

of the Master's kingdom, and for the good of our beloved Church.

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ART. II.—THE LAW OF THE SABBATH.

PART III.

TO the testimony of Holy Scripture, with which our former papers have been wholly occupied, our present purpose is to add the evidence of sub-Apostolic times, with a view to ascertaining the practice of the early Church in connection with the Christian Day of Rest. Our excursion into this field must necessarily, be a hasty one. It will be followed by a glance into the records of some ancient nations, to seek for indications of the universality of a weekly day of religious restraint; the question of the substitution of the first day of the week for the seventh will bring our inquiry to a close.

As in gathering our evidence from the Gospels, we will first offer the reader a catena of passages from the early Fathers, postponing comment until afterwards. We shall find the day called by various names—fearlessly spoken of by the heathen name of "Sunday," as we name a god in the name of each day of the week, and feel no sanction of idolatry is involved in doing so.

*Ignatius*, at the beginning of the second century, thus writes to the Asiatic Church of Magnesia:

If, then, those who were brought up in the old order, have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living agreeably to the Lord's Day, on which also our life sprang up again by Him and by His death . . . how shall we be able to live apart from Him?<sup>1</sup>

*The Epistle of Barnabas* (middle of the second century):

Moreover, He says: "Thou shalt sanctify it with pure hands and a pure heart." If, therefore, any can *now* sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, except he is pure in heart in all things, we are deceived. Behold, therefore, *resting aright*,<sup>2</sup> we shall sanctify it, having been justified and received the promise, iniquity no longer existing, but all things having been made new by the Lord, shall we not then be able to sanctify it, having been first sanctified ourselves?" Further, he says to them: "Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure" (Isa. i. 13). Ye perceive how He speaks. "Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me, but that in which I have made, namely, this, when giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of

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<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad Magnes, c. 9. The phrase, "observing the Sabbath," is — "σαββαρίζοντες," "*sabbatizing*"—slightly contemptuous.

<sup>2</sup> We follow here the reading of the Codex N.

another world. Wherefore, also, *we keep the eighth day with joyfulness*, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

*Justin Martyr* (middle of the second century) :

And on the day called Sunday,<sup>2</sup> all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits ; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, when our prayer is ended, bread, and wine, and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen. And there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing, give what each thinks fit ; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world ; and Jesus Christ, our Saviour, on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday), and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the sun, having appeared to His Apostles and disciples, he taught them these things which we have submitted unto you.<sup>3</sup>

*Irenæus* (end of the second century) :

The mystery of the Lord's Resurrection ought to be kept only on the Lord's Day.<sup>4</sup>

*Dionysius of Corinth* (end of the second century) :

To-day we observe the Lord's holy day.<sup>5</sup>

*Melito of Sardis* (end of the second century). He wrote a treatise *περὶ κυριακῆς*, concerning the Lord's Day.<sup>6</sup>

*Clement of Alex* (end of the second century) says that Plato, in the tenth Book of his "Republic," speaks beforehand of the Lord's Day.<sup>7</sup>

*Tertullian* (end of the second century) :

In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than the sun worship . . . .<sup>8</sup>

Others suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact (quod innotuerit) that we pray towards the east, and make Sunday a day of rejoicing.<sup>9</sup>

We count fasting, or kneeling on the Lord's Day, to be unlawful.<sup>10</sup> Sabbaths and Lord's Days are excepted—*i. e.*, from fasting.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ch. xv. Some sentences are obscure, but the general drift of the passage is plain.

<sup>3</sup> I. Apol., c. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Epi. to Bp. Soter, Ap. Euseb. H.C., Lib. iv., c. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ap. Euseb. iv. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Apol., c. 16.

<sup>10</sup> De Cor. Mil., c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> τῆ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρα.

<sup>4</sup> Ap. Euseb. H.E., Lib. v., c. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Stromata, bk. v., c. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ad Nationes, c. 13.

<sup>11</sup> De Jejuniis, c. 15.

The evidence thus gathered from patristic sources cannot be disregarded. We learn from the testimony of the earliest and most noted of the Fathers that the devout and joyous observance of the first day of the week, under the name of the Lord's Day, was an essential part of recognised Christian practice; that secular employments were laid aside; that the believers met regularly on that day for united worship and spiritual instruction; that the Lord's Supper was administered on that day; that alms were distributed to the needy; that there was such a marked distinction in the habits of the Christians between this day and the rest of the week, that their pagan detractors accused them of sun-worship, the day being in their calendar peculiarly appropriated to the honour of that luminary; that mere cessation of labour, though understood to be necessary, did not fulfil the requirements of the day, but that this was to be subsidiary to devotions, and especially solemn assemblies for common worship. The well-known phrase of Ignatius, "living agreeably to the Lord's Day," is of particular import, because it is just one of those allusions which mark the prominence of the observance in the regard of the believers of the time. It is of much greater evidential value than the strongest injunctions from Ignatius to his readers touching the duty of keeping the day holy. We have no hesitation in affirming that there is no historical fact resting on stronger grounds of proof than this—that the observation of the day by intermission of toil, and by special religious exercises, was the constant practice of the Christian Church from the days of the Apostles.

The due observance of the day, after the secular arm was stretched out to defend and support the Church, was enforced by law. Constantine forbade lawsuits on this day,<sup>1</sup> the courts were to be closed.<sup>2</sup> Neither civil nor criminal causes might be heard. Pirates, however, might be prosecuted for boarding the corn-vessels.<sup>3</sup> Valentinian the Elder prohibited all arrests of men for debt, whether public or private, on this day.<sup>4</sup> Valentinian the Younger speaks still more expressly: "On Sunday, which our forefathers rightly called the Lord's Day, let all prosecutions of causes, controversial business, and disputes be wholly laid aside; let no one demand a public or a private debt; let there be no hearing of causes, either before arbitrators appointed by law, or voluntarily chosen. And let him be accounted not only infamous, but sacrilegious also, whoever departs from

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod., Lib. ii., Tit. 8, De Fēriis, Leg. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cases of absolute necessity were excepted. Slaves might be manumitted, this being an act of mercy.

Cod. Theod., Lib. ix., Tit. 35, De Quæstionibus, Leg. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Lib. viii., Tit. 8, De Executoribus, Leg. 1.

the rule and customs of our holy religion."<sup>1</sup> Theodosius exacts that all Sundays in the year be days of vacation from all business of the law whatsoever.<sup>2</sup>

Secular business of a more private kind was also strictly forbidden. Ploughing and harvesting were *at first* excepted from the prohibition. Eusebius,<sup>3</sup> in his "Life of Constantine," notices two laws made by him touching military discipline. By the first of these laws the Christian soldiers in his army were obliged to attend Church; to enable them to do so they were discharged from all services on that day. Those who were still beathen were, by a second law, compelled to repair to the open fields, and there, laying aside their arms, to address their prayers, at a given sign, to the Supreme God.<sup>4</sup>

What is still more to our present purpose, no public games, or shows, or frivolous recreations, were allowed by law on the Lord's Day.

There are two celebrated laws of Theodosius the Elder and his grandson to this effect. The first forbids anyone, holding any official post, to gratify the populace with any shows or games, whether gymnastic, or gladiatorial, or theatrical, or equestrian. The second extends the prohibition to Christmas Day, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, and includes Jews and Gentiles in its application. The coincidence of an imperial birthday with a Sunday was to be allowed to constitute no excuse for making an exception.<sup>5</sup>

Were not our researches purposely restricted to the first ages, many another testimony might be added from the later imperial enactments, from the later Church councils. But the further down the ages we travel the less reliance can be placed upon the practice of Christian communities. The stream is the purest nearest to the spring. The rapidity of its deterioration after the third century supplies one of the saddest pages in the records of the weakness of human nature.<sup>6</sup> We have adduced sufficient evidence to make good our case for the Apostolic and primitive observance of the first day of the week. Those who desire to

<sup>1</sup> Cod. Theod., Lib. viii., Tit. 8, De Executoribus, Leg. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Lib. ii., Tit. 8, De Feriis, Leg. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. Vit. Const., Lib. iv., cap. 18, 19, 20.

<sup>4</sup> A curious comment on Acts xvii. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Cod. Theod., Lib. xv., De Spectaculis, Tit. 5, Legg. 2 and 5. Chrysostom (Hom. iii. in 2 Thess.) calls upon his hearers to come to church *twice* a day, *even if there be no sermon*. To the above evidence we may add the celebrated report made to Pliny the Younger by some lapsed Christians: "Quod essent soliti *stato die* ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem," etc. (Lib. x., Ep. 97).

<sup>6</sup> Occupations which are *vindicated* in councils of the sixth century are often to be regarded as evidence of a reactionary feeling against Judaizing views. In the seventh and eighth centuries vigorous reformatory

see more are referred to the voluminous chapters on the subject in Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church." The day was regarded as, in the highest degree, a sacred one. It was not felt to be a bondage, a galling yoke, to keep it. It was, in the language which the early believers borrowed from the Jews, their Malchah, the queen of days, "the holy of the Lord, honourable." On it they did not "do their own pleasure," nor "speak their own words," but "delighted themselves in the Lord." To them it was a rich gift, and as such they employed it and enjoyed it. It never occurred to them even to endeavour to render the day a pleasurable one to the outside world, to make the day of the Lord's resurrection a "delight" to those who had never received the grace of union with Him. Nothing would have astonished those early believers more than modern anxiety to make religious privileges tasteful and attractive to the irreligious. Persecution did much to keep the Church and the world apart. It may be that our special dangers nowadays lie in the direction of rendering the profession of Christianity so light a yoke that the worldly hardly feel its weight; and find the compromise between self and Christ so practicable that next to nothing has to be yielded when they yield allegiance to Him. What if this wedding of irreconcilable principles result in the offer to the outside world of a Christianity without a Christ? Our first duty is to God's truth, our *second* to our fellow-men. Everything we will do to benefit, to rescue, to bless, with heaven's gifts, mankind—everything but *one* thing: make the enactments of God one whit more elastic than He Himself has made them; lower, by a single half-inch, the barrier He has set up between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of self.

The question has now to be considered whether the appointment of the last of the seven days of the week as the Sabbath was peculiar to the Jewish dispensation.

In the first place, it is to be observed that the *first* whole day of Adam's existence was a Sabbath. He was created on the sixth day. God's seventh was *his* first.<sup>1</sup> Now, from what day of his existence would Adam be likely to reckon his weeks if not from the first day of his paradisaical life?

This is our first point: our next is this. If we have the legal requirements of one nation, and that nation's practice to account

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measures were taken. Pious frauds were pressed into service; miraculous judgments cited; here lightning had struck; here a palsy smitten; here visible fire burnt up, the violators of the day (*vide* Robertson's "Church History," revised edit., vol. iii., pp. 239, 240).

<sup>1</sup> We do not open the weary question of the "days" of creation. We may be excused entering an arena in which the very combatants are well-nigh lost to view in the dust they raise.

for the sacredness of the seventh day, we have the most ancient practice and customs of *several* nations to prove the peculiar veneration of the ancient world for the *first*. To this varied testimony we now turn.

China is our first field. Here, it is true, the existing usages of the country afford little help to us. When the eyes of Western curiosity were first directed towards it, the conclusion of one eminent writer was that the Chinese knew no Sabbath. Since then our knowledge of the country and its annals and customs has largely increased;<sup>1</sup> so, before adducing evidence of the coincidence of a sacred day amongst this people of very ancient appointment, we will mark one or two testimonies to the hebdomadal reckoning of time. The following rites are customary at the funeral of a father. Before a tablet inscribed with the names of the deceased parent, incense is burned, and the children prostrate themselves daily for one week; after which the prostrations recur on each seventh day for seven weeks.

Our next record of the early existence of the week in China is found in the cycle of twenty-eight days; each day named after one of the twenty-eight constellations, corresponding to our signs of the zodiac, though differing in number. This cycle, which is very ancient, appears to be an attempt to combine the measurement of time by the moon with a multiple of the seven days of the week.

The third record is taken from the Chinese classics, which were considered ancient in the time of Confucius—that is, five hundred years before Christ. In one passage of these old writings, the words are found: “Seven days complete a revolution;” in another there is this statement: “On the seventh day all the passages are closed.” By the “passages” are meant the roads and canals. These extracts, from writings of an age prehistoric, point both to the existence of the week, and, what is of still greater moment, to the existence also of a weekly day of rest.<sup>2</sup>

The last record we shall bring forward is even still more interesting. It is encountered in the “Imperial Almanac,” issued annually by the Board of Rites. It is put forth with

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<sup>1</sup> “The Primitive Sabbath Restored,” a pamphlet by Rev. J. Johnston, of Glasgow, is here our guide.

<sup>2</sup> The classic from which these extracts are taken is the celebrated Yih King, or “Book of Changes.” This work first saw the light within the walls of a prison. Its author, Wan Wang, a political offender in 1150 B.C., relieved the tedium of confinement by elaborating a philosophical system from the eight diagrams and their sixty-four combinations, grounding his theory upon an earlier system invented by the Emperor Fu-he. Confucius attempted to elucidate the book with but poor success. (See further Professor Douglas’s account in the “Encyclopædia Brit.,” art. “China.”)

the authority of the emperor, and the publication of an unauthorized edition is made a penal offence. On every seventh day, in this almanac, a particular character, not found in common use, recurs. This seventh day, thus marked, is our Sabbath; the *first* day of our week. The origin of the character is lost in obscurity. The Chinese dictionaries give "secret" or "closed" as its meaning.

The foregoing evidence, from the customs and most ancient written records of China can scarcely be overrated. It clearly indicates the existence of the "week" in times so far remote that, in the twelfth century B.C., they were considered ancient. We have a notice of the stopping of traffic on one day in seven by order of the emperor: we have a mysterious and enigmatical character attached to the day in the "Imperial Almanac," which corresponds to our Christian Sabbath, a character which no living Chinese scholar is able fully to explain.<sup>1</sup>

The testimony from Indian sources is not less cogent. The most sacred day amongst the Hindoos is *not* the seventh day, but the *first* of the week. This day is known as *Aditivar* or *Aditya-war*. This must be regarded as independent evidence, notwithstanding that some have attempted to prove that India was indebted to Egypt for its calendar. Dr. Hersey, *e.g.*, thinks that we may account for this similarity between the Indian and Egyptian method of computing time and naming the first day as sacred by supposing that Hindoos took the system from Persia, with which country and Egypt there were frequent military connections, Persia being supposed to be the cradle of the Hindoo race. Is not this going a long way round to establish a preconceived theory? We venture to think so.

Egypt supplies our next evidence. In the Egyptian astronomy the order of the planets, beginning with the most remote, is Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon. Each day was consecrated to a particular planet, the day receiving the name of the planet which presided over its first hour. If, then, the first hour of a day was consecrated to Saturn, that planet would also have the 8th, the 15th, and the 22nd hour; the 23rd would fall to Jupiter, the 24th to Mars, and the 25th, or *the first hour of the second day*, would belong to the Sun. In like manner the first hour of the 3rd day would fall to the Moon, the first of the 4th day to Mars, of the 5th to Mercury, of the 6th to Jupiter, and of the 7th to Venus. The cycle being completed, the first hour of the 8th day would return to Saturn, and all the others succeed in the same order.

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Legge has written to me that this character has been clearly proved to be merely phonetic, and stands for the first syllable of the Persian word "*Mithras*"—*the sun*. This is much to the purpose. He dates Fu-he B.C. 3332.

According to Dio Cassius the Egyptian week commenced with *Saturday*.<sup>1</sup>

An important corroboration of this evidence is unexpectedly afforded by a passage in Stephen's defence before the council: "Yea, ye took up the star of your god Remphan" (Acts vii. 43). The quotation is from Amos v. 26, where the text reads "*Chiun*" in place of "*Remphan*." The discrepancy has occasioned much discussion. The most reasonable view is that which regards<sup>2</sup> Chiun as a Semitic equivalent for the Egyptian Remphan or Rephan. Now it is the opinion of Kirchen that Remphan (*Ρηφάν*) is a Coptic word, and signifies the planet *Saturn*. This opinion has been repudiated by some, such as Hengstenberg, but it is supported by many eminent Coptic and Arabic scholars. If, then, the Israelites, deserting the worship of the true God for the false deities of heathendom, "took up" the worship of this Egyptian god, it becomes a striking fact in connection with our argument that this god should have been associated with the day of the week on which they had been accustomed to worship the Lord.

We pass now to Roman times. Here we find the *first* day of the week dedicated to the supreme deity. It is always difficult in the pantheon of the Greeks and Romans to assign each god his proper place in the order of dignity. Jupiter was by no means always supreme. The father of the gods was not seldom compelled to bow to some one or another of his refractory offspring. Undoubtedly the Sun-god was, in many respects, supreme. His name was given to the first day of the week. "Dominus" was a special title reserved for the Sun. *Baal* is its Phœnician equivalent. We find, then, in the "*Dies Solis*" of the Roman calendar an evidence of the sacredness of the first day of the week.

It must be matter for surprise that the Romans should have gone to Egypt for their calendar, thus setting aside the customs of Italy and Greece. The fact has been emphasized as most significant. Before the days of Julius Cæsar the Roman week consisted of *eight* days. There is some doubt whether he actually introduced the septenary division of time, but there is none as to the fact of its introduction about his time. It is at

<sup>1</sup> The above is taken from Mr. Woolhouse's article "Calendar," in the "Encyclopædia Brit." Rawlinson ("Herod," vol. ii., p. 134, edit. 3), while maintaining that the Egyptians generally made use of decades, allows that the *hebdomal* division was of very early use, instancing the seven days' fête of Apis.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Wordsworth takes this view. Dr. Pusey (on Amos v. 26) suggests that the Repham of the LXX., quoted by St. Stephen (*Ρηφάν*), may be only a different way of writing *chevan*, the translator here, as in other places, substituting  $\gamma$  for  $\delta$ . He allows, however, the theory of its being an equivalent, as an alternative one.



least highly probable that the system was introduced in 46 B.C., when the calendar was remodelled. We cannot fail to see here an instance of God's overruling providence in the introduction, just before the Christian era, of a system which should afford peculiar facilities for the re-establishment of the primæval Sabbath, the first day of a week of seven days. The very word "Lord's Day" was *Christianized* rather than coined. It, like the word "Logos," was utilized by the Christians from heathen sources, the term "Dominus," as we have already seen, being peculiarly appropriated by the Sun-god—Apollo among the Romans, Baal among the Phœnicians.

Taken together, these testimonies from widely distributed sources form a body of evidence of no slight value. They appear to point unmistakably in one direction, and establish the high probability of the following propositions: 1st. The extreme antiquity of the *seven-days-week*. 2nd. The almost universal custom among the nations of antiquity of setting apart one day in seven for some special acts of worship. 3rd. The superiority in the estimate of most nations of antiquity, and these the most important by far, of the *first* day over the seventh of the week.

Further, be it observed, that this division of time, unlike the others, is not regulated by astronomical reasons. If we disallow a common origin for the custom, that common origin being the primæval week, we have to account for this singular coincidence of many nations as a purely arbitrary computation. Moreover, it is by no means an obvious method. To have divided the month into groups, say of *five* days, as was actually done in the island of Java, would have secured a readier and simpler subdivision of the year; or, say, into periods of *ten* days, whereby the computation of time would have been brought into harmony with the very early and almost world-wide adoption of the decimal system of numeration.<sup>1</sup> Except on the grounds we take, the prevalence of the septenary computation is inexplicable.<sup>2</sup> It is not forgotten that some have endeavoured to explain this on the ground that the seven planets were adopted as the basis of the calculation. But this breaks down at once when we remind ourselves that the naming of the days from *the names* of the planets (we carefully avoid saying from the planets) was by no means so widespread as the septenary computation. It would, of course, on this theory, have been co-extensive with that computation. The Jews, the Arabians,

<sup>1</sup> This decimal computation was forced upon France at the Revolution, with what success is well known. An ignominious return to the older method was the sequel.

<sup>2</sup> The lunar month affords no explanation. This being 29½ days, a week is not an aliquot part of it.

the Persians, and other Oriental people simply denominated the days of the week by their *numerical order*. The Goths and the Saxons, after assigning the first two days to the chief luminaries, gave the names of gods which had, as far as we know, absolutely *no connection* in their minds with the planets to the rest of the days of the week.<sup>1</sup>

The question follows, Whether the day for the commencement of the week was changed by Divine appointment at the Exodus?

There is a curious tradition, for which Dio Cassius is responsible, that, on their flight from Egypt, the Jews, actuated by hatred of their former oppressors, made Saturday the last day of the week. We have seen that with the ancient Egyptians it was the first.<sup>2</sup> This, like that Egyptian story that the Jews were expelled from the country because they were infected with leprosy, is a curious distortion of historic facts. At the same time it affords an interesting side-testimony to the alteration itself.

Now it has been the opinion of some that the true explanation of Exod. xvi. 23, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord," is to be sought in the change that was made, at the departure from Egypt, of the Sabbath, from the first to the seventh day of the week. We take the following from Dr. Jamieson as to the above passage:

It is urged that the Israelites left Egypt on the day before the primitive Sabbath. We learn from the first verse of this chapter that they arrived at the Wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the second month; the 6th day from that day was the day before the Sabbath (verses 5 and 23), and the 20th day of the month; consequently the 21st was the Sabbath, and the 22nd was the day after the Sabbath. If we reckon back we shall find that the 15th, the 8th, and the 1st days of this month were also the days after the Sabbath, and so the 30th and last days of the preceding month Abib, which is called the first month, was the Sabbath, and consequently the 29th, 22nd, and 15th days of this month were the days before the Sabbath, but the 15th was the day on which the Israelites left Egypt.

So when the manna was gathered in double quantity on the *fifth* day of the old Creation-week, the *rulers* of the congregation are surprised, as expecting the day of rest to be still two days off. They assemble, and apprise Moses of the incident. His reply is, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

A sufficient reason for such a radical alteration in the calendar

<sup>1</sup> V. Dr. Jamieson on Gen. ii., "Critical and Experimental Commentary."

<sup>2</sup> "Encyclopædia Brit.," vol. iv., p. 665.

<sup>3</sup> Origen (Hom. vii. in Exod. xv.) says that manna first fell on the Lord's Day to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath. Cf. the sheaf of the first-fruits.]

is to be sought in the solicitude of God to draw off the minds of the people from the idolatrous customs of the Egyptians. The change of the beginning of the year was accompanied by a change in the week. The seventh month was made to change places with the first. He who "hath put in His own power" times and seasons may do what He will with His own. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth."

The outcome of this close association in constant religious thought and worship between the Sabbath and the deliverance from Egypt, is that the particular Sabbath of the Jewish nation had a strong national element as part of its basis. The year was changed to fix the memory of the great event. The Sabbath was changed for the same purpose.<sup>1</sup> When, however, national considerations were merged in the wider thoughts to which the Gospel of good-will to all mankind gave birth, such a reference to a Jewish national mercy in connection with the weekly Day of Rest was no longer appropriate. The day that had been changed to lend itself more readily to the requirements of a temporary dispensation, again resumed its earliest place in the order of the days of the week. A far mightier deliverance, from far direr foes, through the atoning work of the Mediator, has eclipsed the glory of the emancipation from under the hand of the Pharaohs. The whole relations that subsisted between Israel and Israel's God and Lord were singular: patriotism and piety were closely bound up together. Not only their religious, but also their national existence had begun and was sustained through their direct relations with the God of Israel. They were taught to regard themselves as the chosen of Jehovah, their land as His peculiar possession, the rest of the world not only as foreigners, but "strangers from the covenants of promise." To become a believer in the true God involved becoming a Jew. Proselytes were not only united to the faith, but in a

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<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is extracted verbatim from the notes to Dr. Lee's sermon on the "Duty of observing the Christian Sabbath," as appearing of much importance in this connection: "I am induced to believe that the first and last day in each of these feasts was intended to fall invariably on a Sabbath; but that the first day of the first feast was a Sabbath is put beyond all doubt by Levit. xxiii. 11, 15, where we are told that the sheaf is to be waved *on the morrow after the Sabbath*, and that from that morrow (ver. 15), seven whole weeks are to be counted to the feast of Pentecost; and, if this was the case, each of these days must have been a Sabbath."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the common explanation of the "high day" of John xix. 31, that it was a year in which the first day of the feast *happened to coincide* (so Alford) with the weekly Sabbath, is untenable. It was no coincidence. The day was not "high" because it was a Sabbath, but the Sabbath was "high" because it was *the Passover-Sabbath*. By a slight lapsus, Dr. Lee (p. 6) says that the *Jubilee* was reckoned from Abib (see Levit. xxv. 9).

peculiar manner to the nation that embodied the faith. The very names of localities obtained a religious significance. Events in history become invested with mystic import—grew into the scenery of a whole Pilgrim's Progress; gave to religious truth a form, a face, a voice. Men spoke of loving Jerusalem in the same breath with loving the Lord. The enemies of Israel were the enemies of Heaven. Every war was a crusade; every battle an act of religion. To link, therefore, to such a religious system the undying memories of the Exodus, was in keeping with the whole character of that system. But when the great Shepherd came to gather together in one His own, which were scattered abroad, and win spiritual liberty for His race and people, these memorials of Jewish history fade before the grander commemorations of redemption.

We have no hesitation in drawing, from the foregoing inquiry, the conclusion that the appointment of the last of the seven days of the week as the Sabbath was peculiar to the temporary Jewish economy. The arrangement bears upon its face the marks of transitoriness. We hold that the appointment was grounded upon considerations which no longer have place; and that therefore, when the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles, the restoration of the primordial first-day Sabbath was a matter of course.

We leave the subject. Something might have been added on the existing or proposed encroachments upon the sanctity of the day. It appears better to avoid ground which has so often been ably occupied of late years by platform and press. In this direction let a closing word or two suffice.

Need we try—ought we to try—to make the day the happiest of all the week to those whose whole lives are one long "grieving of the Holy Spirit of God," between whose souls and the Divine Source of all truest happiness there stretches "a great gulf fixed," unbridged as yet by redeeming love, or though bridged by that redeeming love, uncrossed by their reluctant feet? The Lord's Day *must* be more or less a pleasureless day to a Christless soul. It will only be otherwise in proportion as its distinctive and most hallowed features are obscured or lost. It will be most loved for that in which it is least sacred: we must be "in the spirit" to enjoy its spiritual joys. The very same principle that would render it, pleasurable to the worldly and the frivolous, would, if it dared, turn heaven itself into a paradise for worldlings and degrade its pure joys into the hollow pleasures of selfish fashion.

This is not the way to do the Church's work in the world. This was not her Lord's. Ill will she fulfil her high and holy mission among men by bating one jot of her claims to entire and unconditional allegiance to her great Head. Her work is

not—may she ever remember—to bring down the things of God to the level of the world, but to lift men up through her ceaseless ministries of loving suasion to the altitude of the things of God. Alas for her if she play the Belshazzar with the vessels of the sanctuary, or, through sinful compromise, allow the world to do so! The murmur of the earth-bound multitude, “Our soul loatheth this light bread,” must constitute no excuse for offering them coarser and less heavenly diet. For her children she has none but “angels’ food,” and may fill none but such as have an appetite for that.

No stress is here laid on the connection between national prosperity and the honouring of the day of rest. Close as we believe that connection to be, we close with a higher note. While secularists are busy laying a rude and profane finger on the Christian’s best treasures, let it be his to grasp them the tighter. Not too much, but all too little, *he* feels one day in seven to be to step aside from the hurrying, time-worshipping crowd, and, while the great machine of commercial and business life pauses,

Find solace which a busy world disdains.<sup>1</sup>

No pleasureless day of austerity and bond-service is it to him, rejoicing in “the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free.” Having learned to estimate the pleasures of earth at their true value—having weighed them in the balances of the sanctuary and found them wanting, he has his own sweet and enduring pleasures of which the world knows not. He is more than contented with his calm, peaceful Sabbaths. From their holy ministries, from their quiet joys, from their gentle restraints, he “gathers fruit unto life eternal.” To him they are

. . . A port protected  
From storms that round us rise ;  
A garden intersected  
With streams of Paradise.<sup>2</sup>

Each Sunday, as it passes from him, leaves him stronger, calmer, meeter for the Sabbath-keeping that “remains”; with a firmer hold upon his God; more fully possessed of that peace passing understanding, which is begotten of the ever-deepening conviction that man’s highest good is to be found in the knowledge of the Lord, and in the doing of His will.

ALFRED PEARSON.

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Wordsworth.

