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Bible Studies
on the
Sabbath Question

Arthur Elwin Main

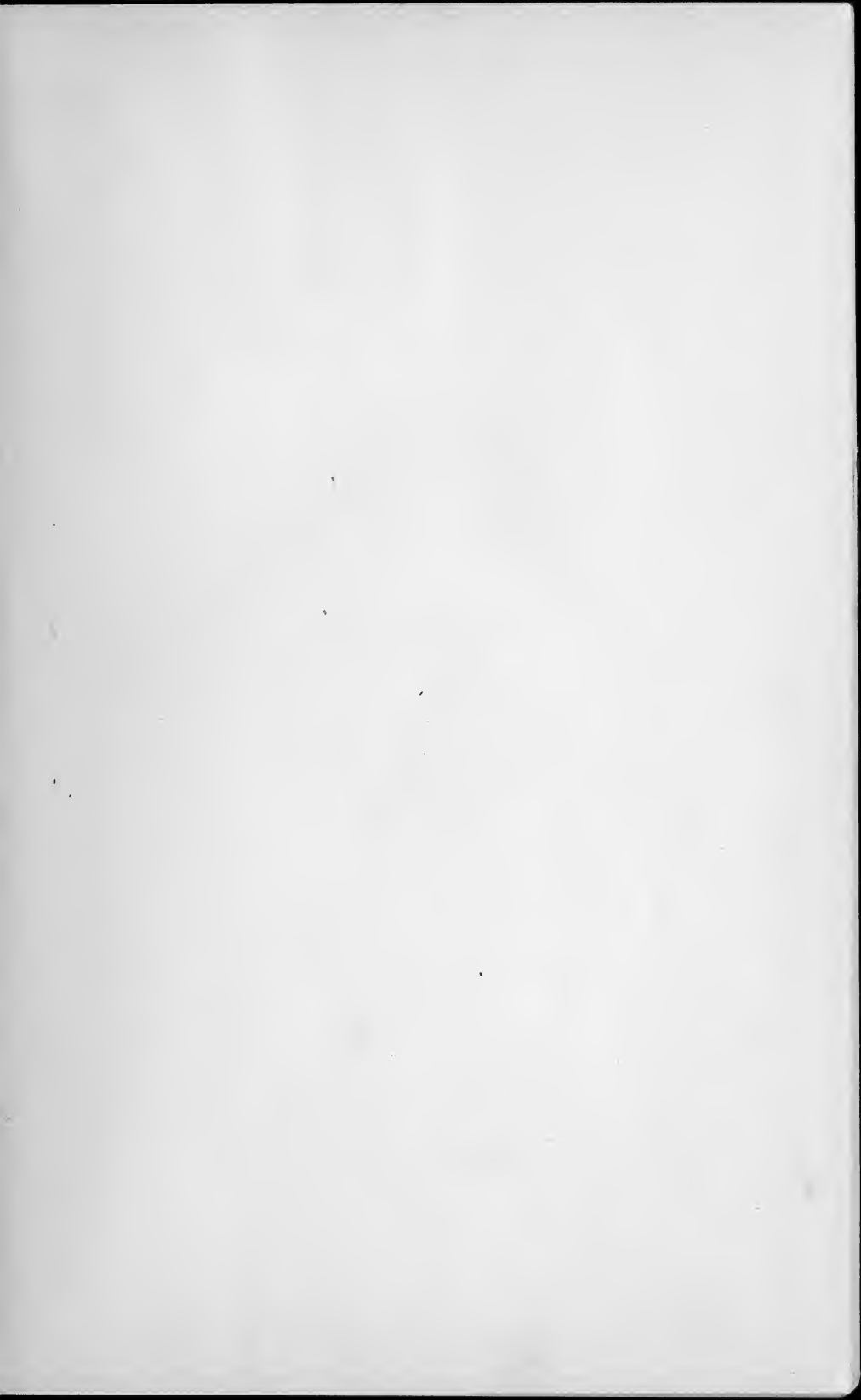


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THE STUDIES OF THE
SABBATH QUEST

BY

THE REV. DR. J. H. ...
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NEW YORK ...

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BIBLE STUDIES ON THE SABBATH QUESTION

FOR THE USE OF
PASTORS, SABBATH SCHOOLS, YOUNG
PEOPLE'S CLASSES, HOME
STUDY, ETC.

ARTHUR ELWIN MAIN, D. D.,
Dean and Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology,
Alfred Theological Seminary, Alfred, N. Y.

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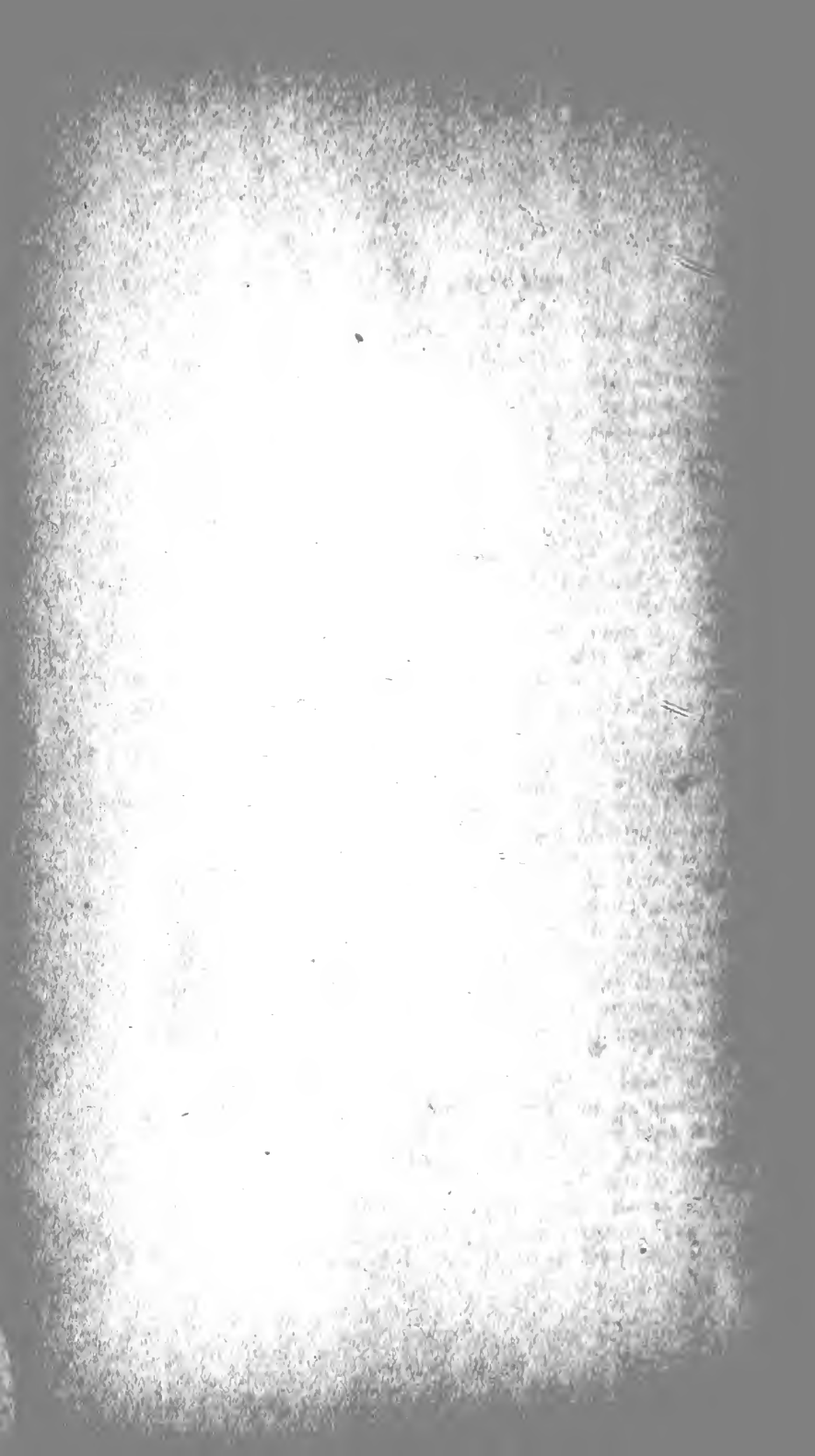
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INTRODUCTION

The Sabbath is a living question, today, in Christian literature, and in the world of Christian life and thought. Conventions are held, addresses made, sermons preached, books written, papers published, and State and National legislatures petitioned, in the interests of Sunday observance. This is a recognition of the importance of having some particular day set apart for change and rest for body and mind, and for special religious and humanizing purposes. History and experience witness to the vital connection between such a day and the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of mankind. And it is my belief that if the Church would come back to the Sabbath of the Old and New Testaments, its appeal on behalf of sabbathism would be supported by Scripture, history, reason, and sentiment, as can not be the case in efforts for the Sunday.

Advancing knowledge in the fields of physical and mental science, and of history, has greatly changed and enlarged our conceptions of God, man, and the universe. Through our increasing knowledge of ancient peoples and religions we have been led to look upon all the great religions of the world as signs that men everywhere have been seeking after God, who met them on the highest level of their thought and desire. But as the Christian Scriptures, religion, and ethics, claim to be the true and the best, they must stand the test of history, experience, and reason.

Industrial progress, new social conditions, and closer international relations, are the wonder of our times, and must be reckoned with by us who believe in the final triumph of the religion and morals of the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The study of the history and literature of the Bible has been lifted to the level of other history and literature; and the right of the Bible to the results of a critical scientific, historical, and literary investigation of its claims is recognized as never before.

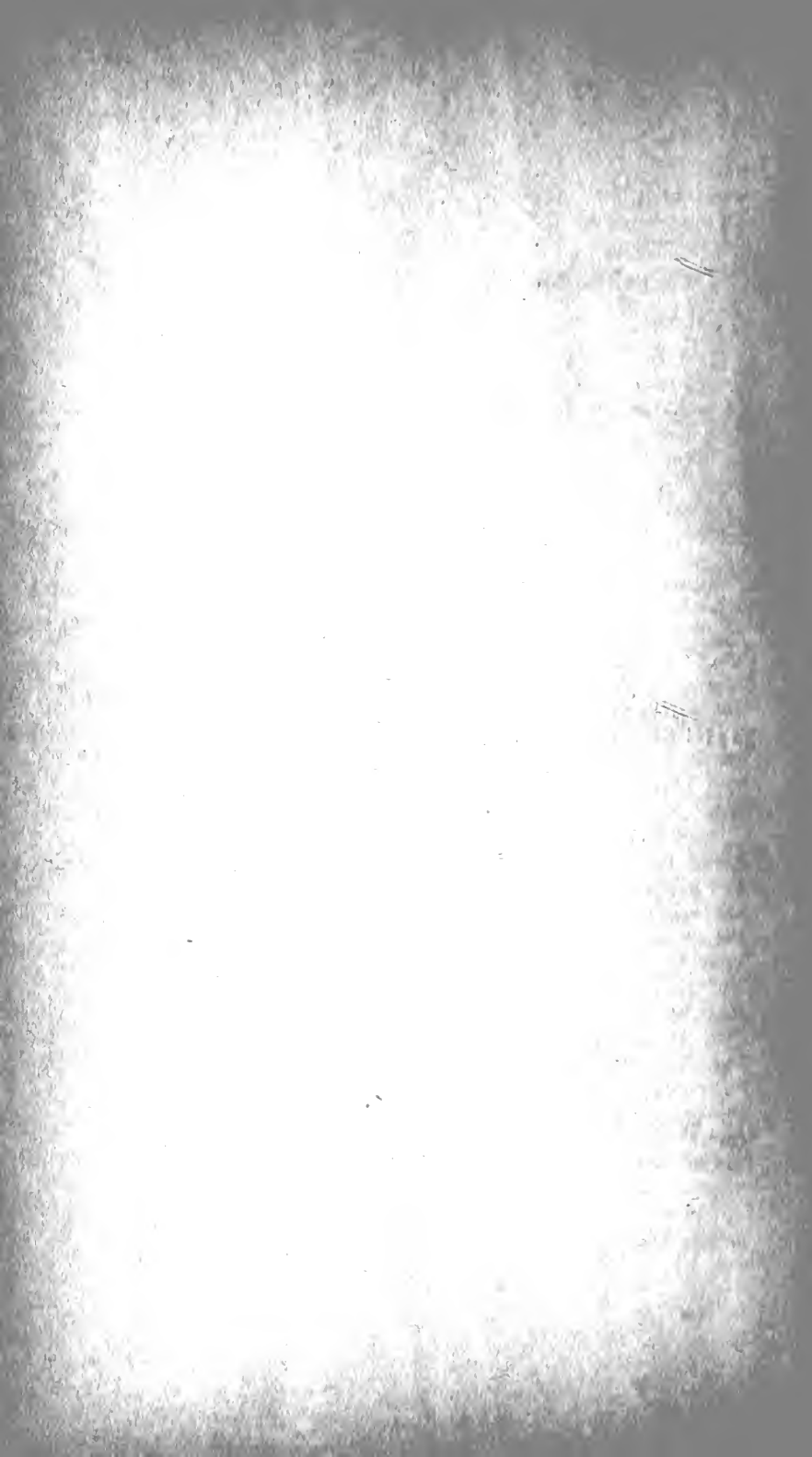
The rational and practical, the scientific and historical spirit and method prevail. What are things worth to us while we fight the battles of life? Will they help us realize

our aspirations for what is better? Modernly educated young men and women, and, indeed, all really thoughtful persons, ask for facts that are correctly defined, clearly verified, and well arranged. And the historical spirit views the world of men and events as a great whole of related parts, to be studied and explained according to the principles of evolution or development. Men will not believe in Christ because of his alleged miracles; they must first believe in Christ the revelation of God, then in miracle. Men will not believe in the Bible because told that it is inspired; they will first believe in the Scriptures as the most wonderful of all books on religion and morals; then they can not but believe in its inspiration. Men will not believe in the supernatural as something which contradicts or violates the natural; for this also is of God; but in supernatural as only another name for that which is natural in God's sight. Such are the changed points of view, such the proposed new light for old faiths, demanded by modern thought and our growing knowledge of the great world; such the new tests and new opportunities that Christianity must meet in the twentieth century. And, in turn, things modern and new as well as things traditional and old in theory and practice, must answer whether they can adjust themselves to the ethical and spiritual principles taught and lived by Jesus the Nazarene. We need have no fear as to the results, if we will only do the will of God as he gives us to know his will; for then we shall know whether the doctrine be of him or not.

The Sabbath must also prove itself equal to the demands of these new points of view, and the great opportunities and responsibilities of the Christian Church and religion today, or surrender its claim to represent a truth of God, providentially ordained to bless the human race. That however it is worthy of an honored place in the Christian faith and practice of this century, we believe to be the teaching of the Old and New Testaments when interpreted historically and reasonably.

PART I

THE SABBATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



THE SABBATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

STUDY I.

The opening chapters of Genesis are not a piece of Jewish national history; for they go back, in doctrine, to a period long before the Jews formed a part of the world's history. The teachings here are of supreme interest to everybody that thinks concerning God, creation, man, the Sabbath, marriage, sin, its consequences, and the hope of redemption. The true intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual welfare of all men depends upon the principles found in this scripture. The doctrine of God; the stories of creation; of the earth now waste and void, now by the Spirit of God a cosmos good and blessed; of man in his Maker's image and likeness and given dominion over all other created things; of marriage and the family; of the dreadful tragedy of sin, its punishment, and the beginnings of the history of man's salvation,—these matters do not belong to any particular time, land, or people. They have universal value and meaning, and are related to human history, not Hebrew only.

Now in the heart of this ancient universal religious and moral history, the product of divine inspiration, we find the hallowed and blessed seventh day. The Sabbath then can not be "Jewish" in the sense of having originated with the Mosaic legislation, and of being a national institution merely. The records have come to us by Jewish hands; and Jesus said "salvation is from the Jews." The charge that Seventh-day Baptists are the disciples of Moses and Judaism, in contrast with being disciples of Christ and the Gospel, is unwarranted by Scripture, history, or reason.

Among primitive nations there were many accounts of the origin of the world. But our Bible stories tower far above them all in simplicity, grandeur, purity and spirituality; and in their doctrines of God, the world, man, and their religious and moral relations.

Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to harmonize the teachings here with the teachings of modern

science. The degree of actual scientific correctness, and the depth of philosophical thinking are clear and striking; but the ruling purpose of this Scripture is not scientific or philosophical, but religious and moral. And an historical and literary point of view, loyal at once to true scientific, philosophical, and spiritual methods and aims, should guide us in our interpretation of the form and content of these ancient writings.

The word "day" must mean a period of twenty-four hours. No other meaning fits the language, or gives proper significance and force to the legislative appointment of the seventh or last day of the week for a Sabbath.

The physical universe is a book of God, because it reveals the power, wisdom, methods, and thought of God. And according to the teachings of this great book as read by modern science, it was a vast period,—how vast no one can tell,—from the time when the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, to the time when the Creator saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. But these untold ages are represented in Genesis as a period of six days.

We have here, then, an inspired masterly pictorial story and description of creation, whose glory is its simplicity and sublimity. It is for the child and the greatest scholar. It contains the great essential truths about God, man, and the world, that men most need to know; and being a living word because the word of God, it has the capacity to take on from age to age all the mysteries of light,—the light of knowledge that shines from advancing theology, science, philosophy, history, and experience.

"The sovereignty of God and the supremacy of law and order are the most striking features of this story of creation." (Cf. Psalms civ. Isaiah xl. Proverbs viii. and Job xxxviii.) In these opening words of Genesis the Hebrew poet gives us "six scenes in the Act of Creation, six pictures of the general order of the development of nature. . . . The poem of the Creation conceives God as speaking six creative words, in order thus to paint the six pictures of creation in an orderly manner. The poet does not propose to comprehend in his representation all the forces and forms and methods of the work of God. Take it as it is, it is a lyric poem of wonderful power and beauty. Science has not yet reached a point where it can tell the story of creation

as well. The story of creation is set forth in the legends and myths of many nations. The Babylonian poem gives us the best ethnic representation. But all these ethnic conceptions are discolored by mythological fancies and grotesque speculations. Compared with the best of them the Biblical Poem is pure and simple and grand. A divine touch is in its sketchings."—Briggs.

It may be that some one will ask, Why dwell so long upon the nature and value of the first chapters of Genesis? There are four good reasons, at least: (1) This is beautiful and instructive Scripture. (2) It is essential to an understanding of the rest of the Bible. (3) In this book of Genesis, the book of the beginnings of the world and of the self-revelation of God to man, there is given the basis of history, religion, and righteousness. (4) If therefore the Sabbath doctrine has its roots here it is well rooted. If its foundations are here, it is built on rock, not on the sand.

It has been quite the fashion with some religious teachers to place a light estimate upon the worth of the Old Testament. A minister once said that he thought we had little use for the Old Testament, unless it was the Psalms for devotional reading. The influence of this kind of teaching spread until the Church was in danger of becoming lost to the beauty, power, and educational and religious importance of the holy Scriptures of the Old Covenant.

Higher criticism, or, better, historical and literary criticism, as such, does not concern itself with the religious meaning of any book or passage of the Bible, or with the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. It does not ask, What does the given book or passage teach? But, When, where, by whom, for whom, was it written or spoken? Is it prose, poetry, history, narrative, discourse, prediction, or epistle? Is the language literal or figurative? What did it mean to the writer, and to those who first heard or read it? and so on.

Thus modern biblical scholarship is re-discovering the Old Testament and revealing to us more and more of its inestimable value as a treasury of divine truth.

The book of Genesis is understood and valued as never before, as it is more clearly seen to be "the true and original birthplace of all theology. It contains those ideas of God and man, of righteousness and judgment, of responsibility and moral government, of failure and hope, which are pre-

supposed through the rest of the Old Testament, and which prepare the way for the mission of Christ".—Hastings, art. *Genesis*.

"Without that clear and sublime attestation at the threshold of the inspired record, of the personal source from which all has flowed, and of the unique worth and dignity of man, and his near kinship with that source, surely human life would have been far darker and more hopeless, and the deepest problems would have remained unsolved. Upon this basis, laid broad and clear in *Genesis*, the revelation of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus rests. For the mediatorial work of Christ rests on the Fatherhood of the Creator of all things, and on the supreme worth of man, whom Jesus came to save."—Hastings, art. *Cosmogony*.

Now the Sabbath and marriage, two holy and blessed institutions, symbolic and actual foundations of religion and society, are found in this very Scripture, "at the threshold of the inspired record."

As in the case of marriage so the Sabbath was misunderstood and misused. But in the teachings of Jesus as we shall find, both are lifted out of Mosaism and Judaism into the grace, truth, and glory of the original divine and ideal purpose.

STUDY II.

Read Gen. ii, 1-3.

The *Genesis* story of Creation comes to us in the frame or under the figure of a working week; and the Sabbath is given a place of great worth by being at the end of that sublime pictorial week, and at the beginning of human history.

The work of creation was not really "finished" until after the divine "resting," "blessing," and "hallowing." One of the highest privileges of the mind is to look back upon completed work with satisfying contemplation. God saw that everything he had made was very good, because fitted to accomplish his holy purpose; and he could "rest." Such rest the immanent God finds in his unceasing but restful activity as he sustains and orders all the host of created things in the heavens and the earth for spiritual ends. Cf. "My Father worketh until now, and I work." John v. 17.

The Hebrew word translated "rested" (*shabath*) means to *desist, cease*; so the writer is not speaking of the rest of relaxation, but of cessation from the activity of the work of creation. "In the verb used (*shabath*) there is evident allusion to the 'sabbath' (properly *shabbath*)."—Driver.

The order of nature's development from lower to higher forms, and the history of the divine process of creation, have their self-witnessing expression in the Sabbath, which, at the end of God's week of labor, stands between his self-revelation in creative acts and his self-revelation in a completed world,—a world that furnishes a sphere for free human activity, and for redemptive history. The Sabbath, here, marks the clear distinction between creation "in the beginning," and history and providence; but both are dependent upon the Creator's presence, power, and activity. And as commemorating creation, and the Creator who is also the God of history, providence, and redemption, the Sabbath possesses great dignity and value.—Schultz.

For God to "bless" is to express his favoring will concerning the thing blessed. It means here that the Sabbath was appointed to beneficent and happy consequences. And if the Sabbath is a burden rather than a blessing to us, the fault is ours for misunderstanding or misusing it; for it was not so intended from the beginning.

To "hallow" anything is to set it apart or dedicate it to uncommon and sacred uses. The Sabbath was consecrated to religious and ethical ends; to the good of human society and of all the creatures of God. If, then, we use the Sabbath in a way that makes it a fitting and beautiful memorial of God's finished creation of the world, and a symbol of the rest of our new creation in Jesus Christ (Heb. iv. 9-11); if we use it so that it brings good to all men in all of the relations of life,—social, industrial, and civic, it becomes in truth a blessed and sanctified day for men, families, communities, and nations.

The Sabbath idea and the seventh or last day of the week are naturally and necessarily linked together in this scripture. Our Maker is represented here as finishing his work and resting on the seventh day; and it was the seventh day that he blessed and hallowed. The reason given applies to no other day, and can make no other day the Sabbath; and this reason has no more passed away than the meaning of the rainbow (Gen. ix. 12, 13). Thus we are

taught how God, by his work of creation, ennoble the ordinary work done by us, creatures bearing his image and likeness,—work that ought to be our joy and honor; and how, by resting, he sanctifies our resting from life's common labors. The blessing of the seventh day clothes it with beauty and power,—power for good to men individually and collectively; and the hallowing of the seventh day puts it into living relations with its Author and with our religious experiences in him, and makes it a most fitting and much needed bond of union between all worshipers of God. And words are robbed of meaning if the ground for the doctrine of the holy and practical purpose and the universal spiritual observance of the Sabbath day are not laid here.

Along with great truths and facts concerning God, creation, man, sin, early civilization, religion, the consequences of sin, and redemption,—the seventh or last day of the week as the blessed and hallowed day, and holy marriage, are leading parts of the early chapters of Genesis. These narratives, no matter when they took on their present literary form, are manifestly intended to set forth the foundations of religion, righteousness, redemptive history, good social order, and the kingdom of God.

Driver, in commenting on Gen. ii. 24, says: "Marriage,—and moreover *monogamic* marriage,—is thus explained as the direct consequence of a relation established by the Creator. Cf. Matt. xix. 4-6; Mark x. 6-8." Likewise we may say that in Gen. ii. 1-3, Sabbath-keeping,—and moreover Sabbath-keeping on the seventh day of the week,—is explained as the direct consequences of an ordinance of the Creator. Cf. Exod. xx. 8-11; Mark ii. 27, 28.

STUDY III.

The beginnings of human history are recorded in Genesis, chapters i-xi; the beginnings of Hebrew history in chapters xii-l. In this part of the Bible there is no direct teaching concerning the Sabbath; but the number *seven* occurs many times. See any good concordance of the Bible. This number is also found in Babylonia-Assyrian literature. The origin of this usage, it is not difficult to decide, must have been the deep impression made upon the minds of men by the regular recurrence of the seven days of the week, which

was suggested by the phases of the moon. "The combination of this number with the cultus was, therefore, probably an inheritance which the Hebrews brought with them when they migrated from their home in the East."—Hastings, art. *Number*.

Abraham, in his early Chaldean home, "was no doubt taught that strangely mixed religion which clung for generations to some members of his family. Certainly he was taught in common with the whole community to rest on the seventh day; as he was trained to look on the stars with reverence and to the moon as something more than the light that was set to rule the night."—*The Expositor's Bible, The Book of Genesis*, Dods.

This does not mean that the seventh day was observed then according to the teachings of Moses and later prophets; but that the prophets and law-givers of Israel took the seventh day of primitive peoples and lifted it to a high and sacred place in the purest of all ancient religions, the Hebrew cultus; and from this it passed into the still more spiritual conceptions of the religion of Jesus.

That the week of seven days, and some regard for seventh days, are pre-Mosaic, see Oehler's *Old Testament Theology*, Day, sect. 147; *Old Testament Theology*, Schultz, vol. I., pp. 204, 205; *The Book of Genesis*, Driver, p. 34; *New Commentary on Genesis*, Delitzsch, p. 110; *The New Century Bible*, Genesis, p. 88; *Old Testament History*, Wade, pp. 43, 44, 93; *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, Price, pp. 85-87; *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, Clay, pp. 15-17; *Old Testament History*, Smith, pp. 329-331; *History of Religion*, Menzies, p. 96; *Manual of the Science of Religion*, De La Saussaye, 169, 613; *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, Jastrow, pp. 377, 378; *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, arts. *Sabbath*, *Time*; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, art. *Sabbath*; *Religion of the Old Testament*, Marti, p. 14; *Early Hebrew Story*, Peters, p. 203; *The Early Traditions of Genesis*, Gordon, pp. 216-223.

All this does not show that the Babylonia-Assyrians or any other pre-Mosaic nation had a true sabbath. But, (1) we see that the week and the seventh day have their roots far back in the past. (2) The great antiquity and the naturalness of religion and of religious time are made plain. (3) The Sabbath and many other customs were *adopted* by Moses, but *adapted* to the most spiritual and ethical re-

ligion of ancient times, the Hebrew. (4) And, as we shall see later in our study, the Sabbath came to be, as was the divine intention, not a grievous burden, "but to the true worshippers of Jahveh, it was always a 'delight' (cf. Isa. lviii. 13f), a day which kept alive their faith and joy in God amid the depressing gloom of exile and bondage, and in which they enjoyed 'some presentment of the pure bliss and happiness which are stored up for the righteous in the world to come.'"—Gordon.

STUDY IV.

The Exodus from Egypt and the Mosaic legislation are the subject of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books, no doubt, received additions, revision, and editing, in later periods; but Moses and the events of his time laid their historical, religious, ethical, and literary foundations; and their spiritual and moral value to us is unimpaired by questions of dates and redaction.

Moses, Israel's great deliverer, religious and moral leader, and law-giver, is one of the world's greatest legislators and most mighty personalities; and his work and teachings are both Hebrew and human, national and universal.

"It was neither as philosopher nor as poet, but as prophet, that Moses became the founder of his people's religion. He received it, he adopted it, in a religious spirit, he did not by his own thought create it. . . . The whole way in which Moses does his work is a result of this divine voice, a result of the consciousness that he is acting by God's commission."—Schultz, vol. I., ch. viii.

"So, in his own wondrous way, God raises up Moses, a truly gigantic figure; next to our Lord, perhaps the most important personality in the history of religion. Here again we see the sort of man whom God calls to conspicuous service."—McFadyen, *The Messages of the Bible*, vol. IV., p. 53.

"In Sinai . . . tradition locates the capital achievement of Moses, his religious reorganization of the people. It is one of the most remarkable moments in the history of mankind, the birth-hour of the religion of the spirit. In the thunderstorms of Sinai the God of revelation himself

comes down upon the earth; here we have the dawn of the day which was to break upon the whole human race, and among the greatest mortals who ever walked this earth Moses will always remain one of the greatest."—Cornill.

"Moses . . . is the father of the priests as well as the father of the prophets." "He was a prophet as well as a judge. As such, he founded in Israel the great principles of the moral religion of the righteous Jehovah."—W. Robertson Smith, Hastings, art. *Moses*.

Many more similar quotations might be given. Now these are the utterances not of conservative and "old-fashioned," but of modern, progressive, critical scholarship. And it is certainly a most interesting and significant fact that this great and inspired leader and law-giver, the founder of a nation and of a unique and wonderful religious system, gave the Sabbath a central and fundamental place in his religious and social legislation.

Thoughtful, active, modernly educated young people are coming to have a profound respect for reason, conscience, religion, and the right; and they are learning to think more scientifically and accurately; that is, they are disposed to withhold belief and practice from all but self-witnessing truth, and moral allegiance from all persons but Jesus of Nazareth. Mere external authority, whether of church, or book, or man, commands them in vain, unless the commands are rooted in reason, conscience, and in the life and teachings of the Son of Man. Therefore, in the interests of truth, progress, and sound learning, Seventh-day Baptists should encourage the highest scholarship that comes only from historical, scientific, philosophical and literary inquiry; and be most hospitable to all real truth and fact. No other denomination of Christians can more safely do this. We ought to be the foremost in open-mindedness, breadth of charity, and large-heartedness.

Contrary to what our young people are sometimes told, while progress in science, and in the historical, literary, critical, and spiritual study of the Bible is requiring us to readjust our Sabbath teaching and practice to more rational and ethical interpretations of Scripture, history, and providence, it is also furnishing us with material for laying stronger foundations still for the doctrine of Sabbath-keeping on the last or seventh day of the week, according to the principles and practice of our Lord and Saviour.

One will read or be told that recent scholarship concludes that the Hebrew Sabbath was derived, ultimately and historically, from Babylonia; or that the Hebrew and Babylonian institutions had a common origin; and so is led to believe or fear that this tends to overthrow our doctrine that the Sabbath is of divine origin and authority.

Our reply is: 1. We cheerfully give up some of our former opinions respecting the Sabbath, that are neither required by the Scriptures nor warranted by history and science. The world was not made in six twenty-four-hour days; the Sabbath had a natural as well as a supernatural or providential origin; and Christ, not Moses, is our teacher as to the method of Sabbath-keeping. 2. We are grateful for this added knowledge as to how the God of providence and redemptive history works in and through the natural course of events for the accomplishment of his purposes of grace. The Sabbath may have passed from the Chaldeans to the Hebrews; but it is not therefore not from God. Salvation is from the Jews, our Lord himself said; but who would dare say, It is therefore not from God? 3. It is this same modern biblical scholarship that also says, "Like other already existing institutions which were taken up into the Mosaic system of religion and morals, the Sabbath, under the divine inspiration and guidance, assumed a new character among the Hebrews. It was stripped of its superstitious and heathen associations, and made subservient to religious, moral, and social ends."—Hastings, art. *Sabbath*.

STUDY V.

We are now to try to find out what is taught in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, concerning the Sabbath; and to inquire as to the relation of this teaching to ourselves.

The results of our study will not be essentially affected by the admission that Leviticalism and revisions and additions to Mosaism, belong to a period centuries later than Moses, and the exodus from Egypt. For Moses certainly furnished the substantial basis and the heart of all the legislation and instruction found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, in their present form, and which are grounded in the Decalogue.

It should be borne in mind that our point of view is historical; that is, the Scripture we study was given directly to the Hebrew people, and belongs to the Old Covenant. But these people were being trained to become a means of divine blessing to the whole world. And they were not only *Jews*, but men and women, boys and girls. What they were taught, therefore, must have contained universal elements and been grounded in universal principles. What and how much is universal and enduring, is to be learned from the teachings of the New Covenant. To keep this in mind will help us to appreciate the really great significance and value of Mosaism; and to realize that those ancient externals actually clothed living and eternal verities.

Read Exod. xvi. 22-30.

This belongs to a time and place in Israel's journeying before Sinai and the Fourth Commandment. See xvi. 1 and xvii. 1. The Sabbath may have been forgotten in Egypt. But the language here agrees exactly with the idea that it was not an absolutely new thing. It reads as it would were the Sabbath being reinstated as something that ought to have been known or readily recognized.

Verses 23 and 27 teach that the Sabbath is to be kept with Jehovah in our thoughts. Verse 27 illustrates a lack of faith; and verse 29 shows the divine care for those who trust in the good providence of a good God.

STUDY VI.

The accounts of the first publication and of the preservation of the Decalogue contain extraordinary particulars intended to witness to the belief in its immediate divine origin, sovereign authority, and incomparable importance. See Exod. xix. 16-25; xxxi. 18; xxxiv. 1; Deut. iv. 12, 13; x. 5.

The giving of the Decalogue was one of the most momentous events in all the history of religion. There was then published to Israel and for the world the germs of that which developed, by varying stages, into the highest of all forms of religion,—the Christian. A leading argument of the destructive critics against the antiquity of the Decalogue is, not that it is "Jewish," but its high ethical, religious, and spiritual character.

"The formation of the canon," says Professor Briggs, "began with the promulgation of the Ten Words as the fundamental divine law to Israel. These ten words were given in their original form as brief, terse words or sentences. The specifications and reasons were added to the several different documents of the Hexateuch, and these were eventually compacted together in the two versions,—Exod. xx and Deut. v. These ten words were given by the theophanic voice of God to Israel on Mount Horeb. They were taken up into all the original documents of the Hexateuch. They lie at the basis of the entire legislation. They have the authority of God, and public recognition, and adoption. They were kept on the two tables of stone, in the holy ark in the most Holy Place of the tabernacle and the temple. If any document fulfills the tests of canonicity the Tables of the Law certainly do."

In our study of the Decalogue let us also take careful note of what the *Expositor's Bible* has to say concerning it: "Whatever its origin, it is an exceedingly remarkable document. It touches the fundamental principles of religious and moral life with so sure a hand that at this hour, for even the most civilized nation, it sums up the moral code, and that so effectively, that no change or extension of it has ever been proposed.

"By emphasizing the universal nature of the ten commandments, and by showing that they preceded the ceremonial law by many centuries, the critical school have cut away the ground from under the semi-antinomian views, once so prevalent and always so popular, with those who call themselves advanced thinkers.

"It is now no longer possible to maintain that the Decalogue was part of a purely Jewish law, binding only upon Jews, and passing away at the advent of Christianity as the ceremonial law did.

"Now, manifestly, a religion which spoke its first word in the ten commandments, even in their simplest form, must have been in its very heart and core moral.

"They (the prophets) were simply reasserting the fundamental principles of the Mosaic religion. Reverence and righteousness,—these from the first were the twin pillars upon which it rested.

"Like all beginnings, this was an achievement of the highest kind. Nowhere but in the soul of one Divinely enlightened man could such a revelation have made itself known.

"Nor is there anything ceremonial or Jewish in the command, Remember or observe the rest-day to keep it holy. In the reasons given in Exodus and Deuteronomy we have the two principles which make this a moral and universal command,—the necessity for rest, and the necessity of an opportunity to cultivate the spiritual nature.

"Understood in that way, the fourth commandment shows a delicate perception of the conditions of the higher life which surpasses even the prohibition of covetousness in the tenth. In the words of a workingman who was advocating its observance: 'It gives God a chance,' that is, it gives man the leisure to attend to God. But the moral point of view which it implies is so high, and so difficult of attainment, that it is only now that the nations of Europe are awaking to the inestimable moral benefits of the Sabbath they have despised. Because of this difficulty, too, many who think themselves to be leaders in the path of improvement, and are esteemed by others to be so, are never weary of trying to weaken the moral consciousness of the people until they can steal this benefit away, on the ground that Sabbath-keeping is a mere ceremonial observance. So far from being that, it is a moral duty of the highest type, and the danger in which it seems at times to stand is due mainly to the fact that to appreciate it needs a far more trained and sincere conscience than most of us can bring to the consideration of it."

The prophets built their moral teachings upon the Decalogue. Concerning this the Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* says: "Assuredly, the prophets did not first enunciate, but inherited, the doctrine that true religion utters itself in morality; and it is an obvious inference from the broad facts of the tradition that this fundamental idea was affirmed by and descended from Moses. That as the founder or reformer of a religion, he should have embodied its leading principles in 'terse' sentences is not only possible but probable, and the testimony to the fact that in the Decalogue we possess such a summary is too strong to be set aside in the interests of a historical theory."

The Decalogue is characterized by both greatness and real limitations. Within a remarkably small compass it lays down the foundation articles of religion,—the sovereignty and the spirituality of God; and the claims of morality in the chief spheres of life,—home and society.

Its ethical precepts are most indispensable and far-reaching; and its wonderful moral value is further seen in its unique capacity to receive richer and fuller contents, as at the hands of Jesus. This proves its possession of inner life and power; for it is only living things that can grow and expand.

But its supreme distinction and glory lie in its teaching that religion and morality are knit together by vital and indissoluble bonds. It is the great pre-Christian advocate of righteousness as the highest and best kind of ritual. In an age of much ethically indifferent ceremonialism; and in the midst of elaborate systems of festivals and sacrifices, the Decalogue makes it plain that a holy God requires, most of all, justice, mercy, purity, kindness, and truth.

The one strictly religious and direct commandment of the law,—the Sabbath,—makes special, regular, and needed provision for meditation and worship; and shows compassion for the weary and heavy-laden, not forgetting either the servants or the beasts of burden.

The revelations of God as recorded in the Scriptures were gradual. The great and good God made known his holiness and will to man according to the degree of development of their willingness and capacity to know him. Even the Decalogue then can not but have its limitations. These lie on the surface, and may be clearly seen. It is too brief to be exhaustive in depth or breadth; and its moral requirements relate for the most part to justice among men. It is necessarily elementary; for uninstructed and undisciplined people, like children, must be taught first principles long and patiently.

Accordingly, the demands are not high pitched when compared with the Sermon on the Mount. Of essential and highest value in the religious and moral training of a primitive people, the Decalogue did not and could not rise to the wants of an enlightened and sanctified Christian conscience and the demands of Christ's spiritual and moral ideals. For this we must go to his interpretation or revision of the

Decalogue in his continued lofty teaching, deeds of love, divine and human, and purity of life.—Hastings.

The opening chapters of Genesis are of inestimable value; the Sabbath was a gift from our Creator for all mankind, as was the family also; it was ordained to turn the minds and hearts of men toward their Maker, and to promote our spiritual and physical good; and there are many pious and scholarly witnesses to the great moral and religious worth of the Decalogue, whose value as a whole exalts the quality of every part.

STUDY VII.

Read Exodus xx. 8-11.

The word "remember" may or may not refer to Gen. ii. 1-3 and Exod. xvi. 22-30; but the Decalogue is not the formal enactment of entirely new, but the compilation of old and enduring principles.

The Fourth Commandment is given a unique place, because embodied in a great moral code whose sacredness and authority Paul incidentally and so all the more certainly, recognized in Eph. vi. 2. (Amer. Rev.) Evidently the author of the Decalogue did not think it was disfigured by the Sabbath law. Put in the place of the Fourth Commandment any one of the scores of ceremonial laws, and think how the unity and dignity would be marred! Its honorable position in the midst of such a wonderful summary of what men owe to God and to one another, weighs heavily in favor of its high character.

"In Exodus we have the motive for the observance of the Sabbath raised to the universal and eternal, by being brought into connection with the creative activity of God." But the Sabbath is not to be kept merely because our Maker worked and rested; but because he blessed and sanctified it for man's good. "He who breaks the Sabbath denies the creation," say some of the wisest of Jewish teachers. If this be thought too strong language, the Sabbath was, at any rate, a central point in the greatest of the world's ancient religions; a weekly reminder that Jehovah God creates, sustains, and rules the universe.

"Now," again says the *Expositor's Bible*, "the foundation upon which all the institutions of religion may be securely built, is the day of rest. Call it external, formal, unspiritual, if you will; say that it is a carnal ordinance, and that he who keeps it in spirit is free from the obligation of the letter. But then what about the eighth commandment? Are we absolved also from the precept, 'Thou shalt not steal,' because it too is concerned with external actions, because of 'this . . . thou shalt not steal . . . and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this one saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?' Do we say, The Spirit has abolished the letter; love is the rescinding of the law? Saint Paul said the very opposite: 'Love is the fulfilling of the law, not its destruction; and thus he re-echoed the words of Jesus, 'I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill.'"

A friend has no more right to steal my money than an ordinary thief. Both are under exactly the same obligations. One is under a law-system, to be restrained and punished according to law; the other is under a grace-system, self-restrained by the power of love.

The world of sin, suffering, sorrow, poverty, and of a thousand bodily and spiritual needs, is not to be deserted on this the most beautiful and holy of days; but the day is to be made more beautiful and holy still by reverent meditation, devout worship, and humble service. The Sabbath was given for humanity's good; mankind is not given to it. The day is for our help and blessing; we are not in ritualistic bondage to it.

The "rest" of God is not the rest of inaction. The Sabbath rest that remaineth for the people of God will not be a rest of inaction. But we may be sure that it will be most *restful*.

In reply to a question asked by a member of his class with reference to the nature of true Sabbath-keeping, the writer said, in substance: Ordinarily, no doubt, you ought to find joy and strength in the public worship of the church, and in the preaching of the Gospel; but if Miss M. were very sick, and in sore need of some one's nursing, and you were the only one that could well care for her, you would be a Sabbath-breaker not a Sabbath-keeper, if you were to attend church instead of working hard, if necessary, for her comfort and safety. And in such service one ought to

find rest of mind and heart. This is not excess of liberty, but highest, holiest law.

Neither men and women of wealth, nor the hard-working poor, are justified in using the Sabbath for a worldly holiday; but men, women, and children, from ill-ventilated rooms, and after days of confining toil may, if they will, religiously and thankfully spend a part of the sacred time under the sky, in the fields, and among the trees, the first temple of God, their Maker and bountiful Father.

STUDY VIII.

Read Exod. xxxi. 12-17.

By an act of grace Jehovah God entered into a covenant with his people; and the Sabbath was especially emphasized as a sign and pledge of this covenant relation. It was to be a constant symbol of covenant privileges and covenant obligations. Sabbath rest and Sabbath worship must not be looked at in their bare outward form, but must find their real meaning in God's covenant relation with man. Not only did the inner and spiritual side of the law of God shine through the Sabbath as a form; as it also shone through sacrifice and other ceremonies, but these outward acts of worship were divinely appointed means for the actual realization of communion between God and the worshiper.

Nitzsch,—see Oehler's *Old Testament Theology*,—in his lectures on Christian Theology, says: "The whole Old Testament ought to be and must be a representation and exercise of the process of sanctification. The whole nature of the symbols and ceremonies of Moses is different from those of the heathen, although much in the outward forms in heathenism and the Old Testament seems to be quite similar. The heathen ceremonies effect material union with the divinity by working magically. There is not a single usage in the institutions of Moses in which communion with God is effected in a magical way through the senses, but all have a purely symbolical nature." That is, they are to express, purify, and strengthen actually existing covenant relations between God and his people. To keep the Sabbath holy was an acknowledgment that the Sabbath-keeper was sanctified unto the Lord. Sacrifice meant prayer, thanksgiv-

ing, and devotion; to keep the Sabbath is to confess that the Maker and Ruler of the heavens and the earth is our God and Father in and through whom we hope to find rest after toil.

The Sabbath was to be a holy and perpetual sign of Israel's relations with Jehovah God that were based upon his gracious covenant; and, if reverently and faithfully observed, it would help to keep them in close fellowship with "Jehovah who sanctifieth you."

These principles and these human needs are universal, and in strictest accord with the Gospel; and it is a natural and reasonable inference that such should still be the recognized place and significance of the Sabbath in the moral and religious life of men today. If the spiritual and ethical ends of the Sabbath as set forth in this passage from Exodus are out of harmony with the spirit and purpose of the New Covenant, if, indeed, they are not essentials in the covenant of grace, then this Scripture has no importance or value for us beyond that which always belongs to the history of any great religion. The Jesus of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is higher in authority than Law, Prophecy, Psalms, or Epistle; and by him are they to be interpreted. And though now "not under law but under grace," that is, not under a system of legalism, but of gracious love, we are not beyond the need and help of the Sabbath as a fitting and beautiful symbol of our faith in God our Creator, and as a holy sign of our covenant communion with him who would sanctify us unto himself. The six "secular" days need the hallowing influence of the "sacred" seventh day. The world needs this weekly witness against practical atheism, and this call to a rest in God. One can rest in him every day; but one is in danger of not finding this daily rest, it is to be feared, who disregards the Sabbath's help. The word "solemn" in the fifteenth verse does not mean *sac*, but sacred, devout, in a manner worthy of holy and spiritual things.

STUDY IX.

The Sabbath was not only an individual matter and a sign of individual covenant fellowship with God, but it was also a national institution and a sign of national covenant relations with Jehovah God who had called Abraham, de-

livered the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and elected them to a large place in the world's moral and religious history. Hence to profane the Sabbath was both a sin and crime, punishable to a degree of severity consonant with the civil and religious conditions and spirit of that age of the world, but quite out of accord with the spirit and purpose of the New Covenant. All social, civil, moral, and religious institutions, laws, customs, rewards, and penalties, are, in no small measure, a revelation of the world's then existing conceptions of God, man, religion, and righteousness.

According to the Mosaic legislation every one who profaned the Sabbath was to be cut off from among his people, that is, excommunicated as a kind of outlaw; and surely put to death. Now it has been seriously affirmed, in ignorance, it is to be supposed, of the principles of historical interpretation, that a commandment enforced by such a penalty, must have been of a purely temporary character. This was the reasoning of a little book that came into my hands when, years ago, I was investigating the Sabbath question. The purpose, of course, was to try to show that there was no Sabbath before the Jewish period and none after it; that the Sabbath was only an institution of Mosaism and Judaism.

Now let us extend this principle of reasoning to other requirements of the Mosaic legislation and see what it would prove if adopted.

He who blasphemed the name of Jehovah must be stoned to death.

Read Lev. xxiv. 16.

What a dreadful penalty! Hence the law against blasphemy must have been only Jewish and temporary!

If any man or woman was found to have transgressed the divine covenant by worshiping false gods the transgressor must be put to death.

Read Deut. xvii. 2-7.

How severe a penalty! Hence the Mosaic law against serving and worshiping other gods must have been only Jewish and temporary!

A stubborn, rebellious, and wicked son who would not obey the voice of his father or mother was to be stoned to death by the men of his city.

Read Deut. xxi. 18-26; Lev. xx. 9.

What an inhuman punishment! Therefore the law of disobedience to parents was merely Jewish and not universal!

Adultery and other gross forms of immorality were punishable by death.

Read Lev. xx. 10-16.

Who is ready to affirm that these awful penalties rule out such laws from the category of the permanent and the universal?

What then is truth and reason here? Many Mosaic laws were at once religious, moral, and civil, because theocratic; consequently to disobey them was a state offence. Transgression of law must be punished in some way. The kind of punishment may change with changing conditions and advancing wisdom and humaneness without affecting the essential nature and quality of the law itself. And it is according to historical and rational principles of interpretation to say that the severe penalties mentioned above were parts of an ancient and temporary mode of administering laws that were in themselves essentially holy, just, and good; and the holiness, justice, and goodness of the Old Testament have become part and parcel of the New Covenant. Such is the teaching of Jesus and Paul.

In the Mosaic code there are *five* classes of crime punishable by death. In England two hundred years ago there were 148 capital crimes.—*Hebrew Life and Thought*, Houghton.

STUDY X.

One who believes in the God and Father of Jesus Christ ought not to find it hard to believe that a wise and good divine providence so governs the course of nature that ordinary labor is not necessary on the Sabbath day, "in order to make a living."

Read Ex. xxxiv. 21.

We may confidently expect that the good God, our heavenly Father, has done his part toward our making a living and making, what is a thousand times better, a life; and that we can get a living and make a life, if we will only do our part faithfully and well.

Read Ex. xxxv. 1-3.

Moses felt that he spoke by Jehovah's authority, and for the best moral and spiritual interests of the people. It is six working days, not six idle days, that entitle one to the rest of the seventh day, and to its needed privileges and blessings. A holy day is one set apart from other days for a particular and religious purpose. The word *solemn* does not mean sad or gloomy; the phrase *solemn rest to Jehovah* means a rest observed with reference to Jehovah, a Sabbath day kept with respect, thoughts, feelings, and dignity, that become a holy day. Such things as smith-work and cooking were not to be done on the Sabbath; hence they were to kindle no fires that day, in that climate. To use this requirement and the penalty attached as an argument against the perpetuity of the Sabbath idea and institution, is to show a strange lack of the historical sense. And for a devout and strict Jew to employ a gentile servant to light his fire for him on the Sabbath does not seem to be any better. To suppose that this forbids fire in cold weather and rigorous climates is to do violence even to the spirit of the Old Testament, not to say the merciful New Covenant.

STUDY XI.

Read Lev. xix. 1-4, 29, 30.

The aim of Mosaism was to put the children of Israel in right relations with Jehovah their God, because good religion and morals depended upon such right relations. Pure monotheism had a long and hard struggle for the supremacy, against polytheism and henotheism; and higher standards of character and conduct sought the overthrow of lower standards of morals. And the centuries witnessed a progress from primitive and crude ideas and customs, and forms of religion that were corrupting, toward Christian theism and the Christian morals of the New Testament.

The above passage from Leviticus is one of deep religious and moral insight. The divine holiness was a fundamental principle of the entire law, and the ground of the covenant that God made with his people. Holiness, holiness like Jehovah's and because he is holy, and escape from the grossest impurity, seem to be made to depend upon the practical

recognition of divinely ordained and right family relations, the keeping of Jehovah's Sabbaths, the pure worship and service of Jehovah as the one only true and living God, and due and reverent regard for sacred places. And the Sabbath is given a central and essential place in this Scripture, as though divinely appointed to be a protection for religion, the home, and purity. And it does not seem narrow-minded to say that the religion, homes, and social life of modern times would be made purer, stronger, and better, by a more faithful observance of the principles of this passage from ancient Leviticalism.

STUDY XII.

Read Lev. xxiii. 1-3, 37, 38.

The Sabbath stands at the head of the list of set and holy feasts, seasons and convocations. It was first in rank and supreme in importance. It was as though the other sacred times and gatherings were to derive their sacredness and chief significance from their connection with the weekly Sabbath, whose spirit and purpose felt week by week were to be carried on to the less frequent and more ceremonial religious and joyful seasons and feasts. "Solemn" has here its old-fashioned meaning of fixed or stated and reverent.

Notwithstanding this provision for holy assemblies on the Sabbath, and the custom in later Old Testament and in New Testament times, it is taught even now through unscriptural bondage to the letter, that the fourth commandment forbids the public Sabbath congregation.

Read Lev. xxiv. 5-9.

"The rite of 'the presence-bread,'" says the *Hastings Bible Dictionary*, "is one of the fairly numerous survivals from the pre-Mosaic stage of the religion of the Hebrews, and goes back ultimately to the naive conception that the god, like his worshippers, required and actually partook of material nourishment. No doubt, as W. R. Smith has pointed out, this idea 'is too crude to subsist without modification beyond the savage state of society.' In the case of the show-bread, it may be suggested that the odour of the 'hot bread' (1 Samuel xxi. 6) was regarded in ancient times as a 'sweet savour,' like the smell of the sacrifice to Jehovah (Gen. viii.

20, 21). In any case the custom of presenting solid food on a table as an oblation to a god is too widespread among the peoples of antiquity to permit of doubt as to the origin of the rite among the Hebrews.

“While, however, it must be admitted that the rite of the presence-bread had its origin in the circle of ideas just set forth, it is not less evident that, as taken up and preserved by the religious guides of Israel, the rite acquired a new and higher significance. The bread was no longer thought of as Jehovah’s food in the sense attached to it in an earlier age, but as a concrete expression of the fact that Jehovah was the source of every material blessing. As the ‘continual bread,’ it became the standing expression of the nation’s gratitude to the giver of all for the bounties of his providence. The number twelve was later brought into connection with the number of tribes of Israel (Lev. xxiv. 8), and thus, Sabbath by Sabbath, the priestly representatives of the nation renewed this outward and visible acknowledgement of man’s continual dependence upon God. The presence of the show-bread in the developed ritual, therefore, was not without a real and worthy significance.” And the Sabbath was honored by being appointed as the time for this symbolical act of thanksgiving and praise. And the historical origin and development of the ceremony is an excellent illustration of the origin and development of much of Mosaism, as men were led to purer and higher conceptions of God and religion.

STUDY XIII.

Read Lev. xxv. 3, 4.

The land’s sabbatical year and other symbolical sabbaths derive their religious meaning and use from the weekly Sabbath’s moral, social, and spiritual value.

Read Lev. xxvi. 1, 2.

True spiritual Sabbath-keeping and reverence for the sanctuary would remind the people every week of Jehovah their God, and thus help to keep them from idol-worship. Note how the law against idolatry, the Sabbath commandment, and enjoined reverence for the sanctuary, go before promised good and threatened evil. Sabbath-breaking, apostacy from

God, and the natural and inevitable spiritual, moral, social, and national results would come together. What a plain and blessed witness for our Maker, Benefactor, and Redeemer, would a universal regard for the Sabbath of the Lord our God be today!

Read Num. xxviii. 9, 10.

The Sabbath was not marked, like other special occasions, by any peculiar ceremonies and offerings, but simply by doubling the regular daily sacrifice. This would ceremonially seal the holy day as the day of consecration or sanctifying day of all the week, as the queen of the days.

STUDY XIV.

Read Deut. iv. 13; v. 1-3.

Whether the words "he wrote them upon two tables of stone" be taken literally or figuratively matters but little, for figurative language is often quite as forcible as the literal, and poetry is frequently more expressive than prose. These words attest the divine origin and sovereign authority of the "ten commandments."

The Decalogue, the ethical code introductory to the Sinaitic legislation, and of which the Sabbath commandment was a central part, fundamental to both tables, was the basis of the Old Covenant. This fact gives it great significance, dignity and worth. The Ten Words were the supporting pillars of the great Hebrew religion, and set forth the practical and holy conditions upon which many a rich blessing for the ancient people of God depended. And it is the testimony of history and experience, and of writers upon religion and ethics that they still represent great spiritual and moral values.

Read Deut. v. 12-15.

V. 12. The Sabbath day was to be *observed*, i. e., regarded, kept in mind, honored; in a holy manner, i. e., as a day separated from the others for religious ends; and as a matter of obedience to Jehovah their God.

V. 14. How good it would be if we could regard the Sabbath, and do all things "sacred" and "secular," "unto Jehovah our God."

Unless the Bible was written by men lacking in common sense and common honesty, it is at least deserving of as fair treatment as we give to other books; and in the light of related Scripture it is only fair to say that "any work" must refer to the ordinary labors of the six working days, to any work out of harmony with the spiritual character and purpose of the Sabbath day. "Thou," "son," "daughter," "man-servant," "maid-servant," "ox," "ass," "cattle," "stranger," i. e., a sojourner or foreigner—these are important religious, moral, social, educational, economic, and political factors in home, community, church, industrial, and national life; and the ancient legislator was more up-to-date than we of the twentieth century may sometimes suppose. It was the object of the Sabbath to help place men and families and property in right relation with God; and when persons and things are in right relations with God, the public welfare and private well-being are sure to follow.

It was the divine intention that the Sabbath should bring a blessing to both man and beast. This is also the teaching of Exodus xxiii. 12:

Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy hand-maid, and the sojourner, may be refreshed.

V. 15. In Exodus xx. 11,

For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it,

a universal reason is given for the Sabbath law; in this place a national reason is given. Deliverance from Egypt was not given as the ground for instituting the Sabbath, but as a ground for its religious observance by the Jews. And they were to remember their bondage and their deliverance, that they might be kind to stranger, man-servant, maid-servant and cattle. The right use of the Sabbath rest would be a great social leveler and promoter of humane feelings. It is not scriptural Sabbath rest and worship when these are enjoyed at the unholy cost of a servant's or any creature's unbroken toil. This is to make the Sabbath service and privileges an abomination to the God and Father of all men, rich and poor, master and servant, and of all creatures.

And as the Sabbath was appointed to be a regular memorial of Israel's escape from the bondage of Egypt, so ought it to remind us, week by week, of our redemption from the worse bondage of sin, and of the Sabbath rest that remaineth for the people of God.

OTHER SABBATIC TIME

For accounts of sabbatic days and periods besides the weekly Sabbath, see the following Scripture: Leviticus xvi. 29-31; xxiii. 4-8, 26-32; xxv. 1-17; xxvi. 34-43; Numbers xxviii. 16-25.

STUDY XV.

We begin now our study of the historical and prophetic portions of the Old Testament.

The Chronicler takes pains to record how the sons of the Mohathites were over the showbread to prepare it every Sabbath and how David and Solomon arranged for the burnt-offering morning and evening on the Sabbath.

Read 1 Chron. ix. 32; 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 30, 31; 2 Chron. ii. 4, 8, 12, 13.

In Israel, even in the days of bad kings, the Sabbath was regarded. Religious services of some kind were regularly held, it is believed, by the prophets, in the name of Jehovah. For when the son of the Shunamite woman died, she greatly desired to go to the prophet Elisha, the man of God, and prayed her husband to send her. *2 Kings iv. 23-25.*

The question whether both the new moon and the Sabbath observance are universal and abiding or not, is to be settled by such Scripture as Genesis ii. 1-3 and the Decalogue; by their evident place in the Old Testament religion; and by the teaching and practice of Jesus.

As a matter of history the new moon festival declined in influence while the Sabbath increased.

In the days of the wicked Athaliah, the queen mother, Jehoiada the priest, and the leader of a righteous revolution, regulated the duties of temple and palace guards by the Sabbath.

Read 2 Chron. xxiii. 4, 8.

See also 2 Kings xi. 1-12.

There seems to have been a canopied seat for the king

and family's use in the house of Jehovah on the Sabbath, or a covered way or colonnade along which the king could pass when going from the palace to the temple on the Sabbath day: 2 Kings xvi. 18.

The good Hezekiah was another king who honored the Sabbath and other sacred time by appointed sacrifices: 2 Chron. xxxi. 3.

STUDY XVI.

The prophet Amos thus condemns the greed, oppression, and dishonesty of his times:

Read Amos viii. 4-8.

Prof. George Adam Smith says concerning this remarkable passage, in the *Expositor's Bible*: "The existence at this date of the New Moon and Sabbath as days of rest from business is interesting; but even more interesting is the peril to which they lie open. As in the case of the Nazarite and prophets, we see how the religious institutions of the people are threatened by worldliness and greed. And, as in every other relevant passage of the Old Testament, we have the interests of the Sabbath bound up in the same cause with the interests of the poor. The Fourth Commandment enforces the day of rest on behalf of the servants and bondsmen. When a later prophet substitutes for religious fasts the ideals of social services, he weds with the latter the security of the Sabbath from all business (See Isaiah lviii). So here Amos emphasizes that the Sabbath is threatened by the same worldliness and love of money which tramples on the helpless. The interests of the Sabbath are the interests of the poor. The enemies of the Sabbath are the enemies of the poor. And all this illustrates our Saviour's saying, that *the Sabbath was made for man.*"

The prophet Hosea declares that a part of the consequences and punishment of Israel's sins shall be loss of the Sabbaths: Hosea ii. 11, 12.

History and observation teach that an utter disregard of the Sabbath and that for which it stands,—which is godlessness; and spreading moral disaster, belong together. True

religion is historical, moral, and physical. National, social, and physical blessings are the gifts of God. Their coming and going are conditioned upon the obedience and disobedience of the holy, just, good, spiritual, ethical, and physical laws of our Maker and heavenly Father.

STUDY XVII.

Isaiah calls upon heaven and earth to hear his solemn charge against a corrupt and corrupting people:

Read Isa. i. 10-20.

This passage does not teach that Jehovah God did not care to have the people offer sacrifices, or enter his courts, or burn incense, or observe the new moon, or keep the Sabbath, or hold solemn meetings, or celebrate holy feasts, or spread forth their hands in prayer; but it does mean that these externals of religion were an abomination if they who practice them are guilty of rebellion against God, violence, moral uncleanness, evil-doing, and oppression, instead of being kind, clean, well-doing, just, willing, and obedient.

All religiousness, church-going, forms of prayer and praise, gifts of money, church membership, Sabbath-keeping, Sabbath reform work, are wearying to a holy and righteous God, and a trouble to Him, unless the religious, the church member, the worshiper, the giver, the Sabbath-keeper, the Sabbath reformer, is personally pure, true, and good.

STUDY XVIII.

Read Jer. xvii. 19-27.

The prophet Jeremiah announced to the kings and people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in the name of Jehovah, that the prosperity, permanence, and religion of the nation would depend upon a hallowed Sabbath; while an unhallowed Sabbath, and traffic and needless work on that day would bring a devouring fire.

Jeremiah prophesied just before and just after the Babylonian Captivity, a captivity due not to the nation's old age and the infirmity of years, but to the sins and lux-

riousness of princes, priests, and people. This fact gives a special weight to his message.

The prophet does not attribute as much significance and value to mere work, traffic, and burden-bearing on the Sabbath, or to the mere withholding from these things on that sanctified day, as one might at first suppose. Their importance is in what they revealed of the state of men's hearts. No one can be truly religious on the Sabbath and be irreligious on the six other days of the week; no one can truly honor God on the seventh day and dishonor him from the first to the sixth days; no one can keep the Sabbath in a spiritual way and keep the other days for sin; no one can sincerely worship and serve God and treat his fellows unjustly and oppressively; no one can truly love God and not truly love man also. Such seems to be the real spiritual meaning of these words of the old prophet of Judah; and with this interpretation agrees a passage from the *Sayings of Jesus*, a very old manuscript discovered on the site of Oxyrhynchus, one of the chief cities of ancient Egypt, about 120 miles south of Cairo, on the edge of the western desert:

"Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye make the Sabbath a real Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father."

STUDY XIX.

At length Judah's sins brought the people into captivity, and Jehovah caused solemn assembly and Sabbath to be forgotten in Zion:

Read Lam. ii. 5, 6.

Among the gifts of God to his people when he brought them out of Egypt was the Sabbath, to be a sign between him and them, that they might know that he was Jehovah that sanctified them. But instead of hallowing their Deliverer's Sabbaths, that they might know him as Jehovah their God, they profaned them and lost communion with the Lord. Then in righteous judgment they were scattered among the nations and dispersed through the countries. Such is the teaching of Ezekiel, prophet of the Exile:

Read Ezek. xx. 10-24.

Even the priests hid their eyes from the Sabbaths and from other holy things:

Read Ezek. xxii. 26.

Closely connected with the idolatry and impurity of the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, that brought on such grievous punishment, was the profanation of the Sabbath:

Read Ezek. xxiii. 1, 36-39.

In vision the prophet beheld the future glory of the Lord's redeemed people, under the figure of restored worship. The priests "shall hallow my Sabbaths." The east gate of the temple's inner court, shut the six working days, shall be opened on the Sabbath days; and prince and people shall worship at that holy place and time:

Read Ezek. xliv. 15, 24; xlv. 17; xlvi. 1-4, 12.

Upon Israel's return from the captivity in Babylon every man shall be blessed that keeps the Sabbath and refrains from doing evil; the Sabbath and covenant-keeping eunuchs shall be given a memorial, i. e., place or part in the Lord's house, and a name better than sons and daughters, and foreigners who do not profane the Sabbath and have joined themselves to Jehovah, shall be brought to his holy mountain and made joyful in his house of prayer:

Read Isa. lvi, 1-8.

STUDY XX.

A wonderfully great promise is connected with faithful and cheerful Sabbath-keeping in Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

"If thou turn away thy foot," etc., i. e., "If thou treadest not its sacred soil with the foot of everyday business."

"Thine own words," i. e., words out of harmony with "my holy day."

"Upon the high places of the earth," i. e., in national exaltation.

This 58th chapter of Isaiah relates, first, to practical righteousness, and then closes with a passage that exhorts to "the observance of one form, and places the keeping of the Sabbath on a level with the practice of love."

“Our prophet, then, while exalting the practical service of man at the expense of certain religious forms, equally exalts the observance of Sabbath; his scorn for their formalism changes, when he comes to it, into a strenuous enthusiasm of defence. This remarkable fact, which is strictly analogous to the appearance of the fourth commandment in a code otherwise consisting of purely moral and religious laws, is easily explained. Observe that our prophet bases his plea for Sabbath-keeping, and his assurance that it must lead to prosperity, not on its physical, moral or social benefits, but simply on its acknowledgment of God. Not only is the Sabbath to be honored because it is the *Holy of Jehovah* and *Honourable*, but *making it one's pleasure* is equivalent to *finding one's pleasure in him*. The parallel between these two phrases in verses 13 and 14 is evident, and means really this: Inasmuch as ye do it unto the Sabbath, ye do it unto me. The prophet, then, enforces the Sabbath simply on account of its religious and Godward aspect. Now, let us remember the truth, which he so often enforces, that the service of Man, however ardently and widely pursued, can never lead or sum up our duty, that the service of God has, logically and practically, a prior claim; for without it the service of Man must suffer both in obligation and in resource. God must be our first resort—must have our first homage, affection and obedience. But this can not well take place without some amount of definite and regular and frequent devotion to him. In the most spiritual religion there is an irreducible minimum of formal observance. Now, in that wholesale destruction of religious forms, which took place at the overthrow of Jerusalem, there was only one institution, which was not necessarily involved. The Sabbath did not fall with the Temple and the Altar; the Sabbath was independent of all locality; the Sabbath was possible even in exile. It was the one solemn, public and frequently regular form, in which the nation could turn to God, glorify him and enjoy him. Perhaps, too, through the Babylonian fashion of solemnizing the seventh day, our prophet realized again the primitive institution of the Sabbath, and was reminded that, since seven days is a regular part of the natural year, the Sabbath is, so to speak, sanctioned by the statutes of creation.

“An institution, which is so primitive, which is so independent of locality, which forms so natural a part of the

course of time, but which, above all, has twice—in the Jewish Exile and in the passage of Judaism to Christianity—survived the abrogation and disappearance of all other forms of the religion with which it was connected, and has twice been affirmed by prophecy or practice to be an essential part of spiritual religion and the equal of social morality,—has amply proved its divine origin and its indispensableness to man.”—Geo. Adam Smith.

Professor Delitzsch says: “More than other legal institutions the Sabbath festival was the means by which Israel was united and preserved as a religious community, especially in the exile, when a great part of the rest of the cultus, being attached to Jerusalem and the holy land, fell into disuse. . . . The Sabbath festival, established by law, was an educative agency which looked to this goal of all creation, and especially of humanity,—the entrance into God’s rest; it set a limit week by week to the activity of the people losing itself in externality and secularism; by its strict prohibition of all work it compelled them to reflect and to occupy themselves with God and his Word. The prophet does not hedge round this Sabbath commandment with new enactments, but demands for the observance of it thoroughness and sincerity, corresponding to the spirit of the letter.”

STUDY XXI.

Professor Ryle says in his *Nehemiah* that “the observance of the Sabbath was always the stumbling-block in the way of free relations between the pious Jew and the Gentile. The temptation to desecrate the Sabbath in order to maintain amicable relations with Gentile traders was a constant source of religious degeneracy among the Jews.”

In Nehemiah’s times, the middle of the fifth century, B. C., the worshiping Levites, in acknowledging the goodness of Jehovah, said that he made known unto Israel his “holy Sabbath”:

Read Neh. ix, 13, 14.

Under the splendid leadership of Nehemiah, one of the wisest men of Bible times, the people of all classes covenanted not to buy wares on the Sabbath day, and to maintain Sabbath worship in the temple:

Read Neh. x, 31-33.

In the reform work of Nehemiah as governor of Judah he testified against unnecessary labor by the Jews on the Sabbath and against traffic on that day; commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be closed from the beginning of darkness before the Sabbath until after the Sabbath; drove away merchants and sellers who lodged about the city wall; and gave the Levites a special commission to purify themselves, keep the gates, and sanctify the Sabbath:

Read Neh. xiii, 15-28.

Such consequences did not hinge on the mere outward regard or disregard of the day, in the way of physical rest or empty forms of religion. Real Sabbath-keeping was and is a piece of spiritual religion. From no other point of view can the strong language of the prophets be understood, or the legislation of Nehemiah be justified. This is not to say that the spirit of Nehemiah was exactly like the mind of Jesus; but he wrought and ruled well in his day.

STUDY XXII.

SUMMARY OF OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS.

Geikie says that the Sabbath was "commanded as a fundamental duty; to mark the wide difference between Israel and the other nations; to foster religious reverence; and to give a religious tone to public and private life." That is, the Sabbath was an essential part of Israel's training as the Servant of Jehovah.

Our position is not affected by a truly reverent higher criticism of the Bible, unless, indeed, it be to receive added strength. We welcome the general results of that constructive, historical, literary, and critical study of the Sacred Scriptures which has been lifting the Old Testament especially, to a higher level of authority in moral and religious things.

The seventh or last day of the week as a hallowed day, along with holy marriage, and other great truths and facts, is a prominent feature of the early chapters of Genesis. This, and the place of the Sabbath in Law and Prophecy, give to it the stamp of essential universality.

The Ten Words from Sinai, though requiring fulfillment, not abrogation, by Jesus and Paul, have always been the admiration of thoughtful minds as a wonderful summary of human obligations. Among these ten words the Fourth is given a central and significant place, thus being raised to a high plane of spiritual and moral values. And whatever may have been the pre-historic origin of the Sabbath, "it assumed among the Hebrews a new character, being stripped of its superstitious and heathen associations, and being made subservient to ethical and religious ends."—Hastings.

In Deuteronomy the Sabbath receives added honor and emphasis by an appeal to Israel's sense of gratitude for having been brought out of Egyptian servitude by the mighty hand of God.

In all Leviticalism the Sabbath is represented as a gift and blessing for both man and beast,—not as a burden to be borne.—Oehler.

The prophets saw a vital connection between true Sabbath-keeping and spirituality in religion and purity of morals. And to them Sabbath relates most of all to God, religion, and righteousness of life. By the divine appointment it has material and physical use, but its chief ends are spiritual and ethical. Scriptural and ideal Sabbath observance is a religious service that should include fitting rest for body and mind. No ordinance of the State can make any day a Sabbath-day, however it be labeled.

The essence of true sabbatizing is inward and spiritual, not outward. The oppressor and the evil-doer can not be Sabbath-keepers. Amos viii. 4-10. Isa. i. 13-17. In the name of Jehovah, Jeremiah and Isaiah proclaim that holy Sabbath-keeping has a living and real connection with righteousness, and with individual and national well-being. Jer. xvii, 19-27. Isa. lvi. 1-5.

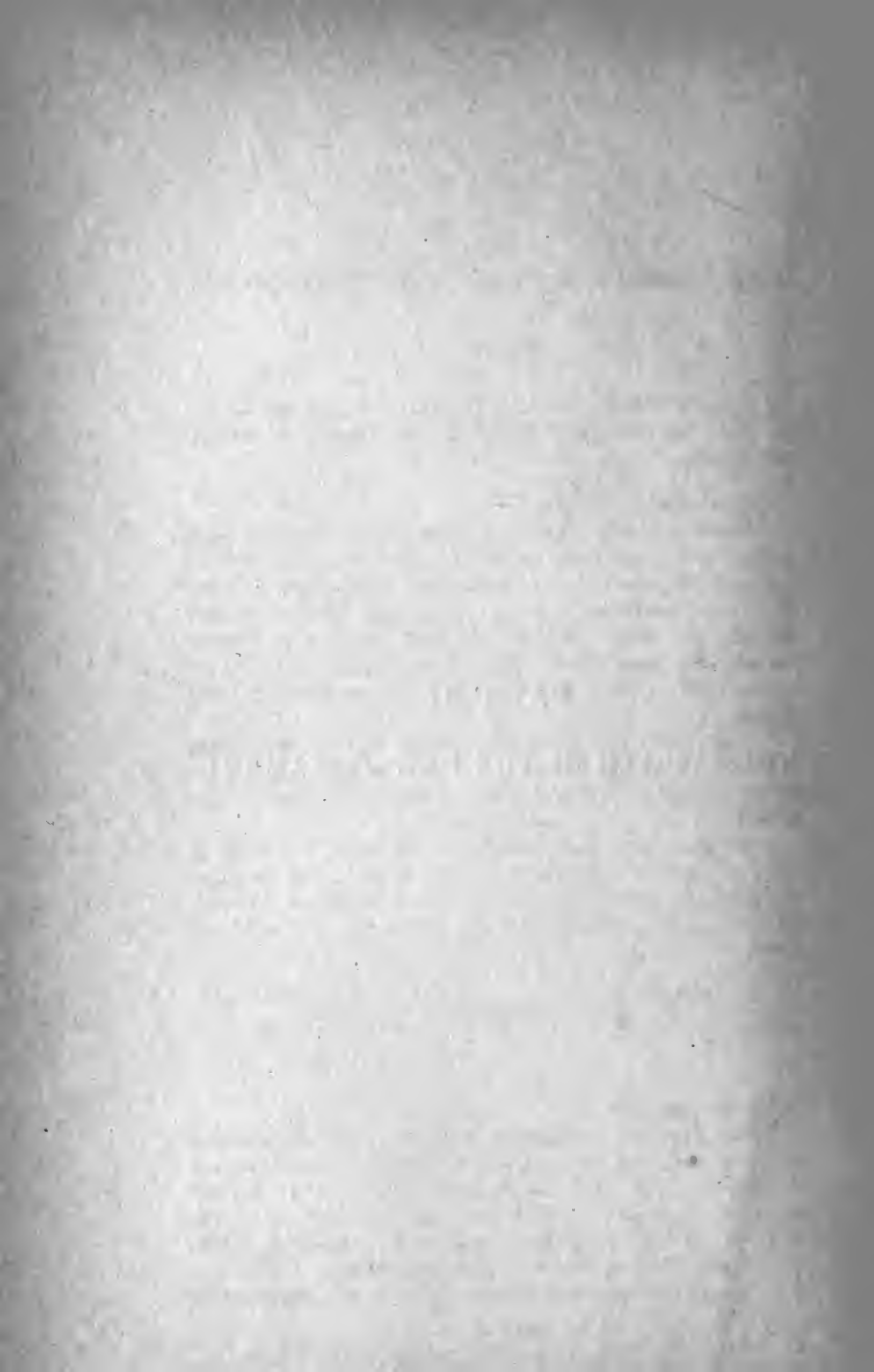
They who call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah, honorable, shall delight themselves in Jehovah, and receive abundant blessing, riding upon the high places of the earth. Isa. lviii. 13. 14. In Ezekiel's vision of the future glory of the Lord's redeemed people, under the figure of restored and pure worship, the priests shall hallow the Sabbaths of Jehovah. Ch. xliv. 24. And the exultant 92d Psalm is dedicated to the Sabbath day, and celebrates the goodness of Jehovah and the blessedness of the righteous.

Modern leaders of religious thought testify to the world's need, now, of a Sabbath day; and I have been impressed as never before by the spiritual and ethical, the human and therefore universal significance of the Old Covenant teachings concerning the holy Sabbath of Jehovah God.



PART II

THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT



THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

STUDY I.

Relation between the two Testaments or Covenants, and the authority that Jesus claims as our Teacher in religion and morals.

Read Matt. v. 17-22a.

There is a wide difference between fulfilling and abrogating; and Jesus came to fill the older Scriptures full of meaning. He filled the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," so full of meaning that we now know that God does not approve either feelings, thoughts, words, or acts of hatred. He taught that a bad thought is like a bad word in the sight of God; and a bad wish or purpose like a bad action.

Again and again Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time . . . ; but I say unto you." Thus he claims highest authority as the moral and religious teacher of men.

Whether then the Sabbath of the Old Testament is for Christians or not; and if it is, How we are to keep it,—are questions for Christ, not for Moses or the prophets, to answer; unless, indeed, they are found to agree with our Lord.

STUDY II.

Read Matt. xii. 1-4.

The Pharisees complained when they saw the disciples of Jesus beginning to pluck and eat wheat or barley on the Sabbath; for they held that to pluck heads of grain and rub them in the hands on that day was forbidden labor. In order to defend his disciples from their complaining critics Jesus reminded the Pharisees how, according to Jewish history, David and the other hungry men with him, entered into

the house of God and did eat the holy showbread which no one but priests, as a rule, had the right to eat. There is not one word here against orderly worship or ceremonial observances; but Jesus teaches that there may be special occasions of necessity when human needs are higher and holier than mere religious form and ceremony. On this particular Sabbath the hungry disciples took, apparently, the easiest way of satisfying a natural want, though at the cost of a little labor; and the Master said they did right. But this neither justifies useless labor, nor destroys the value of good order, in the house and on the day of God. The Sabbath is not a burden but a spiritual privilege.

There is a saying ascribed to Jesus as following his conversation with the Pharisees, when they said it was not lawful for the disciples to pluck, rub, and eat ears of grain on the Sabbath, which impresses scholars as being both ancient and genuine:

“On the same day when he saw one working on the Sabbath he said to him, Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed and a transgressor of the law.” i. e., If thou art doing this work on the Sabbath day conscientiously believing it to be a work of necessity, blessed art thou. But if thou art acting against thy conscience thou art transgressing the law.

This seems to have been Jesus' habit of mind regarding the Sabbath, as it was that of the apostle Paul.—*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, art. *Sabbath*.

STUDY III.

The public worship of God, so essential to the experience of a common fellowship with our heavenly Father; and special service for our Lord in fitting religious exercises, may require that we do work on the Sabbath day.

Read Matt. xii. 5, 6.

According to the Pharisaic point of view and teaching the ministering priests “profaned” the Sabbath, treated a sacred thing with irreverence. According to Jesus the nature of this service was not profanation but religion.

The priests, on the Sabbath day, offered burnt-offerings of lambs, and flour and oil; and this required work. But,—such is our Saviour's argument,—a literal Sabbath law must give way to the important sacrificial worship and temple service. To make necessary arrangements for public religious worship, and to attend Sabbath meetings, are justified by the principles here laid down.

But Christ is greater than temple or church, because God dwells in him in a higher sense than in any buildings, however holy. And if one is rendering Christ some special service, such as preaching, Sabbath-school teaching, and worshiping, though it be work, one is doing his Lord's will. One may do his or her daily and ordinary work in such a way and spirit as to make it really a service of Christ; but evidently it is not of this regular work that the Lord is here speaking.

STUDY IV.

The law of love is greater than the letter of law, when the letter hinders the practice of the former.

Read Matt. xii. 7, 8.

The prophet Hosea (ch. vi. 6) was speaking to people who offered sacrifices and observed the externals of religion, but were wicked in character and conduct; and so he said, It is not sacrifice and burnt-offerings that God desires, but goodness and the knowledge of God. Sacrifice and burnt-offerings were not pleasing to God unless the worshipers understood him and were good.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, Your strict outward observance of the Sabbath counts for nothing with my Father, because you do not show love, sympathy and mercy toward my disciples, your fellow men. God wants both Sabbath-keeping, and love, kindness, fairness, and compassion; but if he can not have both, he a thousand times prefers love, mercy, and kindness, to any Sabbath-keeping that is possible without these virtues.

Christian disciples may act under the authority of their Lord, who has the right to regulate and control the Sabbath; for the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

STUDY V.

It is right to do deeds of mercy on the Sabbath day.

Read Matt. xii. 9-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11.

One Sabbath day there was a man in a synagogue with a withered hand; and enemies of Jesus asked him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, that they might charge him before the council with breaking the Sabbath law by working. Jesus answered them by saying, If one of you had a sheep and it fell into a pit on the Sabbath day, would you not lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Then in obedience to the Lord's command the man stretched forth his hand, and it was restored whole, as the other. But the disappointed and angry Pharisees went out and took counsel against Jesus, how they might destroy him.

Necessary work in the way of acts of merciful helpfulness is to be done on the Sabbath day; for suffering humanity is of more value than suffering animals, and even suffering animals are of more value than the mere letter of the Sabbath law. If husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, friend, or neighbor, were sick or in distress, and needed our care, it would be contrary to the teaching of Jesus to neglect them for Sabbath rest, worship, meditation, or prayer. But our Saviour does not give a shadow of justification for a general neglect of proper Sabbath rest, worship, reading, meditation, and prayer, for the sake of ordinary work or pleasure.

It became necessary for Jesus to define sharply the new order of social and spiritual fellowship which he came to institute, and to separate it from the worldly ecclesiastical-political ideal of the representatives of orthodox Judaism. As the true ethical and spiritual representative of an ideal kingdom he was obliged to break completely with the Judaism of scribes and Pharisees.—Leighton. And it is very significant that this break involved only a Pharisaised Sabbath, not the Christianised Sabbath that was made for man.

STUDY VI.

Our Lord has care both for his people and his Sabbath. When describing the great tribulation and suffering that

would attend the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said, as recorded in Matthew xxiv, 20, And pray that your flight be not in winter, neither on a Sabbath.

This certainly shows that Jesus expected his disciples to be regarding the Sabbath at the time of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, A. D. 70.

But, as certainly, he can not be understood to be opposed to their trying to escape from the awful horrors of that siege on a Sabbath day. This would be wholly inconsistent with what we have already found to be his doctrine concerning the Sabbath. One writer says that personal safety must not be secured at the expense of Sabbath sacredness, which is greater than personal safety. But Jesus teaches, as we have seen, that personal safety may be secured in complete harmony with the sacredness of the Sabbath. And the same writer says that to relieve suffering on the Sabbath is no profanation of it; that the Sabbath was for man's spiritual nature; that physical rest was subordinate; that the rest of the Sabbath does not interfere with personal needs; and that man was not made to serve the Sabbath, and thus suffer in his own person. In this instance, then, Jesus was more anxious for his disciples than for any rigid Sabbath formalism.

Jesus may have known that his own Jewish disciples would not at the time of the siege have risen to a true and spiritual view of the Sabbath and so felt at liberty to flee from the cruel and murderous Romans and the warring Jews.

And had they known and exercised their freedom from mere Sabbath ceremonialism, they would have been exposed to Jewish fanaticism, and been hindered by Jewish customs relating to the allowed length of a Sabbath-day's journey of less than a mile, the closing of city gates on the Sabbath, etc.

STUDY VII.

Read Mark i. 21-34.

The first Sabbath in Jesus' public ministry mentioned by Mark.

Jesus and his disciples, on the Sabbath day, went to

the synagogue in Capernaum, where people gathered for prayer, Scripture reading, and religious teaching.

He taught the people, and with such power that they were astonished at his teaching.

In the synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit; Jesus delivered him from the power of evil; and the people were amazed at his commanding authority.

From the synagogue they went to the home of Simon and Andrew; Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law of a fever; and she ministered unto the guests, probably by preparing the usual Sabbath meal.

After sunset the people brought to Jesus the sick and demoniacs; and he healed the sick and cast out evil spirits.

The people waited, either for the cool of the evening, or because they kept the Sabbath according to the strictness of rabbinical teaching; they did not wait because Christ was not willing to use his power to heal before sundown on the Sabbath.

Jesus used the Sabbath with mingled freedom and reverence.

STUDY VIII.

Read Mark ii. 23-28.

The Sabbath was made for the benefit of man; man was not made for the sake of the Sabbath.

Actual reaping and threshing were, of course, unlawful on the Sabbath day. The rabbis taught that to pluck grain was to reap, and to rub it was to thresh. To walk on grass was a kind of threshing, and to pick fruit from a tree was to harvest. It was according to such doctrine that the Pharisees said unto Jesus concerning his disciples, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?

The Sabbath was *made*; it owes its existence to some one's purpose and authority. Genesis ii. 1-3 and Exodus xx. 8-11, tell who ordained it, and why. The Sabbath comes from God the Creator.

It was made for man. It is a provision of our Father's love for our spiritual, moral, and physical benefit, and for our happiness. If we do not so use the Sabbath as to bring blessings of mind, heart, and body, to ourselves, our homes, our neighborhood, and our country, we are not using it

rightly, no matter how literal our formalism in Sabbath observance.

Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a graciously given means, not an end in itself. The highest good and the truest happiness of men and women, of boys and girls, and of society, is the end; and the comfort, even of beasts, is not left out.

To divorce, in our teaching, the spirit from the letter, is mysticism; and the letter without the spirit is dead and deadening. But it is the doctrine of our Saviour that there are special circumstances under which the mere letter of Sabbath law must give way to the spirit, for the sake of man who was not made for the Sabbath.

STUDY IX.

Read Mark iii. 1-6.

Our Saviour was angry and grieved because of the unreasoning selfishness and hardness of heart of some who thought they were Sabbath-keepers and he a Sabbath-breaker.

Jesus' use of the holy day seems to have become known; for enemies watch him with unfriendly purpose, to see if he would heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him of Sabbath-breaking. Their customs permitted healing on the Sabbath only when life was in danger. Jesus said unto them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save life, or to kill? No wonder they held their peace. Then he looked round about on them with anger,—anger against their selfishness and sin, but, unlike ourselves, without any disposition to retaliate; for he was grieved at the hardening of their heart, at their insensibility in the presence of a great affliction and of an opportunity to bring relief.

Not to do good in the way of relieving suffering, when one has the opportunity, is the same as to do one a wrong.

Let us be on our guard against valuing rigorous formal Sabbath-keeping above goodness, charity, and kindness.

To make this grave moral mistake will be to bring against ourselves the anger of our Lord, and cause him to look with grief upon our lifeless ceremonialism, religious pride, and coldness of heart.

Let us, if it be necessary, with the courage and in the

strength of our Lord, break away from mere conventional religion and morality, and treat the Sabbath and our suffering fellow men as he did.

Jesus grants no license to put our feet upon the Sabbath day; for the liberty he taught and practiced is more exacting than Pharisaic formalism, because it demands a due and reasonable regard both for the letter and spirit of religion and righteousness.

STUDY X.

Read Mark vi. 1, 2; Luke iv. 16-22, 31, 32.

Jesus a Sabbath-day Worshiper, Preacher, and Teacher.

We have our Saviour's example to justify the holding of meetings on the Sabbath day for prayer, praise, preaching, and teaching. How strange that any one should think that the fourth commandment forbids their leaving home and going to church!

It seems to have been the custom of Jesus, from boyhood up, to go to the synagogue, the place of worship, on the Sabbath day. Regular church-going by children, youth, and young people, is still a good custom, and one that helps to keep our minds and hearts right toward our heavenly Father, and one another.

Rest, reading, meditation, joy, and social enjoyment, in harmony with the teaching and example of Jesus, are right and proper on the Sabbath day; but let us also not forget the great importance of public religious assemblies.

STUDY XI.

Read Luke vi. 6-11, xiii. 10-17.

Jesus the Knower of our thoughts and the Judge of our conduct in the matter of Sabbath-keeping.

There were Pharisees so strict about the Sabbath that they held it wrong to tend the sick or to comfort them on that day; and these self-righteous and bitter religious spies and heresy hunters watched Jesus to see whether he would side with them or not, in their explanation of the Scriptures. But our Saviour always put principle above party, although he

knew that his enemies were trying to think out some way to destroy his influence. How much more their thoughts desecrated the Holy Sabbath than deeds of mercy could possibly do!

As Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day he healed a woman who had been bowed together with some infirmity for eighteen years. The ruler of the synagogue, moved with indignation, cowardly said to the multitude, not to Jesus or the woman, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them come and be healed. But the Lord answered, in righteous indignation at the moral blindness, spiritual insensibility, and falseness of the ruler and his supporters, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? Ought not this daughter of Abraham to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath? No wonder the adversaries were put to shame, and the multitude rejoiced.

In performing some sweet Christian service we may not be keeping the Sabbath as cold literalists and formalists want us to keep it, and yet we may be doing exactly as Jesus wants us to do; or, we may appear unto men to be very strict Sabbath-keepers, and yet in the eyes of our Saviour, who knows our minds and hearts, really be Sabbath-breakers.

STUDY XII.

Read Luke xiv. 1-24.

Jesus at a Sabbath entertainment in the house of a leading Pharisee.

One need not necessarily decline the hospitality of those whose morals and religion are opposed to one's own. Luke records two other occasions when Jesus accepted the offered entertainment of Pharisees, vii. 36-50; xi. 37-52. This was a Sabbath meal. Sabbath entertainments, luxurious and joyous, were common among the Jews, the food, however, being cooked on the day before. We need not hesitate to follow our Saviour's example in these respects, if, in our measure and authority, we use the occasion as he did,—and try to influence men for good.

He taught the principles of true righteousness; and, before the meal, he healed a man that had the dropsy. Answering the thoughts of the lawyers and Pharisees, Jesus said, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not? Not wishing to own that it was allowable, and not daring to deny it squarely, they took refuge in silence. Then he healed the man, and said unto those watching him with jealousy and enmity, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.

Men's instincts are frequently better than their cold formalistic theories. Not many years before this, when a poor porter, who afterwards became a famous rabbi, had been found half frozen under masses of snow in the window of the lecture room of eminent teachers, where he had hidden himself to hear their wisdom, because he had been unable to earn the small fee required for admission, men had rubbed and restored him though it was on the Sabbath day, saying that he was one for whom it was well worth while to break the Sabbath.

Some of the worst formalism of the Pharisees centered around the Sabbath, which had become a national institution and a kind of badge of religious exclusiveness and pride. Let us and all American Christians be on our guard lest, departing from the Sabbath and the Sabbath-keeping of Christ, we bring the Sabbath down from a spiritual and blessed ordinance of God for man's highest good, to an institution of the state, and a sign of religious exclusiveness, rather than a means of true fellowship and real service.

STUDY XIII.

Read John v. 1-18.

A deed of mercy on the Sabbath.

Jesus had healed a sick man on the Sabbath, and told him to arise, take up his bed, and walk. The Jews said it was not lawful for him to carry his bed on that day. In their bigotry and literalism this was their interpretation of the Old Testament Sabbath laws and of such passages as Jeremiah xvii. 21, 22. The answer of our Saviour was, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. From the

beginning of human history to that hour God had been working, in providence and revelation, for the salvation of men from sin, sorrow, disease, and death. From such activities Love knows and wants no rest. To cease from action is not necessarily the essence of real, spiritual Sabbath-keeping; and to keep from doing needed kindness, when Mercy calls to service, is not to keep the Sabbath but to break it. Holy Sabbaths had never prevented the heavenly Father's redemptive and merciful work for his children; they must not hinder his Son who came to minister unto the poor and needy. Neither should their sacredness keep us from working after the example and in the spirit of our Lord and Master.

STUDY XIV.

Read John vii. 22-24.

Mercy is greater than ritual.

If a Jewish child was eight days old on a Sabbath he was circumcised on that day. This observance would be a kind of work and a breaking of the Sabbath law as explained by those to whom Jesus was speaking. If then circumcision is so important that you will observe it on the Sabbath if the eighth day of the child comes on that day, are you angry with me, Jesus said, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath? If we practice baptism on the Sabbath, which is real work, shall we not also do the work of ministering to the sick, the suffering, the sorrowing, and the sinning? Judge not according to appearance, the Lord added, but judge righteous judgment. Let us also try to get at the heart of things, and at the actual motive and purpose of what others say or do.

Mercy is free, not bound, on the Sabbath.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work,—said Jesus; and then he healed the blind man. The healed man was brought to the Pharisees, some of whom said, This man (Jesus) is not from God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath. They charged him with breaking the Sabbath because it was on that day that he had made the clay and opened the poor man's eyes. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division

among them. How may one feel pretty sure that one is a true Sabbath-keeping Christian? When one is conscious of desiring and seeking to do deeds of mercy and acts of kindness on that holy day, in the spirit and with the purpose of Christ.

STUDY XV.

Read Matt. xxvii. 62; Mark xv. 42; xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 54-56; John xix. 14, 31, 42.

Studies XV. and XVI. are not vitally related to the doctrine of the Sabbath or the Person of our Lord. The impossibility of a completely satisfactory explanation and harmony of these Scriptures is evident from the various conclusions or partial conclusions reached by pious and scholarly students. It is not reasonable or necessary to demand an exact explanation or harmony. Those were strangely exciting days and hours; and that four accounts of such events, by honest writers, should appear to differ in some particulars, need not surprise us. If we had fuller knowledge concerning unrecorded incidents; the writers' sources of information; and the exact meaning of words, most of the difficulties would probably disappear. In any event a doctrine of the Sabbath, the Sunday, or the divinity of Christ, that depends upon some dogmatic interpretation and reconciliation of these passages, rests, it may be feared, on insecure grounds. Fortunately, truth is never so straitened.

That the Preparation means the day before the Sabbath, sixth-day, or Friday, is altogether probable, if, indeed, not quite certain. See Hastings, art. *Preparation*. Our Saviour, then, was crucified on Friday, the Jewish Preparation day.

The first day of the Passover feast was a sabbath, an annual ceremonial sabbath, as we would say (Exod. xii. 16). But to suppose that Mark does not refer to the regular weekly Sabbath when he says, "the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath," and "And when the sabbath was past;" or Luke, when he says, "And it was the day of the preparation, and the sabbath drew on . . . And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment;" or John, when he says, "that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day)," is to bring to plain speech an unnatural and forced interpretation.

That particular Sabbath was both the weekly Sabbath of the fourth commandment and the first day of the feast (Lev. xxiii. 7), and therefore a high day, a day of special sacredness.

Well would it be for us Christians if instead of laboring up to the last minute of sixth day we *prepared* for the Sabbath in our cooking, and in other ways, that we might better keep the day according to the commandment of God and the example of his Son.

STUDY XVI.

Read Matt. xii. 38-40; xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 19; xxvii. 63, 64; xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1, 2; Luke ix. 22; xviii. 33; xxiv. 1-7; xxi. 46; John xx. 1, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 4.

Compare with these scriptures Genesis xl. 12, 13, 20; Esther iv. 16; v. 1; and 2 Chron. x. 5, 12.

From these passages it is evident that "three days and three nights," "after three days," "three days," and "on the third day," in Jewish modes of speech, mean the same. The Talmud says, "A day and a night make an Onah, and a part of an Onah is as the whole." A Jew, Greek, or, Roman would understand "after three days," to mean any time on the third day.

It is a familiar fact that the same words have different meanings at different times, in different countries, and with different people. When our common English Bible was translated "thought" meant *anxious thought*; what we New Yorkers would call a tin pail a West Jersey man would call a kettle; etc.

Our own brother Ch. Th. Lucky, a Jew by blood; a profound scholar; as familiar with Hebrew modes of thought and expression as with the air he breathed; and a humble and devout Sabbath-keeping believer in the risen Christ, said that no educated Jew would have any trouble in understanding that the crucifixion of Christ on Friday and his resurrection on Sunday fulfilled all the requirements of language as to the time he was to be in the grave.

We might celebrate the resurrection of Christ annually, as we do his birth; but there is no teaching that the first

day of the week was to become the Christian Sabbath. Our Lord made the Sabbath of the Old Testament the Christian Sabbath.

Matt. xxviii. 1 is not easy of interpretation. According to strict Jewish reckoning the Sabbath ended and First-day commenced at sundown; and Matthew may intend to say that at that hour the two Marys went "to see the sepulchre." For another uncommon use of the verb *dawn* see Lk. xxiii. 54, in Greek.

Verses 2-7 may refer to what took place not immediately upon their arrival, but far into the night. This would bring Matthew into closer harmony with the other accounts.

The Greek for "late on the Sabbath" may be translated "after the Sabbath." See Godet, *The Twentieth Century New Testament*, *The Modern Speech New Testament*, Riddle, *A Popular Commentary*, etc.

The day may be thought of here in the *natural* sense, from sunrise to sunrise, and *dawn* mean early Sunday morning. See Meyer, Lange, Schaff, Alford, Broadus, *The One Volume Bible Commentary*, etc. Of possible explanations this is one of the best.

But we are ignorant of the exact meaning of some of the words; all the related circumstances are not known by us, and, evidently, were not known by every writer; the events were surpassing strange; each account is based upon the writer's own knowledge and object; and very minute and complete agreement in all details would arouse suspicion of collusion, and rob the narratives of their naturalness and freedom of spirit and purpose. Compare the reports of four honest people of the same scene or event. I feel, therefore, an hundred times stronger assurance of my living faith in a crucified and risen Saviour who was and is Lord of the Sabbath, than I do of the possibility of a perfectly exact interpretation and detailed harmony of our four accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

It might be added that one feels a sad interest in reading, as an argument, of Christ's being in "the gloomy tomb on that Jewish Sabbath." For it is pretty likely that he and the penitent were in *paradise* that day,—which must have been a pleasant place in which to spend the Sabbath.

STUDY XVII.

Read Luke vii. 2-9, (compare Matt. viii. 5-12), John xii. 20; Acts viii. 27, 28; x. 1, 2, 22; xiii. 14-16, 26, 27, 42-48; xiv. 1; xv. 21; xvii. 17; xviii. 4.

The following is a most valuable and important contribution to the explanation and illumination of these passages:

"It may be doubted whether the Jews ever secured a very large number of proselytes in the full sense, that is, of those who accepted circumcision and assumed the obligation to observe the law in all its parts; for the rite of circumcision was exceedingly repugnant to the world in general. But it is certain that they attached to themselves a large multitude of devout worshipers, who attended the services of the synagogue and served and honored their God. (These Gentile worshipers of the God of the Jews were commonly spoken of as devout and God-fearing men. See Acts x. 22, 35; xiii. 16, 26, and Josephus: Ant. XIV., 7, 2; B. J. II., 18, 2.) Many such adherents seem to have observed the Sabbath and some of the Jewish laws respecting food (Josephus: Contra Apionem, II., 30); while others contented themselves with conforming to the moral precepts of the Decalogue, or with the general practice of justice, holiness and mercy. It was among these Gentile adherents of Judaism that Christianity had its most rapid spread. They were prepared for it by their belief in the God who was worshiped both by the Jews and Christians, and by their acquaintance with the Old Testament, which they heard read in the synagogue week after week. . . . How much the existence of such circles of God-fearing men and women in all the great cities of the empire must have meant to Paul, we can easily imagine, and we shall see that he was fully alive to the opportunity offered by them."—McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age*, p. 160.

These people are commonly regarded as being "such non-Jews as held to the Jewish synagogue worship and observed the most elementary Jewish laws of food and purity and Sabbath observance, without entering by circumcision into the Jewish community. . . . But surely Cornelius would have been found in the synagogue on the Sabbath (see Acts x. 2, 22), and he is not to be distinguished from the class of foreigners informally connected with Judaism, with whom

the other passages acquaint us. Another such is the centurion who loved the Jewish nation and built them a synagogue (Lk. vii. 2-9); and another, the eunuch who came to Jerusalem to worship (Acts viii. 27, 28). . . . Although there were among the heathen many who were attracted by the monotheism and morality of Judaism and attended the synagogue services, yet these were not in our sense proselytes. A heathen could become a Jew only by circumcision."—Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. *Proselyte*.

According to the Acts these non-Jews "often became converts to Christianity, and this was an important factor in the establishment of the Gentile Christian Church. The struggle between St. Paul and the Judaizers (Acts xv, and Epistle to Galatians) was an attempt on the part of Christian Pharisees to compel Gentile Christians to become 'proselytes of Righteousness' by circumcision and keeping "the law of Moses." To keep the Ten Commandments did not make a Gentile a Jew; and the Sabbath was not a disputed question in the Jerusalem conference.—Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, art. *Proselyte*.

What added interest and naturalness these statements give to such passages as Acts xiii. 42, 44, 48; and to the fact that the Sabbath remained in the Church for centuries.

STUDY XVIII.

Read Romans iii. 28, 31; vi. 14; vii. 1-7, 12, 14; xiii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 1-18.

While deepest piety and greatest learning can not exhaust the rich mines of moral and spiritual truth found in Paul's wonderful letter to the Romans, it is believed that there is something precious here for beginners, and for boys and girls. Bad thoughts and feelings, desires and purposes, are, in our heavenly Father's sight, like bad words and actions. Hence we are condemned by his holy law, to which we can not yet give ideally perfect obedience, as it is explained by Jesus in the sermon on the mount. But he will forgive, that is, take away the condemnation, upon the condition of true repentance, love, trustfulness, and purposed obedience, on our part. Then there must follow loving service and obedience that, in their steadfastness and growth, are far beyond anything possible to one unforgiven and condemned. This pardon, acceptance, and growing trust, love,

and obedience, are what is meant by the big words Justification and Sanctification. If one should long wrong one's parents and afterwards come back truly owning up, with real sorrow, trustfulness, love, and intention henceforth to be obedient, every true parent would gladly and gratefully forgive and welcome back such a child. But one is not then made free from obligation to serve and obey, but under the greatest obligations to do so. Law is not made void by faith and love, but established. One can not easily imagine anything more contrary to reason and Scripture than the opinion that Christ or Paul did away with law.

If Paul meant to say that believers in Christ are not under high and holy obligation to be obedient to God, he would be most self-contradictory. What then does the apostle mean? A criminal transgressor of civil law is under that law's condemnation and exposed to punishment; if he is pardoned he is released from condemnation and penalty, but it is still his duty to be law-abiding. If husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers, sisters, and friends, went to statute books as the chief source of their knowledge of what they ought to do for one another, they would be legalistic, that is, under a law or legal-system. In their case the "letter" would kill all true affection and trust. If, on the contrary, they were true at heart, love would be their principal motive and end, their chief ground of obligation, and their best guide to right action, though sometimes, of course, needing information from the statute books. Christians are not under law but under grace; we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. That is, we are not under a letter-, law-, or legal-system, that constantly takes us to the letter of the law that we may learn what we *must* do for God and man in order to be saved; but we are under a grace-, love-, or spiritual-system, love being our chiefest and most exacting law. I try to serve my aged mother, and study to find out how I may serve her more and better, not that I may *become* her son but because I *am now* her son. Let us try to keep the Sabbath holy, to honor all the will of God, to keep the commandments of Jesus, and hunger for a knowledge of more and more to do, not that we may at last be saved in heaven; but because we are now the forgiven and saved children of our Father in heaven. Thus does love become the fulfillment of the law.

Sometimes one man says to another, If you will labor

for me by the day, month, or year, I will pay you wages. A man might say to a woman, If you will become my one lawful wife, I will furnish you with food, shelter, clothing, and protection, and set aside ten thousand dollars as exclusively your own. All this is a covenant of works; and if the letter of the agreement is the chief or sole ground of obligation and fidelity, there is little or no room for true life and love. But if a father says to his son, I love and believe in you, and all that I have is thine; or if a son says to his father, I love and trust you, and my best service and obedience shall be given to you willingly; or if a man and woman say, We love and trust each other, all that each of us is, or has, or may become, belongs to the other, we have all things together,—then here are moral and spiritual covenants of love and life. The Old or Mosaic Covenant, in its externals, is called a covenant of works, though beneath the outward there was the real spirit; and the Decalogue was its heart, centre, and basis. The former was glorious because it was one stage of redemptive history, and the Jewish religion was greatly superior to all contemporary religions. The New or Gospel Covenant is one of far greater moral and spiritual power, because more manifestly a covenant of grace and love. The latter is of surpassing glory, taking the place of the former; Christ, not Moses, is our law-giver; and we are not under the mere letter of law, but under the law of love, a law that demands both outward and inward and advancing worship, obedience, and service.

STUDY XIX.

Read Gal. iv. 8-11; Rom. xiv. 1-7; Col. ii. 16, 17.

Paul is more tolerant in Romans than in Galatians. The disciples in Galatia had been told that they must not only believe in Jesus but keep the whole law of Moses in order to be saved. "Ye observe days," etc., that is, studiously, scrupulously, as if essential to salvation. Galatians was written to overthrow this grave error in doctrine and practice.

The three passages, though relating to different conditions, are kindred in meaning. They set forth this fundamental principle of Paul's theology, namely, that the source and ground of salvation is a personal relation with God through Jesus Christ, made possible by God's grace and our

faith and love. Salvation does not come from obedience to the whole of any part of the Mosaic system, moral or ritual. Paul's feelings are intense, and his language strong; and it must be explained by his teachings as a whole.

To observe the Mosaic ritual, to scrupulously keep the Sabbath, to give mere outward obedience to any commandment of Mosaism, as the ground of our hope of salvation, is to do like the heathen, Paul says, who hope, by the externals of their religion, to win favor and gain safety at the hands of them that are no gods. Freedom in Christ is freedom from such bondage, not freedom from obligation.

The apostle does not object to formal precept, moral or ceremonial, to law or creed; but he does object (a) to the doctrine that salvation and Christianity depend on these; and (b) to the doctrine that the whole of Christian life and duty can be expressed in letter or statute.

If then nothing in the Mosaic law or in Gentile religions, as such, is binding on Christians on account of being contained in them; and if no "good works" of themselves bring salvation,—why keep the Sabbath, and why regard such spiritual and moral teachings and precepts as are found in the Decalogue, in Hebrew prophetism, and in the writings of many Gentiles? Because these have been taken up and absorbed into Christianity; and as evidence and fruit of our new life with God in Christ.

Professor H. C. G. Moule in his commentary on Romans, has something to say that is quite to the point: "The 'weak brother' spends much time in studying the traditional rules of fast and feast, and the code of permitted food. He is sure that the God who has accepted him will hide his face from him if he lets the new moon pass like a common day; or if the Sabbath is not kept by the rule, not of Scripture, but of the Rabbis. . . . He questions and discusses everything, with himself, if not with others. He is on the way to let his view of acceptance in Christ grow fainter and more confused. He walks, he lives; but he moves like a man chained and in prison. . . . There seems to be a broad and intelligible difference between the Sabbath-keeping of *the Jewish law* and the Sabbath-keeping of *man*; the enjoyment and holy use of the primeval Rest for man and beast. We take it that *that* duty and privilege is not in question here at all. The 'weak' Christian was the anxious scholar of the Rabbis, not the man simply loyal to the Decalogue."

STUDY XX.

Read *Hebrews iv. 1-10; Revelation i. 10.*

As Farrar says, "The Sabbath is a nearer type of heaven than Canaan." This verse shows that the writer did not apply the term "sabbath" to Sunday. And if the passage furnishes no *positive proof* of the perpetuity of the Sabbath law, it certainly suggests the most grand and beautiful thought, that our weekly Sabbath-keeping ought to be of such a character as to be, for ourselves and to others, a symbol of the "rest" that believers find in Christ and may enjoy forever.

The Rev. William Milligan, D. D., one of the foremost interpreters of the book of Revelation, says: "The 'Lord's Day' here referred to may have been the Sunday, the day commemorative of that morning when he who had been 'crucified through weakness, yet lived through the power of God.' If so, there was a peculiar fitness in that vision, now to be granted, of the risen and glorified Redeemer. But it seems doubtful if this is the true interpretation. Proof is wanting that the first day of the week has yet received the name of 'The Lord's Day,' and it is more in accordance with the prophetic tone of the book before us to think that by Saint John the whole of that brief season which was to pass before the Church should follow her Lord to glory was regarded as 'The Lord's Day.'"

Professor Clarke, in *An Outline of Christian Theology*, commenting on ch. xx. 1-10, says that Revelation is the great book of symbols, where every literal thing that is mentioned stands as illustrative symbol of some spiritual reality. This fact of itself casts doubt upon all literal interpretations and applications of imagery that is found here. The book gloriously exalts Christ and foretells his victory; but the language is pictorial and vague, neither intended for exact fulfilment nor capable of receiving it.

How then did the Church come to observe Sunday?

- (1) There is abundant evidence that the Church began to depart from New Testament Christianity during and immediately after the times of the Apostles and the first century.
- (2) There was strong prejudice, among Gentiles, against everything that could be called or thought of as "Jewish."
- (3) "The day of the Sun" was a great day among the heathen; and many heathen customs were taken and adapted

by the Church. (4) These tendencies away from the simple teachings of Christ and the Apostles were strengthened by the naturalness of some special regard for the resurrection day. And the Church came to have many other "sacred" days and periods of its own appointment.

I have no objection to a celebration of the Lord's resurrection; but I must earnestly protest, in the name of truth and religion, against the substitution of the "Christian Sunday" for the Sabbath of the Creation Story, of the Decalogue, of the holy prophets, of Jesus our Lord, and of Christ's great Apostle.

STUDY XXI.

RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY

Jesus the Christ was made a member of the then dying Jewish Church; but he became the Founder of the Christian Church. Naturally much of his thought, speech, and action was under Hebrew forms; but, for him, these forms could not imprison the spirit or hide the face of eternal Truth, and when he spoke he spoke for the world to hear. Man is greater than the Sabbath, he said; and in harmony with this rational utterance, he taught that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mark ii. 27, 28). Thus in carrying the Sabbath back to the "beginning," as he did in the case of marriage also (Matt. xix. 3-8, Mark x. 2-9), he gave to the doctrine of its universality his divine sanction. There is no hint at its abrogation; but in teaching and practice he sought to lift it into the realm of reason and life and out of the swamps of Judaism where, among a hundred and one instances, it was thought worth while to inquire whether an egg laid on the Sabbath were unclean or not. Our Saviour is Lord even of the Sabbath day, and so our Example in the use of this hallowed time. How he was employed on that day the Gospels tell us again and again. Therefore to keep the Sabbath according to the law of its Lord would be to testify every week that God is, and that he is our Maker; and that the Son of Man is Lord over all of life's activities and relations.

The Seventh-day position is not contrary to any New Testament reference to the First-day; to the apostolic history; to Paul's attitude toward the Old Covenant; or to his doctrine of liberty under the New Covenant.

No mention will be made of any Bible scholars or of any historians as though their opinions were decisive, but to show, upon first-rate authority, that the case is not so clearly against our doctrine as many suppose.

Lk. xxiv. 33-38; John xx. 19, 26.—It was natural for the disciples to come together on the evening of the day of the Resurrection, and again after eight days. They were in fear of the Jews; strange things had taken place; some doubted the Resurrection news; and according to Luke they were terrified and affrighted when the Lord first spoke to them. I rejoice with all believers in these appearances of the risen Christ, and in all that they mean of spiritual blessing and power; and do not wonder that they who religiously regard the First-day look back to those meetings with special interest. But there is no indication that the disciples had gathered together to celebrate the Resurrection day; and that Christ desired by his presence to sanction such a purpose.—Meyer and others.

Acts ii. 1.—That the day of Pentecost was on the First-day is by no means certain. It may have been on the "Jewish Sabbath."—Hackett, Hastings, Purves, and others.

Acts xx. 7-11.—This passage, for many people, is proof of the religious observance of the Sunday at that time. It is also the opinion of many writers that this breaking of bread was on our Saturday evening, and that the ship was to sail on Sunday morning.—Hackett, Conybeare and Howson. And it is a fair question whether they met to break bread, that is for an evening meal accompanied by the eucharist, because it was the First-day, or because Paul had planned to leave Troas the following day.—Meyer, Neander.

1 Corinthians xvi. 2.—There is absolutely no reference here to a public meeting for worship.—*Expositor's Bible*, many Commentaries. Marcus Dods says: "This verse has sometimes been quoted as evidence that the Christians met for worship on Sundays as we do. Manifestly it shows nothing of the kind. It is proof that the first day of the week had a significance, probably as the day of our Lord's resurrection, possibly only for some trade reasons now unknown. It expressly said that each was to lay up 'by him'—that is, not in a public fund, but at home in his own purse—what he wished to give."

Revelation i. 10.—That the phrase "Lord's day" came to

be applied later to the Sunday is not questioned; but proof is wanting that the first day of the week had yet received this name.—Hastings, *Expositor's Bible*.

I have no desire whatever to rob these few New Testament references to the first day of the week of all possible religious significance. But, backed by many modern, eminent, and devout scholars, I insist that these instances are not to be pressed into service, unduly; and that they ascribe absolutely no sabbatic principle to the Sunday. I am willing however to take all these Scriptures at any fair value, and to unite with my brethren of every Christian faith in any fitting annual celebration of the resurrection of our one Redeemer and Lord.

Acts x. 1, 2, 22, 23, 34, 35; xiii. 16, 26, 42, 44, 48 and xvii. 17.—Of far greater significance to me are these passages in the Acts of the Apostles, and kindred references in the Gospels. The persons spoken of here as devout, fearing God, and working righteousness, including such men as Cornelius, and the centurion of Luke vii. 2-9, and forming a numerous class, were non-Jews who, religiously restless and believing no longer in heathen gods, had found intellectual and spiritual satisfaction in the lofty ethical nontheism of the Hebrew religion. They attended synagogue worship and observed Jewish laws of food, purity, and the Sabbath, without, however, entering the Jewish community by circumcision. These people worshiped God, were acquainted with the Old Testament, free from the traditions of Judaism, and prepared to welcome a gospel of equal privileges for all believers. That the presence of such men and women in all the great cities of the empire must have meant much to Paul we can easily believe; and among them Christianity had its most rapid spread.—Hastings, McGiffert. This explains the now recognized fact that the Sabbath was kept for centuries by both Jewish and Gentile Christians, East and West.

2 Corinthians iii. 1-11; Romans iii. 31; vi. 14-16; vii. 7-16.—We have here and in related Scripture Paul's doctrine concerning the Old Covenant, the Decalogue, and the Law. The Mosaic "ministration," method, and work, have come to an end in Christ and the Cross. We are under the New Covenant, the fundamental principle of which is grace not legalism. The only "freedom from law" that the New Testament knows is freedom from its condemnation experienced

by believers in Jesus. Truth and law can not be abrogated. But there is another *ministration*; grace and love are revealed more wondrously; there is a new Priesthood; and the Spirit works more within, where the new life from him feels the law written on the heart. Had Christ and Paul been understood there would have been no hierarchy, antinomianism, legalism, asceticism, or mysticism; for saving and living faith establishes law, and confirms, in Christ, the universal priesthood of believers. Sin in Paul, that is, Paul himself, was in the sleep of moral death; but the law cried, Thou shalt not covet, and awakened him to a sense of "the body of this death," physical and eternal. He had "sat for his own likeness;" but when deliverance came through Jesus Christ our Lord, he found that the commandment which had been unto death was now unto life. The law was holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. The newness of the spirit had brought infinite expansion to the oldness of the letter just as the Saviour taught on the mountain.

For further discussion of the following group of passages see Neander, Purves, Sanday, *New Century Bible*, Hastings, Meyer, and others, *in loc.*

Galatians iv. 10; v. 12.—We have here a white-heat protest against contemporary Judaism, and the work of those false teachers who sought to rob the Galatians of the freedom that had come through Christ.

Romans xiv. 5.—This passage is a rebuke, always needed, of religious scrupulousness concerning food, drink, and the regard of mere days.

Colossians ii. 16-23.—This is a condemnation of Judaism, asceticism, and an existing insidious, false philosophy of supernatural relations.

If these passages are against all external observances, as such, then Paul is self-contradictory; for outward things have a place in both his teaching and practice.

If they oppose sabbatizing on the Seventh-day they must also be against sabbatizing on the First-day; for the fetters of a Christian ordinance would be no better than the Jewish yoke.—Adeney in *Biblical World* for November, 1906.

The rational and true interpretation of the doctrine of Paul and the Master seems to be that it swept away dead formalism; the teachings of contemporary, legalistic Judaism; lifeless theology and superstitious philosophy; and the outward observance of any ordinance as though one's salvation

depended upon it. No set of minute rules is given; but principles that may include the Sabbath, baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer, praise, creeds, ordinances, the Sunday, Easter, Good Friday, Lent, and so on, are plainly and strongly enforced.

My aged mother has come to live with me. Imagine one coming with a statute book saying, Here is a list of nineteen things that you must do for her with scrupulous regularity, in order to become her son. My indignant answer would be, Away with this letter that killeth. I am my mother's son by the laws of life and love; it may be that the exacting law of love and life will require not only nineteen but a hundred and nineteen things of filial service.

Imagine one going to the apostle and saying, Now, Paul, in order to become a servant of the Lord and a member of his kingdom, you must keep the Sabbath, practice baptism, join the church, pay tithes, observe circumcision, drink no wine, abstain from meat offered to idols, and so on. The apostle would have exclaimed, Away with this spiritually and morally deadening letter. I am a child of God and a bond-servant of my Lord by the laws of eternal life and love. And if the spirit of loyal obedience; if love to God and man; if the increase of religion, righteousness, and peace, require it of me, I will joyously keep the Sabbath, teach baptism, unite with the Christian community, give as the Lord prospers me, observe circumcision as in the case of Timothy and forbid it in the case of Titus, and I will not eat flesh, or drink wine, or do anything whereby my brother stumbleth. For we are not under law—a régime of legalism with a long code of commands and prohibitions, but under grace—a régime of the Spirit and the principles of love; and the list of love's commands is infinite in length.

The boys and girls of our Sabbath schools can see the difference between these two ways of saying things: First—I love my father and mother, my brother and sister, my grandpa and grandma; and am trying to do everything I can for their comfort and happiness. And, second—I do not want to be punished, or lose my home, food and clothing; and so I will do for father and mother and the rest, only what I must do that I may not in any way be punished.

Theologically, the first is "under grace," the second "under law," that is, legalism.

The Church needs the service of representative and

royal priests and prophets, and some religious forms to promote worship, teach truth, and guide to right doing. The problem is how to balance, rationally and spiritually, their claims and labors in the realms of ceremony, knowledge, and life. Holy love to God and man, good character and conduct, fellowship in spiritual realities—these are the supreme things. Both Jesus and Paul opposed legalism and formalism—not law, beauty and order; human authority in matters of religion; and externalism as a substitute for the essence of Christianity. Ritual finds its true meaning and worth only as it helps to warmth of piety and purity of life.

According to the teachings of Jesus and Paul concerning law and liberty, one of the highest grounds of obligations, —and there can be none higher,—is "*Christian expediency and a dictate of Christian feeling.*" When one becomes a Christian, a child of God, one should understand that the whole will of our Father is to be done voluntarily and joyously, out of love and gratitude, and because the doing of that will promote individual spirituality and righteousness and extends the kingdom of heaven.

A BRIEF SUPPLEMENTARY HISTORICAL SURVEY

My principal sources are Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*; McClintock and Strong; Newman's *Manual of Church History*; Hastings; and Lewis' *Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday*.

The celebration of the Resurrection by some religious regard for the Sunday, commenced, no doubt, early in the second century; but there is no evidence whatever in the Scriptures or in Church history that this was by apostolic decree. Whether this and other doctrines still more strange were due to the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, and whether they were the product of normal evolution under the New Covenant or not, must be determined by an appeal to the Bible, history, and experience.

The struggle of the Sabbath of Jesus against "the day called the day of the sun" of Justin Martyr, and "the venerable day of the sun" of Constantine, for place and power in the life and growth of the Church, was a part of that mighty conflict of the religion of Christ and Paul with contemporary Judaism, pagan religion, false philosophy, and with the principle of authority in religion and of the union of Church and State—a conflict that issued in the Papal Church with its mingled strength and weakness, good and evil.

The Sabbath was kept in both the Eastern and the Western churches either as a fast or a festival for centuries. On to the fifth century and even later the sabbatic principle was not conceived as belonging to the Sunday or the Lord's day, as it was called. And while the sources referred to as showing the early observance of the Sunday in the Church are of great value as history, they would not be counted as altogether safe guides in every matter of faith and practice. After Polycarp (d. 155?), and indeed from even an earlier date, as is well known, there was a swift departure from the principles of the Gospel, a departure that was not evolutionary progress.

Justin Martyr (d. 165?) describes contemporary religious observances on the day of the sun that follows the day of

Saturn, the day on which God made the world and on which the Saviour rose from the dead. His doctrine of angels, demons, baptism, and the eucharist however, would not be quite acceptable, I think, to the Church today. His point of view as an "apologist" seems to have been determined by pagan philosophy, and his theology by a desire to "accommodate" Christianity to pagan religion.

Tertullian (b. 150-160) found place in his theology for legalism, asceticism, materialism, and a strange doctrine of supernatural power in the water of baptism.

The *Didache* is a valuable piece of religious history, but it would hardly be received as authority in the matter of baptism and the ministry, or in its requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, and to say the Lord's Prayer three times a day.

The Ignatian *Epistles*, a chief bulwark of the papal doctrine of the episcopacy, appear in three forms—the longer Greek, the shorter Greek, and a Syriac version shorter still. Upon the question of genuineness and of there being any reference at all to Sunday-keeping see Lewis' full discussion. But as the epistles stand in some translations, in the shorter Greek form Ignatius substitutes, in doctrine, Lord's day for the Sabbath. In the longer form, with an absurd reference to the inscriptions of two Psalms as being a prophetic looking forward to the "eighth" or Lord's day, he exhorts his readers to keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, and after the observance of the Sabbath to keep the Lord's day as a festival, the Resurrection day.

The unreasoning allegorizing of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Barnabas would be condemned by us all. He finds, for example, in the circumcision of his servants by Abraham a special reference to Christ and the crucifixion.

Sunday as a religious festival grew up in an environment that made its rise *natural*, but not in the course of a normally and progressively developing history of vital religion. The Resurrection was indeed a glorious fact; it was inconvenient to observe two days; opposition to everything thought to be Jewish was intense; Jesus and Paul and the Scriptures were misunderstood; the tendency to compromise with paganism and philosophy and sun-worship was strong; and the Church kept drifting away from her Founder.

Too little emphasis was placed upon the practical and ethical teachings of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke,

too much upon the theology and metaphysics of Paul and John and the logic of Aristotle.

Gospel ideas were practical and capable of realization in the course of a long process of growth. But religious leaders of the early centuries disregarded truth and fact more and more; external forms and ecclesiastical authority took the place of true Christian ideas; and as degeneration proceeded the heads of the Church acquiesced more and more in a system of doctrine, practice, and organization, that was nominal and ceremonial, and was losing life and reality.—Ramsey.

Antioch and Emesa, centers of Syrian Christianity, were also centers of religions that made their influence felt throughout the Roman empire. The worship of the Syrian goddess of Antioch was a popular oriental superstition under the earlier Cæsars; and the rites of the sun-god of Emesa became fashionable under Heliogabalus.—Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry*.

Heliogabalus, the corrupt priest of the Syrian sun-god at Emesa, was Roman emperor, 218-222. It was his intention to merge Judaism, Samaritanism, Christianity, and the State religion into a single eclectic system in which sun-worship should predominate; and to build a great temple in Rome in which side by side with sun-worship Jewish and Christian worship should be encouraged.—Newman.

“The most important epoch in the history of the Lord’s day is marked by the issue of the celebrated edict of Constantine (d. 337), . . . This edict was clearly intended to pay honor to the great Christian festival, although in accordance with Constantine’s general policy, it declined to identify the emperor with the religion which he desired only indirectly to support and only gradually to establish. The use of the heathen name of the ‘solis dies’ with the vague title ‘venerabilis’—a title rendered more ambiguous by the known reverence which Constantine had delighted to pay to the sun-god—was probably something more than conventional.” This interference of the temporal power invested the Lord’s day with the strength and the weakness that the sanction of civil law must necessarily bring to religion. Later, ecclesiastical law united with the civil so that it was said that the Lord’s day superseded the Sabbath not by obligation of the divine law but by the ordinance of the Church and the custom of Christian people. And the tendency to sabbatize the First-day was due chiefly to the necessities of

the legal enforcement of the observance of the Lord's day, first by imperial laws then by the decrees of councils, generally supported by the secular power.—*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

Sabbath-keeping Waldenses, our ecclesiastical and historical ancestors, were for centuries a living protest against the spreading papacy. Sabbath-keeping Nestorians of ancient times; and Sabbath-keeping Armenians of a more modern period, are witnesses to a continued regard for the Seventh-day through the Christian centuries. Concerning the Armenians Buchanan wrote in *Researches in Asia* a hundred years ago: "They are to be found in every principal city of Asia; they are the general merchants of the East. . . . Their general character is that of wealthy, industrious and enterprising people. . . . They have preserved the Bible in its purity, and their doctrines are, as far as the author knows, the doctrines of the Bible. Besides, they maintain the solemn observance of Christian worship throughout our empire on the seventh day. . . . Are such people then entitled to no recognition on our part as fellow Christians? Are they forever to be ranked by us with Jews, Mohammedans, and Hindoos?"—Lewis.

In the mediæval Church there was a steadily growing tendency to place other holy days on nearly the same level as the Lord's day, and to guard all alike with quasi-sabbatarian and burdensome regulations. This tendency was met, at the Reformation, by a two-fold Protest. (1) On the Continent generally, the tendency to reject all holy days and to treat The Lord's day as a matter of church ordinance subject to the Church's control. (2) In England, Scotland, and Holland, the placing of the Lord's day on a Scriptural basis, as the "Christian Sabbath," surrounded, often, with more than Judaic rigor.—*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

But there was a third protest—that of scholarly, eminent, English Sabbath-keeping Baptists. This vigorous protest was answered by Nicholas Bound who taught that the observance of the "Christian Sabbath" was required by the fourth commandment. And Mr. Bound has been answered by history in the divorce of this unlawful union.

These three protests or principles came to America and have grown to four: (1) No Sabbath and no Lord's day. (2) The Lord's day. (3) The "Christian Sabbath." (4) The Seventh-day doctrine. History and religious experience ask

for a Sabbath day; the Lord's day, whatever its claim for recognition by the Church, has no scriptural authority for calling itself a Sabbath, for as the great Italian theologian Perrone says, "Protestants have no authority for the Lord's day or infant baptism outside the traditions of the Church;" the so-called Christian Sabbath has Christian, pagan, legalistic, and papal elements; and Seventh-day Baptists need to watch, it seems to me, lest they offer to the Church and the world an unspiritual and unethical Sabbath, part Christianity and part that Judaizing legalism against which the apostle Paul protested so vigorously. Such sabbatizing on any day will lead to dead formalism or to desecration—two of today's spiritual dangers. But the Sabbath of Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus and Paul, is universal, Biblical, Christian, free.

There has been almost a revolution in the attitude of many persons towards our people and the Sabbath doctrine. "It was a distinct loss that the Seventh-day, or the Jewish Sabbath, gradually fell into disuse; for it represented the commemoration of the creation of all things by God, when God rested from his work which he had created and made—a point of attachment to the natural order, in keeping with the Catholic purpose."—Allen's *Christian Institutions*. "I would rather keep Saturday;" "I am sorry the Church left the Sabbath and Baptism;" "Without doubt the Bible is on your side,"—such utterances as these come from men who are leaders in the Church of today.

This welcomed change has come, it may well be believed, because the chief supports of the so-called "Christian Sabbath" are the unscriptural and unhistorical transfer of the Fourth Commandment to the First day; the traditions of men; and civil legislation; and because of the present rising power of the whole Bible over thought and life; and the increasing freedom and scope of modern Christian scholarship.

In conclusion let me outline, briefly, three illustrative sets of stages in the history of the evolution of religion.

I. *Among the Greeks.* 1. Nature gods and nature religion. 2. The Homeric gods with a religion of beauty but not of high moral standards. 3. The lofty teachings of Socrates and Plato. 4. A period of lower levels in religion, morals, and philosophy. 5. The lifting power of Hebraism and the power of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

II. *In Hebrew History.* 1. The emigration of Abraham, a Seventh-day-keeper.—Dods. 2. The legislation of Moses,

and the struggle for supremacy among the Hebrews of polytheism, henotheism, and monotheism. 3. The grand ethical monotheism of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. 4. The sublime Jeremiah weeping because the blinded people cling to lower standards. 5. The priestly message and the work of Ezekiel and Ezra; and the doctrine of the so-called Second Isaiah that Jehovah God will be exalted among men in righteousness. 6. The conflict between Talmudic Judaism and the doctrinal and practical theology of Jesus and Paul.

III. *In the Christian Church.* 1. The New Testament period, and the early spread of Christianity. 2. The falling of the Church to lower levels in faith and practice because of the blending of Christianity with pagan religion and philosophy. 3. The rise, dominion, and decline of the papal power. 4. The period of the Reformation. 5. The elevation of creeds to an unscriptural and unreasonable place of authority in the realm of spiritual things. 6. The answer of the spirit and work of modern missions and revivals to the attacks of deism and infidelity. 7. The present struggle of religion, the Bible, the Church, experience, reason, and fraternity, with agnostic science and philosophy, destructive criticism, practical atheism, anti-Christian religions and selfishness, for the rule over men's lives individually and collectively. 8. The call, at this acute crisis, for a return in the spirit and liberty of the Gospel to the faith of the New Testament and the religion and ethics of Jesus, that many who really believe in Christ and religion but not in the Church, may come to believe in his holy Church and to enjoy her sacred worship.

We Seventh-day people may feel some pride which we should mingle with much humility and love, in calling the attention of our fellow Christians to the fact that it was this Christ who said, The Sabbath was made for man. And as certain of their own writers have said, Jesus conceived of the Sabbath as a day given to man by a beneficent Providence; his lordship over it was the right to humanize it against the Pharisees who had rabbimized it; and what he spoke, he spoke for mankind to hear.

And we believe that the return of the Church to the Sabbath of the Bible and of the Christ, to spiritual sabbathism, would be a forward religious movement having a parallel only in the splendid forward movement of our day for the world's evangelization, for religious education, the federal union of Christians, peace, and social service.

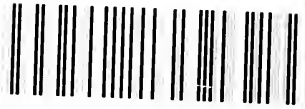
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