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THE LORD'S DAY,
THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK,

NOT THE SEVENTH.

H. C. BENSON, D. D.

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THE LORD'S DAY,

THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH,

THE

FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK—NOT THE SEVENTH.

PROOFS ADDUCED FROM THE WRITINGS AND EXAM-
PLES OF THE APOSTLES AND OF
THEIR SUCCESSORS.

BY

H. C. BENSON, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AMONG THE CHOCTAWS," "SOWING
AND REAPING," ETC., ETC.



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NEW YORK:

PHILLIPS & HUNT.

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NOTE.



THIS paper was read before the San Francisco Preacher's Meeting, Rev. Dr. M. C. Briggs presiding; also before the Ministerial Association of Petaluma District, Rev. Geo. Clifford, Presiding Elder, presiding. Each body, by a unanimous vote, requested its publication in permanent or book form for general circulation on the Pacific coast and elsewhere.

H. C. B.



P R E F A C E .

THE author of these pages had no thought of writing a book. When written to and urged to prepare an argument in support of the Christian Sabbath, as observed by the great body of believers during the centuries and in all portions of Christendom, he hesitated. The circumstances were substantially these :

An organization of Sabbatarians, calling themselves "Seventh-day Adventists," commenced missionary and evangelistic work on this coast some twelve or fifteen years ago. They travel through the country, circulating their pamphlets and tracts, spending a fortnight or a month in a place ; they deliver lectures on prophecy, and with maps and charts make a show of learning.

The closing week of a siege is given to lectures on the Sabbath question—urging that the seventh day of the week only ought to be kept as holy.

They usually succeed in bewildering and misleading a few good, honest, earnest Christians of the different Churches, who are frightened at the thought of habitually desecrating the Sabbath. The converts to the dogma are then led away to the most convenient *Jordan* and immersed. These are the fruits of their labors, the *simmers* saved by their ministry.

Having realized the object for which they labor, they leave their proselytes without pastoral oversight and hasten to other fields, to pass through the same routine of performances.

Christians, once unsettled and drawn away from the fellowship of the Churches in which they were converted, are left out-

side the fold to be buffeted by the enemy, and to lose their piety and their confidence in the people to whom they are indebted for all the religious instruction they have ever received.

While we have many excellent books on the Sabbath, none of them have been written with special reference to that feature of the subject discussed in this essay. And none are in a cheap and suitable form for general circulation among the people who need instruction on the subject.

Young ministers and laymen of the Church have sent many orders to our Book Depository for books, pamphlets, or tracts on this feature of the Sabbath questions. To meet such want this little book has been written, with an earnest prayer for God's blessing upon it.

The reader will find in convenient form the writings of holy men of God whose

testimony is entitled to the fullest confidence. No man can impeach the witnesses who give us the history of the Church from the day that our Lord rose from the dead, down through the centuries. These evidences that the Lord's day, by divine direction, superseded the Jewish Sabbath, it is confidently believed, will be considered by the candid reader as unanswerable.

A spirit of controversy has been studiously avoided. Victory in debate is an achievement for which he cherishes no ambition. Truth is more precious than the plaudits of man. Having received a knowledge of what God has said, it is a duty to communicate to others.

H. C. BENSON.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

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THE LORD'S DAY.

Chapter I.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF THE BIBLE RECORD.

THE term Sabbath is Hebrew, and signifies rest, nothing more. In the history of the creation, as given by Moses, we learn that God wrought six days and then rested, and hallowed the period of rest. The days of creation were, doubtless, indefinite periods, and not diurnal revolutions of the earth upon its axis. God's two Bibles, Nature and Revelation, are equally divine; they do not, can not antagonize each other. Holy men in the olden time spake and wrote as they were moved by

the Holy Spirit; their records are infallibly correct. The strata of earth, rocks, and fossils have, also, tongues with which to declare the power, majesty, and glory of God, as revealed in the processes of creation.

In conceding this much to science we do not abate one jot or tittle of our confidence in the written word. Unnumbered ages, centuries, and cycles may have elapsed after the work of creation was commenced before the earth was in readiness for man's occupancy. The garden in Eden being prepared, man was formed, a companion was given him, and the work of creation was completed. Then, as the record reads, God rested from labor and hallowed the day. It was the seventh period in the world's history, and the first day in the history of the race.

If Adam kept a calendar in his Eden home, he doubtless made his own first day

the date-period, since he could have no method of computing the indefinite periods while matter was in chaos with darkness brooding over it. No importance, however, can possibly attach to the question, since no day was intrinsically holy. The ordinance could require no more than that man should labor six days and rest on the seventh. The day kept is holy because of the act of obedience; and the moral quality of the act, as in *all* cases, is found in the *intention*.

With the race increased and dispersed to the ends of the world, men residing in all latitudes, and on every meridian of longitude of the globe, it is utterly impossible for all to keep the same hours as holy, dating time at the ancient Eden, and counting the days from the dawn of the first Sabbath after the world was made.

Even with the best intentions to keep

the same day as holy, it is sometimes found to be impracticable. A historical fact will illustrate our meaning. When English sailors first visited Pitcairn's Island in the South Pacific Ocean, they arrived on Saturday, and found the people, with John Adams at their head, keeping the Sabbath. It was Sunday according to the calendar on the Island. How is this difference of time accounted for? Very easily and satisfactorily. Traveling East or West, fifteen degrees of longitude makes a difference of one hour in time. Those who first discovered Pitcairn's Island were going eastward from Tahiti to the West Indies. Some of the ship's crew remained on the Island, counting time according to their own calendar and making no allowance for the variation caused by longitude. The English soldiers were going West, keeping time according to their own calendar without re-

gard to longitude. On shipboard it was Saturday ; on the shore it was Sunday. Who was accurate as to the day of the week? The answer is, both were right ; since the days of the week had been accurately counted, and the *seventh* day (Sunday) was observed by each party. The command was literally obeyed, and God, doubtless, accepted the service rendered.

After the world's seventh period and man's first day was hallowed, there is no mention of the Sabbath for a period of about twenty-five centuries. No mandate for its observance had been recorded by Moses. Time, however, was divided into periods of seven days, or weeks, which was evidently by divine appointment. And since there is found an imperative demand or necessity for a regular and stated period of rest, equal to one day in every week— one-seventh portion of time—and since

Christ declared with emphasis that, "the Sabbath was made for man," we may legitimately infer that the patriarchs were instructed, both as to its necessity and man's duty to observe it faithfully. Those who violate God-given law, physical, physiological, or moral, must suffer the penalty. Transgression and suffering are inseparable. "The soul that sins shall die," is an exceedingly comprehensive proposition, and true evermore.

Chapter II.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.

THE exodus from bondage was a thrillingly interesting event in the history of the Israelites. During the centuries of their captivity it is not probable that they were permitted to observe the patriarchal Sabbath. It is possible that they may have become bewildered even as to the day to be observed, but God knew ; he never failed to keep a faithful record, and his calendar was infallibly correct.

After a series of miracles, and sore judgments upon the Egyptians, the King was ready to dismiss the Hebrew people. The Passover was instituted. Its ceremonies occupied seven days. We can not determine certainly the day of the week when

it closed. The paschal lamb was slain and eaten on the night of the 14th day of the first month; on the morning of the 15th day the children of Israel went out of Ramesses, a mixed multitude, six hundred thousand souls, led forth by "a high hand and an outstretched arm." It was probably on the sixth day of the week, Friday. It could not have been on the *seventh* day, as that was the Patriarchal Sabbath. God would not have his people enter upon a long and laborious journey on that day which he himself had hallowed. He could not sanction its desecration. They traveled fifteen miles and camped at Succoth. They doubtless offered sacrifices and returned devout thanks to God for their wonderful deliverance. The presumption is strong that a day, the Sabbath, was spent at Succoth, but the record does not say so.

Continuing their journey into the wilder-

ness, at the end of a month from their departure from Egypt, on the 15th day of the second month, they reached the "wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai." The reader will please note the day, the 15th of the month, and that it was not the Sabbath, since they had made a regular day's journey on that day, and God brought quails out of the wilderness to feed them on that day. The reader will please consult with special care Exodus xvi, 1-30.

In this chapter we have an historical account of the institution of the Jewish Sabbath. The manna fell on the morning of the 16th, and fell regularly for six consecutive nights. On the morning of the 22d of the month, as Moses had foretold them, there was no manna. It was the Sabbath. Had it been on the day of the Patriarchal Sabbath, the seventh day preceding (which

was the 15th day of the month) would also have been the Sabbath ; but, as the record shows, the fifteenth day, just one week previous to the day on which no manna was found, was a *secular* day. Had it been *holy*, the pillar of cloud would have hovered over the camp, and the people would have remained in their tents all day. Now one of two hypotheses must be true: either this Sabbath in the Wilderness of Sin is a *new* institution, or the day of the Patriarchal Sabbath was changed. That it was a Jewish Sabbath day, ordained for a specific purpose, is evident from the record.

The people had murmured against Moses and Aaron. God, by a miracle, gave them food. The manna fell six days and then was withheld, to convince the people that God was able to provide for them. He who had brought them out of bondage would feed them. The Sabbath was com-

memorative of their deliverance. This was its leading characteristic. We turn to the record. See Deuteronomy v, 11-15.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm;

therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

The Decalogue is here recited with this significant variation: The reason for observing the Patriarchal Sabbath, as engraved on the table of stone which Moses brought down from the mountain, is omitted. Another reason for the observance of the Sabbath is assigned. The people are reminded of their sore captivity, and God's goodness in breaking their fetters and leading them out of Egypt. "Therefore [*because* he did this], the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." A logical form is given to the argument. Dr. Clarke, in his commentary, notes the phraseology used, and speaks of a change of the day, which, it is supposed, occurred at the exodus. Some suppose the Patriarchal Sabbath was changed from the first (Sunday) to the seventh (Saturday). It is well-

nigh certain that the exodus was on the sixth day of the week, which was commemorated as the Sabbath in the "Wilderness of Sin," which, occurring at the end of every period of six days of labor, was afterwards, almost of necessity, called the seventh day. That there was either a change of the day or that a new (Jewish) Sabbath was instituted is evident.

In his notes on Deuteronomy, v, 15, Dr. Clarke says: "The day (Sabbath) now became a twofold memorial." It was a memorial of deliverance as well as of creation. The historical record in Exodus and in Deuteronomy is so explicit that we are not left in doubt as to the fact that the Sabbath, as observed in the Wilderness of Sin, had not been a day hallowed of the Lord previous to that time. There had been, we doubt not, a Patriarchal Sabbath, but on another day of the week.

In two months after the manna commenced falling, the Israelites pitched their tents in the shadow of Sinai. Moses went up into the mountain to talk with God. He came down with the law engraved on tables of stone. The Decalogue was given: the fourth commandment contained the law of the Sabbath. It is a day of rest and a memorial of the work of creation, at the completion of which God rested, hallowing the day. The deliverance from captivity is not mentioned. The day of the Jewish Sabbath, however, was retained, the two Sabbaths were blended and kept on the same day. The twofold memorial was kept, the Patriarchal day dropping back to the time of the Jewish Sabbath, which was to be kept as long as the dispensation continued.

Chapter III.

*ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR KEEPING THE
JEWISH SABBATH.*

THE fourth commandment in the Decalogue recites the reason for keeping the day holy—because God wrought six days and rested on the seventh. The Israelites had other reasons for keeping holy-day. Let us turn to Exodus xxxi, 13, 17. “Verily, my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. . . . It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.” It was accepted and observed with such understanding of its purport and obligation. It was a memorial of the goodness and faithfulness of their

covenant-keeping God. He remembered them and extended to them his deliverance from peril and suffering.

It was also typical in its character. It was a type of Canaan, the land of promise, symbolizing the rest and rich fruition awaiting them when their pilgrimage should terminate and their enemies should be subdued. It was also typical of the Gospel dispensation when the rites, ceremonies and costly sacrifices of ritualistic worship should be superseded by the simple and spiritual worship of God. The Sabbath was also typical, too, of the heavenly Canaan, the eternal rest of heaven. Hence the apostle says, Hebrews iv, 1-11: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There

remaineth therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

Thus it is that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The spiritual designs of the Sabbath center in Christ. With the introduction of the Gospel, the spiritual Church of God, with its simple forms of worships, was divested of the old garments which had served their purpose and ceased to be valuable. No marvel that the Lord's day should be stripped of all that was Israelitish or Hebraistic.

Chapter IV.

*OUR LORD TAUGHT BY PRECEPT AND
EXAMPLE.*

JESUS frequently went into the temple on the Sabbath day to read the Scriptures and to ask and answer questions. He sought to instruct the people in the prophecies which foretold his advent and the character of his mission. He was a Jew, and, under the law, rendering perfect obedience in all things.

Wherever the multitudes were assembled the Master went also, to preach the Word and to make known the truths of his own spiritual kingdom. He wrought many of his miracles in the presence of the people on the Jewish Sabbath day. He doubtless chose that day that his works might chal-

lenge attention. In the deeds he performed were proofs of his divinity. On the Sabbath and at the temple the learned might be present as witnesses to the genuineness of his miracles.

The Jewish doctors were tenacious for the literal observance of the fourth commandment without comprehending its spiritual purport. The Master sought to correct their erroneous teachings, and to impart to them the truth in its simplicity. He performed certain deeds on the day which was accounted holy, giving great offense. In his defense he stated two important propositions, which cover the whole ground: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

This statement of our Lord is exceedingly comprehensive. It embraces the whole family of man, from the first pair in

their Eden home to the last that shall live on the earth. All require the *rest* for the body, soul, and spirit. The bones, muscles, brain, and nerves must have rest; the intellect must cease to labor and have a Sabbath; the moral faculties are entitled to a seventh portion of our time in which to meditate in the law of the Lord, and to hold communion with the Father of Spirits—a season for worship. The Son of man, who is Lord of the Sabbath, has authority to define and expound the law; this he has done by precept and by example. “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath,” to perform acts of mercy and necessity—he has given us no license, or permission, to serve mammon or self, in business or pleasure-seeking.

Rest is the primary meaning of the term used to indicate the duty. It is not to be a fast, or a burden, or a restraint. We

are not to feed on "bitter herbs," but to be joyful, serving the Lord with gladness, seeking refreshment and vigor to prepare us for the duties of the coming week.

The Lord, in performing works of mercy and necessity, gave grievous offense to the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who, in turn, were instructed by him. See Matthew xii, 5: "Have ye not read in the law how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless?" Matthew xii, 1: "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat." Matthew xii, 11: "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? . . . Wherefore it is lawful to do well [*i. e.* to heal and

save life] on the Sabbath days." Jesus accepted the moral law as given in the Decalogue, in its essence, when properly understood.

In the summaries of the law, as found in the Gospels, the fourth commandment is not mentioned. See Matthew xvi, 16-24; Matthew xxii, 36-40. The Sabbath is not specifically named, and yet whoever loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself, will obey God faithfully in all other duties. The greater certainly includes the less. The Sabbath, as kept by the Jews, was a task, a burden, and oppressive; while much of that which was authorized in the word was limited to that people, and could not be binding under the Gospel dispensation. Hence, while Jesus taught with boldness and divine authority the truths of his own everlasting Gospel, he never once enjoined upon his disciples the observance

of the Jewish Sabbath; nor did he ever rebuke any one for desecrating that day, which the rabbis regarded as peculiarly holy.

Chapter V.

THE LORD'S DAY.

OUR Lord's crucifixion was the closing act in the old dispensation; his resurrection ushered in the new dispensation. On the cross Jesus had cried, "It is finished!" The sacrifice offered, once for all, was accepted; the ransom price was paid, and the race was redeemed. Ceremonial worship then ceased, and the ritualistic service, like a worn-out garment, was cast aside.

The crucifixion was on the sixth day, Friday, and the resurrection of our Lord was on the first day of the week—our Sunday. It was the crowning act in God's saving scheme of mercy, hence it became an epoch or date-period in the Church of Christ, as contradistinguished from the Church of

the Old Testament. On the morning of that glorious *first day*, the Sun of righteousness poured a flood of light upon the sin-cursed world. The shadows disappeared, the twilight was gone, and the promises which had given hope and courage to patriarchs and prophets became a glorious realization.

“On the first day of the week” the risen Lord appeared, first to the women, and next to them to the disciples; and then to the two brothers who were on their way to Emmaus, explaining to them the Scriptures which foretold the crucifixion, causing their hearts to burn within them. The last interview of that momentous day is recorded by John xx, 19-22: “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto

you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Four times on that glorious day did Jesus appear to his beloved disciples, imparting to them the Holy Ghost—a fresh anointing for the work of the ministry to which they had been called.

He was not seen again till the week had passed—no revelation of himself on the *seventh* day; but again on the "first day," as he evidently had signified his purpose to meet with his disciples when assembled for worship, he came. See John xx, 26: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then

came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." These Sunday evening interviews occurred where Christians were assembled for worship. Had they not been divinely guided, they, doubtless, would have met on the seventh day. But, so far as we can learn from the Gospels, Jesus never once appeared to the Jews, or any other worshipping congregation on the seventh day. He gave no shadow of approval to the Jewish Sabbath. It was dead, utterly abolished forever.

The next notable event in the record, bearing on this question, was the Pentecost. This also occurred on the first day of the week. See Leviticus xxiii, 15, 16. The disciples were all with one accord in one place, waiting for the gift of the Comforter, which Jesus had promised to send, to abide with his disciples forever. And while de-

voutly supplicating before the throne of mercy, their prayers were heard. Acts ii, 2-4: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." In this marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the infant Church on the day of its birth, God gave it the seal of a perpetual Sabbath. Peter, to whom Christ had given the keys of his kingdom, and on whom he had breathed, then fully entered upon his work as a Gospel minister. Three thousand souls were converted and added to the Church as fruits of his first sermon.

The record thus far is most significant.
1. The Lord vanquished the powers of

darkness and came forth triumphant on the first day of the week. 2. He appeared on four separate occasions to his disciples on that day. 3. He did not appear to them during the week, but met them again in the evening of the "first day" of the second week. 4. On the first day of the week he imparted to them the gift of the Holy Spirit. 5. He poured out the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost on the first day of the week, giving the blessed baptism of the Spirit and of power on that day. His Church was, indeed, installed and equipped for its work on that glorious Lord's day. 6. The Word gives no account of his visit to any people, after his resurrection, to impart any spiritual gift, on any other day than the *first*, or Lord's day.

That the first day of the week was, from the beginning, set apart for the celebration of public worship and the administration

of the sacraments is so clearly and conclusively established that no well-informed and candid person will attempt to controvert it. And as it would not be practicable for Christians to keep two days for public worship, the seventh day was not kept as holy by Christians after Jesus came forth from the sepulcher. As the disciples were unanimous in keeping the Lord's day, and there was no controversy in regard to the change, it is only mentioned incidentally by the apostles.

The record is quite sufficient to establish all that is required to show apostolic usage in the premises. Paul's visit to Troas is in point. Acts xx, 6, 7: "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days: where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,

Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." He was a minister of Christ, going to Troas to preach the Gospel to the Church. Arriving there in five days, he waited six days; and when the disciples met for worship on the *first day* of the week, Paul preached to them, and next morning went on his journey. Had the disciples met for worship on the *seventh* day he would assuredly have preached to them. Had they regarded Saturday as holy there would have been a religious assembly and worship.

Meeting on the first day of the week, the Scriptures were read, a discourse was delivered, the disciples joined in prayer, the Lord's-supper was celebrated, a collection was taken for the relief of poor saints, and the services were closed. The hypocritical Jews would not make contributions on the

Sabbath, but the Master taught his disciples that "it was lawful to do well" on that day, especially in performing acts of mercy. Hence we read, 1 Cor. xvi, 1, 2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

The phrase, "Lord's Day," which occurs in the first chapter of the book of Revelation, is entitled to much consideration. We turn to the record and read. Revelation i, 9-11: "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind

me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia." John, the beloved disciple, who leaned on the breast of Jesus at the Supper, was now an exile on Patmos, a little island in the Mediterranean Sea. The seven Churches in Asia had been bitterly persecuted. The congregations had been broken up, and the scattered disciples had sought refuge in the dens and caves of the earth. They were cast down, but not destroyed, they still had faith in the Lord.

John counted the days as they passed while in banishment from the altars where he had so devoutly worshiped. The Lord's day dawned upon him. He remembered the place of prayer, and his suffering brethren. He was in the spirit with his afflicted

brethren, knowing that at the regular hour on that day they would offer earnest prayer to God. While looking up, the veil was lifted and he had a glorious vision. He saw the Lord walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. His hand was over his ministers and he was taking care of the Churches. He had heard and was answering the prayers of his disciples. It was eminently proper that John should should make a specific record of the day. It was the Lord's day, the day for regular public worship. It was holy time, hallowed by the Lord when he vanquished the enemy. Such manifestation of goodness was a verification of Christ's own words to be with those who are met in his name. John and his scattered brethren were met in spirit.

Chapter VI.

THE JEWISH SABBATH ABOLISHED.

THE Jewish dispensation having terminated, all the rites, ceremonies, and ritualistic services of the Mosaic polity disappeared. Old things passed away and all things became new. Fasts, feasts, and holy days, having served their purposes, were no longer observed.

The recognition of the seventh day as holy was inseparable from the synagogue service, and if observed would prove a snare and a temptation to believers in Christ; hence a change of the day for Sabbath services was absolutely necessary. The Jewish converts, however, sometimes attempted to engraft Christianity upon Judaism, retaining circumcision and seventh-day wor-

ship in addition to the Lord's day service and the sacrament of the Lord's-supper. Such policy, however, was condemned by the apostles, who warned believers not to become again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Paul is explicit in declaring that Jewish customs have no place in the Gospel system. In the epistle to the Colossians, ii, 16, 17, he exhorts his brethren thus: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." What does "Sabbath" signify in this connection? The term days does not occur in the original. The Greek reads thus: "*Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει ἢ ἐν πόσει, ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νουμηνίας, ἢ σαββάτων. Ἄ ἐστι σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.*" The term Sabbath is found in the

genitive case and plural number. But, because it is plural, we are not warranted in assuming that any other day is meant than *the* day indicated in the commandment as holy. The genitive plural is *the* form used ordinarily in the Greek. See the Septuagint, Exodus xx, 8, and *ἡμέραν σαββάτων* occurs. We turn to Deuteronomy v, 12, where the Decalogue is recited, and find the genitive plural in the Greek occurs. The text in the epistle to the Colossians is precisely the same, except that *ἡμέραν* does not occur. Supply it before *σαββάτων*, where it is a governing word, in the grammatical construction, in the sentence, and it is a verbal copy of the terms used in the decalogue. If Paul did not mean "the day of the Sabbaths," or the Sabbath-day, it is unaccountable that he should have been so unguarded in his language! Then this Jewish Sabbath or holy

day observed by the Israelites was a *shadow* of the spiritual rest, or Lord's day, established after the resurrection of Christ.

In the epistle to the Romans, xiv, 4, 5, Paul asks: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Then, in writing to the Galatians the apostle reproves Christians because of their Jewish practices, iv, 9-11: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

To assume that all other holy days are spoken of, while the seventh day is excepted, when no intimation of such exception is given, is simply absurd. St. Paul would not use language which would be liable to mislead his brethren. He knew the force of the terms he employed in giving instruction to the Churches.

If it shall be claimed that the apostle's language would equally neutralize the requirement to keep the Lord's day, we answer that it assuredly would not. The Savior had said with emphasis that the *rest*, the Sabbath, was made for man—for the race. The obligation to keep a holy day was not questioned by Paul, or any disciple of Christ, but the practice of the apostles and all Christians had settled the question as to the day—it was the Lord's day. It was not intended to be commemorative of the work of creation, nor of de-

liverance from captivity, but of the crowning act in the scheme of human redemption.

In accordance with the view herein stated, it is well known that in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles, no injunction is recorded for the observance of the seventh-day, and no reproof is given for its desecration. For all acts of immorality the apostles were accustomed to administer rebukes, nor did they spare the offender. The standard of morals was sufficiently exalted, and the wages of sin was declared to be death. Such was the preaching of St. Paul on every occasion. To know something of the offenses, the commission of which would exclude from heaven, we turn to the epistle to Galatians, v, 19-21, and read: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance,

emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In this catalogue of the deeds of the flesh, no Jewish ordinance, obligation, or ceremony is mentioned, not even the seventh day as holy. And yet the Sabbath would stand prominent in the Jewish laws and ceremonies.

But what of the Lord's day? The regular meeting for worship was enjoined and faithfully observed. The believers were instructed, ay, commanded, in regard to such duties. See Hebrews x, 23-25: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves to-

gether, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The perils of neglect and apostasy are clearly set forth. As a religious teacher Paul spake with authority, commanding obedience in the name of the Lord. But the term *Sabbath* was not used because of its associations as an Israelitish ordinance.

Chapter VII.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES.

THE Fathers, though not inspired, were the immediate successors of the apostles. They were converted under the ministry of those who were called and commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ. The oldest of them had been pupils of those holy men of God who wrote and preached as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. They knew how the apostles lived, what they taught, and what they practiced. They were not in doubt as to the day set apart for public worship, and for the celebration of the Christian sacraments. No men have ever lived who could have been better qualified to give testimony in regard to the Christian Sabbath. We submit their testi-

mony in their own language. St. John, the last survivor of the "twelve" commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, said: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, A. D. 101, only half a dozen years after the death of the Apostle John, speaks familiarly of the Lord's day, and says: "Let us [Christians] no more *Sabbatize* [keep the Jewish holy day], but let us keep the Lord's day." "Let every one that loves Christ keep holy the Lord's day, the queen of days, the resurrection day, the highest of all days."

Theophilus, a bishop, who lived a little later, says: "Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor the Lord's day, seeing that on that day our Lord Jesus completed his resurrection from the dead."

Justin Martyr, who was contemporary with Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, says:

“On the Lord’s day all Christians, in the city or in the country, meet together, because that is the day of our Lord’s resurrection, and then we read the writings of the apostles and prophets; this being done the president delivers a discourse to the assembly to exhort them to imitate the things they have heard; then we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate the sacrament.” The same writer further says: “We all assemble in common on the day called Sunday, because it was on the first day that God, having changed darkness and chaos, made the world, and because on the same day Jesus Christ, our Savior, rose from the dead. For he was crucified the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, he appeared unto his disciples and taught them what we now submit to your consideration.”

Clement of Rome, who was born before our Lord's crucifixion, writing to the Church at Corinth, says: "We ought to do in order all things which the Lord hath required us to observe at stated times." That they did as the Lord and his apostles commanded them in regard to the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, is a legitimate inference.

Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John, says: "On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keeps the Sabbath, meditating in the law and rejoicing in the works of God."

Eusebius, who has been justly styled "the father of ecclesiastical history," and whose history of the Church during the first three centuries is a standard among all Christians, says: "From the beginning Christians assembled on the first day of the week, called by them the Lord's day, for

the purpose of religious worship, to read the Scriptures, to preach, and to celebrate the Lord's-supper."

Tertullian, who was born in Carthage, before the death of Polycarp, says: "The apostles introduced nothing at their own discretion, but faithfully assigned to the people the discipline which they had received from Christ." He also says, "The Lord's day is the Christian's solemnity."

Origen, who was born A. D., 185, says of the Lord's day: "If you cease from all worldly works, and execute nothing worldly, but give yourselves to spiritual exercises, repairing to Church, attending to sacred reading and instruction, . . . this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath."

When the first Christians were sorely persecuted, they were known by their observance of the Lord's day. Hence the officer who went to arrest them would ask,

“*Dominicum servasti?*” Hast thou kept the *Lord's day*?) If the believer was true to his religion he would answer, “*Christianus sum; intermittere non possum!*” (*I am a Christian; I can not omit it!*) He could not neglect to keep the Christian Sabbath.

Mosheim is a witness whose testimony no scholar will attempt to invalidate (see vol. I, page 45). In writing of the internal condition of the Church during the second century he says: “All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Savior arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This custom, which was derived from the example of the Church at Jerusalem, was founded upon the express appointment of the apostles, who consecrated that day to the same sacred purpose, and it was observed universally throughout the Christian Church, as

appears from the testimony of the most credible writers.”

The witnesses quoted were the Fathers who lived and gave their testimony in their writings during the first and second centuries, long before the celebrated decree of Constantine legalizing the first day of the week as the Sabbath. Constantine was crowned emperor in the *fourth* century. His decree had no influence whatever in changing the day from the seventh to the first day. It was only giving legal form to an expression of the Christian faith, which was just as prevalent before Constantine's day as after it. To affirm that the emperor's decree dates the origin of the Lord's day, or first day, as the Sabbath, is to affirm what is false; such statement is in conflict with well authenticated history.

Very much additional testimony might be adduced by writers who lived in the

third, fourth, and fifth centuries—even down to the seventeenth century—while not a Christian writer of any note utters a single word in favor of observing the seventh day, or Saturday, as holy.

In closing this chapter a quotation from the “History of the Apostolic Church,” by the eminent scholar and divine, Dr. Philip Schaff, is deemed fitting. He says: “It is absolutely inconceivable that so important an institution as the Christian Sabbath could have come into perfectly universal observance in so short a time, supplanting the Jewish Sabbath, which had been enjoined by the Mosaic Decalogue, without the sanction of the apostles!” And so will all thoughtful and well informed scholars say with emphasis.

One more quotation: “That the apostles and early Christians should of their own accord abandon the seventh day, and

institute the first as a day holy to the Lord, would be to suppose that their Master had permitted them to violate the order of his own house, and to teach for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Chapter VIII.

FACTS AND INFERENCES.

1. THE apostles frequently attended the synagogue services, as it gave them an opportunity to read and expound the Scriptures. Their presence was no more a concession to Judaism in regard to the Sabbath than it was a concession to the Jews who rejected Christ.

2. In the latter part of the fourth century there were Christians who kept Saturday and Sunday both as holy, giving the preference to the latter, which was the day of worship on which the sacraments were administered. Saturday was a day of preparation.

3. During the first centuries of the Christian Church there was unanimity of

belief, and uniformity of practice in regard to the sanctity of the Lord's day, while the observance of the seventh was not taught by precept or example.

4. There is not a text of Scripture in the Acts, or the epistles of the apostles, enjoining as a duty the observance of the seventh day, nor is there a word of rebuke for those who failed to keep it holy. Is it not preposterous to assume that this utter silence in regard to an institution so prominent in the Jewish Church is accidental and without significance? The Christians were earnestly exhorted to give diligent attention to the duties which were required of them. See Thessalonians iv, 1, 2: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye

know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." These "commandments" were well understood by the disciples. They related to "the assembling of themselves on the first day of the week" for worship, the sacraments and almsgiving. Also see Acts xv, 24-29. The pure teaching and authority with which the admonitions and exhortations were given were sufficient.

5. How is it possible to account for the fact that there was no controversy whatever on the subject, unless we accept the hypothesis that the change of the day was made by the authority of the apostles?

6. The few instances in which the Churches, composed of Jewish converts, did for a time keep the seventh day, retaining circumcision and other Jewish ordinances, do not in the slightest degree militate against the arguments in this es-

say, since the same Churches also admitted the sanctity of the Lord's day.

7. Since the proof is conclusive that the Jewish Sabbath, as observed in the Wilderness of Sin, was not the Patriarchal Sabbath, though it was regularly kept as holy after the law was given at Sinai, we have the divine approval, if not command, for one change of the day; and one having been made under divine approval, it can not be considered marvelous if, for cause, a second change of the day should occur, also under divine guidance — especially when the event to be commemorated is a thousand-fold more important than was the deliverance from Egyptian bondage!

8. If we accept the hypothesis that the departure from Egypt was on the sixth day, the day preceding the Patriarchal Sabbath, which day was afterward observed and commemorated by the Jewish Sabbath,

then the resurrection of our Lord, which was on the "day after the Sabbath," occurred on the original Patriarchal day—the day hallowed of God when the work of creation was completed. The proof is well-nigh conclusive that this statement is correct, and yet it matters not, since nothing of importance attaches to it in this discussion.

9. It is enough to know that the "Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." The change, when made, had the divine approval, since inspired men—ministers chosen by the blessed Master—sanctioned the change, and God's approval was manifested to them.

10. The men most eminent for scholarship, piety, and devotion to the Church and cause of Christ during all the centuries since Jesus rose from the dead, have accepted the Lord's day as the Christian Sab-

bath. They have not acted blindly in regard to a subject of such grave importance. The dissentients have been less than one per cent.

II. But, if living in sin during the past eighteen hundred years, how could God's blessing rest upon the ministers and Churches, bringing millions of penitent sinners to the cross of Christ?

How could God give the seal of approval to men who live in open violation of the moral law? Ignorance can not be pleaded in extenuation of the offense. There can be no doubt as to what God requires of his children. The Psalmist says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me!" The persistent violation of God's commandment is certainly iniquity. And yet God hears the prayers of Christians and crowns their labors with glorious success in saving souls.

Chapter IX.

CONCLUSIONS.

CHRIST has taught us as to the authority and necessity of the Sabbath. The rest we must have or pay the penalty of violated laws. The body, the intellect, and the spirit demand a Sabbath. The necessity for it will continue as long as the race exists on this earth, and as long as it is needful God will require us to observe it.

Christ has taught us how to observe the day. Rest, refreshment of soul, body, and spirit; worship, meditation in the law of the Lord, and suitable reading; works of mercy and of necessity—all these are lawful. Labor, pleasure seeking, and traveling are certainly improper on the Lord's day.

It is even possible to fill up all the day

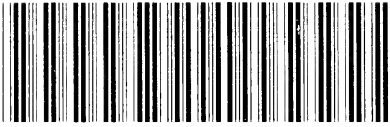
in active and laborious religious duties, so as to prove exhausting when the Sabbath has closed. Then the *rest*, which is a prime consideration of the institution, has not been realized. The minister labors on the Lord's day, yet he rests from the labors of his study in preparation for the pulpit. A minister may not prepare discourses for the pulpit on the Sabbath. This he must do on the secular days of the week. If at any time the ox is in the ditch, without any neglect on his part, it may be lawful to pull him out. The preacher must have a day of rest every week, or pay the penalty of the violated law.

Cheerfulness and relaxation from all the cares of business are certainly proper. The day should not be made *dark*, nor *blue*, nor disagreeable to the children of the family. It should be a season of gladness, which the parents can render it if they

will. The conversation and the reading should be of a character to render the day a delight to all, and profitable at the same time. Suitable instruction, in stories and conversation, will make the Sabbath bright and charming, the best of the week, "the queen of days."

If in any case there is a doubt as to the lawfulness or propriety of some desirable pursuit on that day which is holy, it is only safe to give conscience the benefit of the doubt and forego the pleasure.

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