. 21	" " xxiii. 54
" " ii. 23-28	" " " 56
" " iii. 2-4	St. John v. 9-18
" " vi. 2	" " vii. 22, 23
" " xvi. 1	" " ix. 14-16
St. Luke iv. 16	" " xix. 31
" " 31	" " xx. 1
" " Acts i. 12	" " Acts xvi. 13
" " " xiii. 14	" " " xvii. 2
" " " " 27	" " " xviii. 4
" " " " 42	" " " Col. ii. 16.
" " " " xv. 21	

II. The attitude of our Blessed Lord towards the Sabbath law is our first inquiry here.

On seven occasions the captious elders found fault with Jesus Christ by reason of His actions on the Sabbath-day. On each occasion the ground of their charge was His doing something which was lawful in itself, but, in their view, not lawful to be done on that day. Six of the seven incidents were miracles of mercy. The seventh, the permission granted to the Twelve to pluck the corn-ears and rub them in their hands, was an act of mercy.² The six miracles are all cures. They are the following: The healing of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda (St. John v. 9); the restoration of the withered hand (St. Matt. xii. 9-13; St. Mark iii. 1-5; St. Luke vi. 6-11); giving sight to the man born blind (St. John ix.); the healing of the woman with the spirit of infirmity (St. Luke xiii. 14); the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (St. Mark i. 21); the healing of the man who had the dropsy (St. Luke iv. 1).

1. The scene in the cornfield shall engage us first. The incident is found in all the synoptic Gospels (St. Matt. xii. 1; St. Mark ii. 23; St. Luke vi. 1). The act calls forth the

¹ The phrase *ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων* (or *τοῦ σαββάτου*) is found in eight places, viz., St. Mark vi. 2 (Cod. Bezae); St. Luke iv. 16, xiii. 14, 16, xiv. 5; St. John xix. 31; Acts xiii. 14, xvi. 13.

² One other miracle is mentioned as being wrought on the Sabbath, that of the healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law (St. Mark i. 29). This does not appear to have provoked comment. Archbishop Trench cites St. Mark i. 34, but this was surely *after* the Sabbath.

animadversions of the Pharisees: "Behold Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day.¹ In defending His disciples our Lord adduces two cases from the Old Testament Scriptures. He cites that of David obtaining in his extremity the shew-bread from Ahimelech,² provision which it was unlawful for any but the priestly family to eat. Here was a case where a special necessity was allowed to override a positive enactment. If David was justified, how much more David's "greater Son," in allowing mercy to triumph over ceremonialism, especially when that ceremonialism was of man's tradition, in its exaggerated scrupulosity? But in His answer the Lord takes higher ground than this instance supplies. David's greater Son is greater, too, than the Temple. The priests profane the Sabbath in the Temple, doing their necessary work therein, and some of it servile. Yet they are blameless. Double offerings made the Sabbath toil for them unusually laborious. Newly-baked shew-bread had to be presented. *Some* labour, therefore, must be compatible with Sabbath-observance. If mercy and sacrifice clash, sacrifice must yield to mercy. Christ is greater than the Temple, and greater than the Sabbath.

It seems desirable to give a general conspectus of the Sabbath incidents in the ministry of our Lord. We reserve comment.

2. The restoration of the withered hand. The Saviour is teaching in a synagogue. Among the listeners is a man whose right hand is withered. According to St. Matthew's account, the Pharisees ask Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?" In the accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke, Christ anticipates the question, marking how they watched Him (St. Mark iii. 2), by demanding, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" Glancing round with a look of grieved displeasure, the Lord, having pre-

¹ No exception could be intended against the act itself. This was permitted by Deut. xxiii. 25. Lightfoot ("Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ"), on St. Matt. xii. 1-8, cites passages from the Rabbinical writings: "He that reaps on the Sabbath, though never so little, is guilty. And to pluck the ears of corn is a kind of reaping."

² Some have endeavoured to prove that this incident must have been after the 16th Nisan, when the first-fruits were presented in the Temple, as it was unlawful to *reap* the corn before. But, as Alford points out, it is not likely that the simple act of plucking corn was included in the prohibition. The singular phrase in St. Luke vi. 1, ἐν σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ—if, indeed, we are justified in adopting a reading unsanctioned by the Vatican and the Sinaitic—has occasioned the most conflicting expressions of opinion. Out of the crowd we may accept with timidity Scaliger's, that it indicates the Sabbath next following the second day of the Passover. In illustration of Christ's second plea, we may cite the saying of the Rabbis: "In the Temple is no Sabbath."

viously ordered the man to stand forth in the midst, where he might attract the attention of all, compares him to a sheep fallen into a pit, which His accusers would think it lawful to lay hold of and lift out. He then bids him stretch forth his hand, when it is instantly restored.¹

3. The healing of the impotent man at Bethesda (St. John v. 1). In the five recesses of Bethesda, a pool near the sheep-gate, a number of helpless folk lay one Sabbath, crippled, withered, blind, sick, waiting for some strange, and probably miraculous disturbance of the waters.² At such times its partial virtue effected the cure of but one, the first to step down and bathe. Among these lay a paralytic, who, having no friendly arm to assist him, had ever failed to reach the water in time. The Lord heals him, and bids him take up his bed. On his way home he meets some of the elders, who reprimand him for carrying a burden. He excuses himself as having been bidden by his restorer. Their displeasure is then turned against Christ. They persecute and try to compass His death, because He had done these things on a Sabbath.

4. The opening of the eyes of one born blind (St. John ix.). A man blind from his birth sat, probably in one of the approaches to the Temple, to beg of the passers-by. Jesus Christ, conveying Himself from His persecutors, sees him; and after vindicating His character in answer to certain untimely hints from the Twelve, and with the significant words, "I am the light of the world," spits upon the ground, makes clay of the spittle, spreads this over the sightless eyes, and bids the patient wash in Siloam. He washes, and returns seeing. The elders as usual interfering, he is brought before them, when he boldly defends the Giver of his sight, and owns Him for a prophet. He is excommunicated.

5. The restoring of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (St. Luke xiii. 10). Again our Lord is teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath. A woman is present oppressed with some physical trial, which had spread its effects to her spirit, or was itself the consequence of mental malady. The Lord calls her, and saying, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity," lays His hands on her. Instantly she is able to rise erect, and glorifies God. The ruler of the synagogue is indignant: "There are six days,"

¹ "Jesus Christ, that He might draw off Christianity from the yoke of ceremonies by taking off the strictest Mosaic rites, chose to do many of His miracles on the Sabbath; not much unlike the Sabbatical pool in Judæa, which, dry six days, gushed in a full stream on the seventh."—Jeremy Taylor, "Life of Christ," pt. iii., sect. 14. For this "pool," or rather river, see Josephus, "Wars," vii. 5, 1. Archdeacon Farrar naïvely observes, it rather broke than kept the Sabbath by running once a week.

² Of the miraculous there is no doubt; of its manifesting itself in the disturbance of the water there is some. The latter part of verse 3, together with verse 4, is omitted in B. C. D. S.

he says, "in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day." The Saviour answers, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?"¹ Thus rebuked, all His adversaries were ashamed.

6. The demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (St. Mark i. 23; St. Luke iv. 33). Once more Jesus Christ is teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath. This is the third Sabbath healing in a synagogue. Here was a man over whom foul spirits had gained dominion. Using the mouth of their wretched victim, these cry, as the Lord approaches, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Jesus rebukes the spirits, and commands them to come out of the man. Crying loudly, and with a last fierce struggle with his tormentors, the man is delivered from his thralldom. This is the only public Sabbath miracle to which no exception is taken.

7. The healing of a man with a dropsy (St. Luke xiv. 1). The Lord is invited on a Sabbath to the board of one of the chief Pharisees. He is narrowly watched.² Whether designedly placed there, or having turned in of his own freewill, a dropsical man is there. Before attending to his case, our Lord, answering, as so often, the unspoken thoughts of the company, asks: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" In the sullen silence that follows He cures and dismisses him. He then defends His act in these words: "Which of you shall have an ass" (or a "son," so the Alexandrine and the Vatican) "or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath-day?" As before all are put to silence. "They cannot answer Him again to these things."

Glancing back over these seven Sabbath incidents from the ministry of Christ, we mark the following points. We have

¹ "It is not only permitted to lead the beast out to watering, but they might draw water for it and pour it into troughs, provided only they do not carry the water and set it before the beast to drink, but the beast come and drink it of its own accord."—Erubhin, fol. 20, 2, quoted by Lightfoot, "Horæ Hebr. et Talmud.," vol. iii, p. 142, Gaudell's translation.

² Neh. viii. 9-12 supplies Scriptural sanction to social gatherings on the Sabbath; but the later Jews made it a day of unlimited conviviality. Aug. (Enarratio in Psalm xci. and serm. ix. 3): "Vacant enim ad nugas; et cum Deus præceperit sabbatum, illi in his quæ Deus prohibet exercent sabbatum. Melius est arare quam saltare. Illi ab opere bono vacant; ab opere nugatorio non vacant." "Vacare volunt ad nugas atque luxurias suas."

three cases of healing in the synagogue, one in a public place of resort, one in a Pharisee's guest-chamber, sight given to a beggar near the Temple, the disciples defended for satisfying hunger in the cornfield; works of mercy all of them, unconnected, moreover, with any secular employment belonging to the persons who were the subjects of them. Had such miracles been wrought on the Sabbath as either the miraculous draught of fishes, or the stater in the fish's mouth, we should have had to consider a very different attitude towards the question of Sabbath obligation on the part of Christ. These miracles involved direct sanction of a secular calling, and had they been worked on the Sabbath, it would have been a difficult task to prove that the prosecution of such callings on that day was not also included in that sanction.

The place to which we naturally turn in dealing with this part of our subject is the great discourse called forth by the objections of the elders to the miracle of Bethsaida (St. John v. 17). It opens with an appropriation of highest authority, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." The sense is not doubtful: "Ye complain because I work on the Sabbath. But My Father, who hallowed your Sabbath, has never hitherto ceased from *His* work; work which to His Omnipotence is perfect rest. I, His co-equal Son, work also, as Lord of the Sabbath. I only do what I see My Father, the Author of the Sabbath, do. In blaming Me, ye blame Him. As to this solitary work of mercy and power, it is but a small matter. Far greater than it will claim your wonder hereafter. I will raise Myself as an earnest of My power to raise you all, and judgment will be pronounced by Me upon you, who now sit in hasty judgment upon Me."

Now, is it perfectly sincere to cite such incidents as the above in evidence that Christianity does not ratify the fourth commandment? Is it really supposed that its prohibitions forbid the doctor to go his rounds, or the body to receive its necessary food? What we *may* deduce from the Redeemer's conduct—and any further deduction scarcely escapes the charge of dishonesty—is His abhorrence of the miserable Sabbatarian scrupulosity, the paltry casuistical figments, that had degraded a beneficent enactment into the foundations of a system of travestied morality, wherein pietism was mistaken for piety, religionism for religion. Rather than the abrogator of the Sabbath, Christ was its restorer. Tearing ruthlessly from it the cumbrous overgrowths of men's traditions, the despicable *halachóth* of Rabbinic pedantry, He gave back to men the original gift, and invited them to go forth and enjoy it in the liberty wherewith He had made them free. Picture the Sabbath against which the glad free spirit of Christianity, as represented in its Founder, set itself as a flint: the Sabbath of the Book of Jubilees; the Sabbath, for the express and sole purpose of keep-

ing which the nation of Israel had been chosen by Jehovah, and to admonish those who had infringed which the Prophet Elijah was to descend upon Carmel; the Sabbath which, if kept in its minutest particular, would usher in the advent of Messiah, and be the dawn of lasting national felicity; a Sabbath, the "delight" of which, as spoken of by the prophet, meant eating three meals a day, while the sick were to be religiously left untended, the sorrowing unsolaced; the Sabbath kept by cocks and sheep, sanctified by the lumbago-racked patient abstaining from rubbing his limb; the Sabbath of the countless *toldóth*; the Sabbath of the holy, and yet erring Rabbi Kolonimos, who, having been falsely accused of a murder, wrought a miracle to prove his innocence, but as this had involved the writing of a few words, dragged through the remnant of his days in penance, and bade all who passed his tomb fling a stone at it; the Sabbath of the twenty-four Sabbatic chapters of the Mishna. It was *such* a Sabbath as this that the Liberator of burdened and self-enslaved human nature broke, and in the breaking of it proved Himself the truer keeper of that truer Sabbath, which alone owns Him as its Lord.

III. We have now to consider the attitude of the Apostles, and especially of St. Paul, towards the Sabbath.

The first notice of the day that meets us in the Acts of the Apostles is in the account of the ascension, Acts i. 12. The distance between the spot from which our Lord ascended into heaven, is said in this verse to have been a "Sabbath-day's journey."¹ Nothing can be gathered from this as to the Apostles' scruples regarding the day; the phrase is simply a geographical one.

The Sabbath is named in seven other places of the Acts, viz., xiii. 14, 27, 42; xv. 21; xvi. 13; xvii. 2; xviii. 4. Every one of these passages contains an allusion to the ordinary Sabbath synagogue worship of the Jews. Two references (xiii. 27; xv. 21) are to the reading of the law in public worship on that day. The rest are accounts of the habit of Paul and his fellow-missionaries to take part in that public worship in whatever city they happened to be staying. The passage in xvi. 13 mentions no synagogue, because none was found in Philippi, an open *προσευχή* supplying its place.

It may be said that these notices go for very little in the way

¹ This was 2,000 cubits. Lightfoot explains this measure by reference to Josh. iii. 4. The fact seems to be that it was a Rabbinical deduction from Exod. xvi. 29. Num. xxxv. 4, 5 may have added its weight also to the tradition. Josephus gives five stadia in one place (Antiq., xx. 8, 6) and six in another ("Wars," v. 2, 3) as the distance between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. Chrysostom infers unwarrantably from this passage that our Lord ascended on a Sabbath (Hom. iii. 1).

of evidence as to the favourable attitude of the Apostles towards the continuance of the Sabbath. As positive evidential statements, it is conceded, they go for nothing. They simply tell us of the practical wisdom of the pioneers of the Gospel in utilizing such opportunities for spreading their message as the ordinary gatherings of the Jewish Sabbath placed in their way. But let us view this matter in another light. Supposing they were persuaded in their own minds, guided as they were in such opinions by the Spirit of inspiration, that the Sabbath was a mere ceremonial "beggarly element," which it was the province of the Gospel to do away, would they have acquitted themselves of all culpable reservation of truth in persistently declining to declaim against it on all occasions? Or, if they had so far "been Jews to the Jews," as to allow the maintenance of a weak and obsolete ordinance for a time by their conservative fellow-countrymen, would they not have insisted on the absolute liberty of their Gentile converts to discontinue its observance? In another question of ceremonial legalism, this last was precisely the line they adopted. Circumcision, prudently, and with a true insight into the foibles of human nature, was, by the Apostle Paul—the champion of Christian liberties—allowed to the Jew. Rather than impose it as in any sense a moral obligation upon the Gentile, he would have laid down his commission and have ceased to preach Christ. Thirteen times¹ does he speak slightly of circumcision, and sometimes he expends half a chapter upon the subject. Only *once* does he ever allude to the Jewish Sabbath (Col. ii. 16),² and then, indeed, disparagingly; for the Sabbath of his day was, as we have seen above, such a Sabbath as one with any pretensions to manliness, not to say devotion of character, would have found it an habitual degradation to observe. Moreover, we cannot think that St. Paul, familiar as he was with all the subtle Sabbatical casuistry of the Pharisees, would have had any difficulty in making out a clear and strong case against the corrupt Rabbinical Sabbatism of his day, had he been impressed with the importance of doing so. Certainly he would have had the high authority of his Lord and Master in doing this. Yet we find that while Jesus Christ was constantly opposing the corrupt views of Sabbath observance, and never speaks disrespectfully of the rite of circumcision, only alluding to it once when He points out that its requirements *override* those of the Sabbath, the Apostle uses all the fire of his zeal and the force of his inexorable logic to shake

¹ Rom. ii. 25-29, iii. 1-30, iv. 9-12; 1 Cor. vii. 18-19; Gal. ii. 3-7, ii. 12, v. 6, v. 11, vi. 15; Eph. ii. 11; Phil. iii. 3; Col. ii. 11 (twice), iii. 11.

² Rom. xiv. 5, 6, Gal. iv. 10 do not name the Sabbath, though it may be included. See below on these texts.

the popular faith in circumcision, but contents himself with a single direct, and two other implied allusions to Sabbath observance. To our thinking, it is impossible to regard his reticence on the subject, on the supposition of the abrogation of the Sabbath under the Christian dispensation, as other than a betrayal of Apostolic fidelity, a practical expression of the doctrine of "reserve," which we had vainly hoped the great Apostle, in the utter truthfulness of his character, would have been the last to afford.

The noted passage in Col. ii. 16, 17, remains. It reads thus in the Revised: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast-day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath-day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's." Now we have already seen the sort of Sabbath that must have been present to the mind of one brought up in the Judaism of those days. This consideration goes far to account for anything in this notice of the Jewish Sabbaths which appears to savour of detraction and opposition. But against what *principle* is it that the Apostle is declaiming here? It is against the *meritorious* observance of seasons. The Colossians were in imminent danger of being carried aside from the truth as it was in Christ Jesus to a system of legal bondage and mistaken asceticism. They were clinging to the shadows of Judaic legalism, and uniting to these sundry strange gleanings from the mysticism and theosophic speculations of the East. They had to be recalled to the first principles, to re-enter the school of Christ, "in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Better no Sabbath at all than the hollow observances of formalism and self-righteous legality. Unless Christ, the substance, be grasped, all ordinances, all outward services, all professions, are but empty shadows, shrouds for the dead, which all perish in the using, along with the lifeless souls they enfold.

The same considerations hold with regard to Gal. iv. 10. The Galatian Churches were in a most critical condition. No letter from the pen of the Apostle is more stern and uncompromising than the one he addresses to them. There was ample cause. They were "removed already from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which was not another," but a mere sham, a perversion of the true; which was leaving them shorn of all their evangelic liberties. Sabbaths with them were to be classed in the weary category of legal "rudiments." Judaisers were busy amongst them, preaching circumcision and Mosaism in place of Christ. To such communities, to have taught the necessity of abstaining from work on the Christian Sabbath would have been to confirm them in their false views of Christianity. Let us remember the secular-

ization of the Sabbath, whether Christian or Judaic, was about *the last peril* to threaten those early communities. Abundant, indeed, have been the lame deductions from Holy Writ that men have drawn through failing to understand the passing exigencies of the time; to occupy, as far as might be, the actual standpoint from which an Apostle delivered himself of his message. Had St. Paul lived and laboured in our day, we are persuaded that he would have been amongst the foremost in maintaining the moral obligations of the fourth commandment.

But they who desire to prove from Rom. xiv. 5, 6, and Gal. iv. 10, that week-day labour may be wrought on the Christian Sabbath without crossing the Divine purposes and will regarding the day, are asked to notice that their premises *prove too much*. On this reasoning, it is equally undesirable to observe days for worship and religious exercises, as it is in the way of abstention from work. Attending the ordinances of the Church in the morning of Sunday, and the museum, the art gallery, or the theatre in the evening, we are still condemned as observers of times. The secularizing of the evening gains for us acquittal in this court. But the hallowing of the morning convicts us. The plea, nevertheless, is *not* that it is desirable to have *no* observance of Sunday; but that it is desirable to have a relaxing of that observance. Better, on all logical grounds, to observe not even *half-days* if we would be whole-hearted in our following of this presumed apostolic teaching. If the observance of days be inimical to the spirit of Christianity, there is as little Scriptural ground for the recurrence of Sunday worship as there is for the avoidance of Sunday work.

For one other object we have to look into the Word of God. There is yet the subject of the *Christian Sabbath*, as distinct from the Jewish. We have to inquire in what lay this distinction, and to subjoin a few other considerations which are not without their own proper cogency.

It need not surprise us that the word "*Sabbath*" is nowhere applied by a New Testament writer to the Christian Day of Rest. Perpetual confusion of thought would have been the consequence of using the term promiscuously of both the Jewish and the Christian day.¹ Besides this, the word had become

¹ The application of the name "*Sabbath*" to the Christian rest day is of modern origin. Apparently it was unknown until the end of the sixteenth century (see, however, next note). We owe it to Puritanism. The word first appears attached to the Lord's Day in a publication by a Dr. Bound, entitled "*A Treatise of the Sabbath.*" This was issued in 1595 (v. Mosheim's "*Eccl. Hist.*," book iv., sect. 3, pt. 2). It is difficult to measure the debt England and Scotland are under to Puritanism in this matter. The first Reformers had left untouched the pre-Reformation abuses of the Lord's Day.

associated in the minds of the early Christians with Judaism in its corrupt and anti-Christian phases. There is, however, one place where the word is elevated for a moment out of the low-lying level to which superstition and formalism had dragged it down, and made to wear its true and earliest meaning. The passage in Heb. iv. 9 has already been alluded to. Here the word *σαββατισμός* occurs in an exalted connection; it is employed to describe the rest of the saints. Yet even this rather dissociates the usage of the word from the Christian day, as the Sabbath rest spoken of is not a present, but a future, rest. Its use here would not turn the original readers' minds naturally to the Lord's Day, even as a preparation, much less as a type and prefigurement of the rest of Heaven.¹ Moreover, it involved Jewish ideas of Heaven; Christianized, sanctified Jewish ideas, no doubt, but still distinctly Jewish. They spoke of the Hereafter in their writings as "*dies qui totus est Sabbathum.*"

The common term for the Christian Day in the New Testament is simply "The First Day of the Week." This occurs in the following passages: St. Matt. xxviii. 1; St. Mark xvi. 2; St. Luke xxiv. 1; St. John xx. 1, 19; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2: *ἡ μία σαββάτων*, or *ἡ μία τῶν σαββάτων*, a Hebraistic combination is the invariable form. This, we must suppose, continued for some time the current expression; how long, it is difficult to say with certainty. But the New Testament Canon does not close without giving to the day that name which it has borne ever since. In Rev. i. 10, we meet with the single inspired mention of the "*Lord's Day.*" *Ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ.*² There is no question but that this means the first day of the week. We have the testimony of many of the earliest of the Fathers for the application of the word to that day. To these testimonies we shall turn later. On the day of his Lord's resurrection, on the day consecrated afresh by the descent of the Holy Spirit,³ the exiled Apostle and Seer was rapt in that Spirit to behold in glory his risen and ascended Lord, and receive from Him the prophecy which closes the

¹ Such a reference as the following from Christian devotional thought of the beginning of the fifth century would scarcely have been made in the end of the first: "*Hæc tamen septima erit sabbatum nostrum, cujus finis non erit vespera, sed Dominicus dies velut octavus æternus, qui Christi resurrectione sacratus est, æternam non solum spiritûs, verum etiam corporis requiem præfigurans.*" Aug. (De Civ. Del., Lib. xxii., cap. 30).

² Ignatius (Ep. ad Magnes, 9) has the phrase "to live agreeably to the Lord's Day"—*Μηκέτι σαββατιζόντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ Κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες.* Alford points out the absurdity of understanding either "the day of the Lord," that is, "of His coming," or *Easter Day* by the expression in Rev. i.

³ The day of Pentecost was a *Sunday*, being the fiftieth day, reckoned inclusively, from the morrow of the Paschal Sabbath.

Canon: Deprived of the fellowship of his "brethren, which have the testimony of Jesus," he enjoys direct and ecstatic communion with Heaven.

Now, it is evident from St. John's allusion to the Christian Day of Rest under this name, without comment or explanation, that it bore this name some time at least before. Otherwise its use would be unintelligible. The Revelation, there is the highest degree of probability for thinking, was written in A.D. 95 or 96. Hence the name "the Lord's Day" must be supposed to have been tolerably familiar to Christians generally, as a name for the weekly Christian Day of Rest, as early as the middle of the first century. For some time, there is evidence that *both* the seventh and the first day were kept in some communities. This was the natural compromise that we might expect to find in churches of which the larger number of members were Jews by birth. The Church of Jerusalem would be the last to take refuge in this dual Sabbatism. Its presiding Bishop, St. James the Just, known as he was for his adherence to the law, so far as it was capable of being imported into Christianity without jeopardising the life and growth of the latter,¹ representing as he did the conservative elements of Christian thought, discipline, and practice, would be ready to adopt on all questions a policy of mild conciliation. The joint observance of the two, the old and the new, would doubtless be amongst those concessions, whereby, even more than St. Paul, he "became to the Jews a Jew, that he might gain the Jews."² As the Old-Covenant people hallowed the New-Covenant holy-day *thrice* every year—on the first day of unleavened bread, on the day of the wave-offering, on the first day of the Feast of Pentecost—so the New-Covenant holy-day would supersede, with gentle deliberation, the old; letting it die, so to speak, a natural, rather than by drastic harshness causing it to die a violent, death.³

As to the employments of the Lord's Day, the Acts of the Apostles give us but little information; one passage only presents itself (Acts xx. 7). Here we find that the Christians came together

¹ As St. Peter never mentions the law, so St. James never mentions *the Gospel*. When he does allude to it (i. 25, ii. 12), which he does twice, he calls it "a law," but adds that it is "a law of liberty." This phrase exactly describes his own attitude towards the Gospel. It is a cameo of himself.

² There was an old tradition preserved by Jerome that the Lord Jesus Christ would return again on a Paschal Lord's Day. (We forget where we have seen this.) The Moslems fix the Judgment Day on a *Friday*.

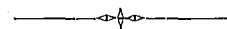
³ This practice of observing the "*Sabbath*" as distinct from the "*Lord's Day*" was long continued in the *Eastern Church*. In the *Roman* and other of the *Western Churches* it was observed from the third century (probably *not* before) as a fast.

upon the first day of the week to break bread, or in other words, to partake of the Holy Communion. There is the consecration of the day by common worship and the Sacrament. This is all we learn from the Acts. To this we can only add one citation from the Epistles (1 Cor. xvi. 2). In this passage mention is again made of the Christian Sabbath: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." There was, then, to be a collection made each Sunday for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and this, we cannot doubt, was to be made when the brethren came together for public worship and the "breaking of bread."

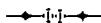
Here the voice of Scripture fails. We have listened to it, we trust, with humility, with reverence. We have endeavoured to lay aside all preconceptions, to weigh its evidence, to catch the inspiration of its spirit, to "call no man our master upon earth," while bending to catch the voice that speaks from Heaven. From that voice we now turn, and with a single added reflection pass to the fathers of the earliest age, and listen to the witnesses to be found amongst them.

The reflection is this. If we hear so little in the Apostolic records and writings of the Christian duty of hallowing the Lord's Day, one reason, and no trivial one, is that those early believers, in the ardour and devotion of their fresh young faith, were prone rather to turn every week-day into a Sunday of holy fellowship and service,¹ than feel the slightest wish to make secular the weekly day of rest. Whatever else we are doing, when we attempt to overstep the barriers of restriction and prohibition, we are cutting ourselves adrift from the practice of the Apostolic and the Primitive Church.

ALFRED PEARSON.



Correspondence.



ROBERT BROWNING.

To the Editor of THE CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—As Robert Browning, the great intellectual poet of the age, is still in every one's thoughts, it may interest your readers to read a letter of his written to me after the appearance of an article of mine in the CHURCHMAN on the poetry of Mrs. Barrett Browning. The article was introduced to his notice by my friend, Miss Anna Swanwick, a lady well known in the

¹ Cf. Acts ii. 46. καθ' ἡμέραν. Chrys. calls the Lord's Day the "*dies panis*," from the custom (*later*) of *weekly* communions. v. Bingham (Ant. bk. xv., ch. 9, sect. 2).