

THE SABBATH QUESTION.

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This question has engrossed the attention of christendom in all ages to a great extent; seventeen centuries have been occupied in its discussion; the highest order of talent has engaged in it, and the deepest research within human capacity has been employed; and still the subject is not exhausted nor the question settled, but the investigation goes on, assuming at times fierce conflict and angry dispute. Christians are not the only Bible believers, but they are the only disputants upon the subject of the Sabbath; and it is remarkable that the Jews, to whom many believe the Sabbath was first given, and that it was a specialty in their law all believe, do not share in this controversy, they are a unit upon the subject. What does this indicate? We shall see in the sequel.

If it be thought presumptuous to add another treatise upon this subject, in the face of the countless volumes already in the field, the only apology offered is, that the subject is important, and it is possible that a new standpoint may give a juster view. We shall therefore examine the subject in the following order:

1. The Sabbath in Eden.
2. The Sabbath in the Patriarchal Age.
3. The Sabbath of the law of Moses

4. The Sabbath of the Church; the Christian Sabbath.

5. First day and Seventh day observance at the present.

1. THE SABBATH IN EDEN.

The generality of Sabbath advocates, whether seventh day or first day, hold to the one and self-same idea that the original Sabbath was instituted in the garden in Eden, and that it was the seventh day; that it was solemnly set apart by God for Adam's use, and per consequence, for all his posterity; erecting it thus at the close of the six days' creation, as a divinely appointed and necessary memorial of creation, designed in the keeping of it as a day of rest, to exhibit the work necessary to keep alive faith in God as the creator,—that this memorial is the "great bulwark" to protect us from Atheism.

Some of these writers fancy to themselves our first parents piously withdrawing on the Sabbath day, to some quiet spot in the garden, (if one spot could be more quiet than another), and there, in contemplative reverence, or acts of worship, to observe the sacred ordinance,—the memorial of creation.

That this is only a fancy sketch, will appear from the following considerations:

1. When it is stated in Genesis 2:3, that God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; it is stated as a reason, "because that in it he had rested from

all his works." He had rested then before he sanctified or set the day apart. Thus it was subsequent to that seventh day that it was set apart, sanctified or made a Sabbath; so that God did not keep it because it was a Sabbath, for it was not yet appointed, and of course Adam did not keep that seventh day or Sabbath for the same reason.

2. There is no proof that Adam remained in the garden until another seventh day occurred, nor have we any proof that it was appointed at all while Adam was in the garden; for it was after he had rested that day that God set it apart for a Sabbath, how long after we shall show hereafter. If it be assumed that it was set apart immediately after, then we must suppose that it was done on the first day succeeding; then it would stand a first day appointment of the seventh day Sabbath.

3. How could Adam keep that first seventh day, even had it been appointed, seeing he had only been created the day before, and of course this next or seventh day was his first full day of life, and how could it be to him the seventh? And then again, the "Sabbath of the Lord" was to succeed six days of labor, not precede them; and Adam not having yet labored at all, how could he require or appreciate rest? Much less, could he comprehend the *first* clear day of his existence as the *seventh* day? It was to him in fact the second day.

4. Under what conditions or circumstances can there be a discrimination between that which is holy and that which is not holy; between clean and unclean; between sacred and profane, or common? Surely not until these opposites exist. There was nothing in the garden to contrast with the good,

holy, or clean, for all was very good; hence nothing could be set apart as holy, to distinguish it from any thing else, for all was holy alike.

5. In what condition was Adam in the garden to observe a holy Sabbath? His moral development had not as yet enabled him "to know good and evil," and he certainly could not observe a precept that required such discrimination. How could he observe a moral precept without the knowledge of both good and evil? There is no proof that Adam ever heard of a Sabbath day; and in the absence of such proof, and from the foregoing considerations, we must needs regard the Sabbath of Eden as unfounded in scripture, and one of the fables that attract these who turn from the truth. And instead of the idea of this Sabbath of Eden being a bulwark against Atheism, it has assumed the dimensions and character of a great pillar, or image of idolatry; to which the adoration of lip and mouth is paid—the day is worshiped, the creature more than the Creator.

2. THE SABBATH IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE.

This Patriarchal Age is understood to be from Adam to Moses. Those who recognize the appointment of the Sabbath in Eden, trace it through the Patriarchal Age of course; or rather take it for granted that its observance constituted part of the righteousness that adorned those ancient worthies; though no mention of it is made in the history, of that entire period from Adam to Moses, a period of nearly twenty-five hundred years. It is assumed that Adam taught Sabbath observance to several generations; and that the precept was handed down through this whole period. Not only

is the history of that period silent in regard to the knowledge of the Sabbath, but it does not even recognize such a division of time as a week; whereas, the knowledge and observance of a seventh day, weekly Sabbath, necessitates such a recognition or division of time. It is true, a single mention is made of a week during that whole period; but then it meant seven years, (a), so that the great fancied memorial of creation does not even cast the outlines of a shadow in any part of the Patriarchal Age; and yet within that period lived some of the most faithful and devoted men known to sacred history, some of whom "walked with God," "were perfect in their generation," "were righteous" and the "friend of God."

One writer insists that in Abraham's case are traces of the descent of the Eden Sabbath. It is in the fact that God said, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (b.) Hence "he certainly could not have been ignorant of the sanctification of the seventh day." It is also said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." (c.)

We find in the history of this Patriarch numerous commandments, statutes and laws given him, for he often heard "his voice," among which was to get up out of his father's house and country, and crossing the Euphrates, to go into Canaan and view it with respect to a future and final settlement therein; to circumcise his household; to offer Isaac

upon Mount Moriah; to send away his concubine, all of which he faithfully performed, and both the commandments and obedience to them are recorded; but no mention nor allusion, by precept or example, to keeping a Sabbath. And when he sent away Hagar, and her son Ishmael, part of his household, he said nothing to them about a Sabbath; and when he divided his substance and gave gifts to his six sons by Keturah and their children, and sent them to a place by themselves for a permanent location, he said nothing,—taught them nothing about keeping a Sabbath; from which we infer that he had not been commanded to observe one himself.

Emerging from the vague and misty regions of conjecture, we now come to the period where will be found the origin of the Sabbath of the Lord; and in the history of the people to whom it was given, will find ample proof of its origin, nature, design and intended duration. We learn from the words of Christ that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (d.) And we shall find it a part of that law given four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with faithful Abraham, wherein the gospel was preached to him, which law was added because of transgression.

We will now consider:

3. THE SABBATH UNDER THE LAW;

When the Lord took Israel by the hand and did lead them out of Egypt, to separate them to himself, to become the depositaries of his "Oracles—to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giv-

(a) Genesis 29:27, 28. (b) Gen. 26:5. (c) Gen. 18:19.

(d) Mark 2:27.

ing of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." (e.) Among these laws and ordinances, and statutes, is the institution of the Sabbath, a sign of the covenant made with them, and also a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

"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, [for this reason], the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." (f.)

"Speak thou also unto the Children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know, [remember], that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." (g.)

"Wherefore, I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover, also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know, [remember], that I am the Lord that sanctify them;—and hallow my Sabbaths, and they, [the Sabbaths], shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know, [remember], that I am the Lord your God." (h.)

"Thou camest down upon mount Sinai, and speakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, by the hand of Moses thy servant." (i.)

The above is too plain to need comment. No language can be more explicit to show *when* and *where* "the Sabbath was made," and for whom. Having learned this, we need not wonder that no traces of it are found in the preceding Patriarchal Age. Until now, the period of which we are speaking—at Sinai—it had not been shown that God had ended his work on the seventh day of creation and rested; but now the Lord reveals that fact, and *now* blessed

and sanctified it, for a perpetual sign and covenant between himself and the people whom he had just now separated from all others, and delivered from bondage; which sign and covenant were made binding, in terms, "throughout their generations."

In discussing the question of "the Sabbath in Eden," it was shown that the Sabbath or seventh day was not *set apart* before it occurred; nor upon the seventh day, but after; and the foregoing scriptures show us how long after, and the place, viz; in the wilderness of Sinai. Still, in the face of these evidences, christendom in a body adhere to the notion of an *Eden Sabbath*; which requires identification with the seventh day Sabbath of Exodus, twentieth chapter; and to this task have the zealous and learned applied themselves with great diligence and assiduity.

Some of the difficulties attending this attempt will appear when we remember that the learned are not agreed at what point to begin the count of days. If, it is alleged, the seventh day was handed down by Adam to his posterity, he must in the nature of things begin his count with the first day of his existence, and from thence counting would bring the seventh day on Friday. But if the first whole day of his existence were the starting point, then the next seventh day would be Saturday,—and this would make two Sabbaths,—one at each end of the cycle, the first and seventh; just such as we find in Exodus 12:15; a *first* day and *seventh* day "holy convocation" or Sabbath. (j) A number of Sabbaths are authorized to be kept as recorded in this chapter; but the

(e) Rom. 3:2; 9:4. (f) Deut. 5:15. (g) Ex. 31:13. (h) Ezek. 20:10,12,20. (i) Neh. 9:13,14.

(j) Lev. 23:2,8.

seventh day Sabbath is the one of the fourth commandment, and the sign as we have learned, and if it is also a memorial of Israel's coming out of Egypt, we should expect it to take its rise from that very day on which they came out, and this we will now show. On the fourteenth day of the first month the passover was killed. (*k*) "At evening," at the close of the fourteenth day of Abib, and at "midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt."—29*v*.

And a great cry arose while it was yet night, and Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said "Rise up and get ye forth from among my people."—31*v*.

"And they rose and went out," of course on the fifteenth of Abib, and this was henceforth to be "the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you." (*l*)

"And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (*m*)

"And thou shalt shew thy sons in, [time to come], that day, saying, "This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt." (*n*)

Now this month Abib was the first month of their year, and they journeyed on until they "came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure out of the land of Egypt." (*o*)

And they murmured for food, and the Lord sent them quails that evening, 12*v*.; and in the morning, (the sixteenth), "Ye shall be filled with bread," the manna; "And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."—16*v*.

The Lord had told Moses that "the people shall go out and gather a certain rate *every day*," and the sixth day of this daily gathering "they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they [had] gather [ed] daily."—5*v*. "And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating."—21*v*. That is, every day since it had fallen; and it first fell as we have seen, on the sixteenth of the second month. "And it came to pass that on the *sixth day* they gathered twice as much bread, two Omers for one man, and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses."—22*v*. Neither the congregation, nor any out of all the rulers, aside from Moses, seemed to understand why this double portion was gathered on the sixth day; and the rulers came to Moses about it.

"And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, [the sixth], and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning; and they laid it up till the morning as Moses bade. And Moses said, [in the morning], Eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." (*p*)

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." (*q*)

Here we are distinctly informed when and where the Sabbath of the Lord was made, viz, the seventh day from the fifteenth day of the second month, which would be the twenty-second day of the month, and so was the calendar of the sacred year arranged that it answers to

(*k*) Ex. 12:2, 6, 18. (*l*) Ex. 12:2. (*m*) Ex. 13:3.
(*n*) Ex. 13:8. (*o*) Ex. 16:1.

(*p*) Ex. 16:23-26. (*q*) Ex. 20:9:10.

the fifteenth of the first month in counting backward or forward; so that the fifteenth of the first month (Abib) seems to be the basis or starting point in the series of Sabbaths; (seventh day Sabbaths); for it is certain that the passover was killed on the fourteenth, and on the fifteenth they were to eat the unleavened bread. (r.) Now to show that this is the Sabbath, see ninth to eleventh verses, where it is expressly provided that the first fruits had to be provided "on the morrow after the Sabbath." (s.)

Josephus says the first fruits were offered on the sixteenth of the first month, and of course the day before would be the Sabbath. (t.) And further, Christ was crucified on the fourteenth day of the first month, on the day of the passover, and the next day, (the fifteenth), was the Sabbath. (u.) The day after the passover is the day of unleavened bread, and the Sabbath; for on each Sabbath was the shew bread to be "set in order, [and eaten], before the Lord." (v.) This is also shown in the fact that Moses, on the first day of the first month of the second year, set up the tabernacle; set the table and the bread upon it before the Lord, "as the Lord had commanded Moses" to do on every Sabbath. (w.)

That the Sabbath was a part of that covenant made at Sinai, we will further quote:

"And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform; even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (x.)

Here we are told that the ten commandments was the covenant, and when an ark, or box, was made in which to put these two tables of stone it was called the ark of the covenant.

Again:

"And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee, and with Israel. And he wrote upon the tables

the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." (y.)

"These words the Lord spake unto all you assembled in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more; and he wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them to me." (z.)

These testimonies clearly prove that the Sabbath of the Lord made known in the wilderness and incorporated into the covenant at Sinai, was a part of that covenant—the organic act—of the commonwealth of Israel. And now we will inquire after the duration of that covenant:

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid; the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise; which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? *Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.*" (a.)

"But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. But finding fault with them, [it], he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." (b.)

These testimonies show that the first covenant at Sinai was imperfect and temporary, and its ordinances typical of a better; and as Moses was the Mediator of that first covenant, so Christ was the Mediator of the second covenant, which should supercede the first, as the following shows:

"In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (c.)

This shows that the first covenant was really then superceded, and about to vanish away in the dissolution of their nation, which took place soon after. St. Paul, in contrasting the gos-

(r) Lev. 23: 6. (s) Josh. 5: 10, 11, 12. (t) Antiquities, b. 3, c. 10. (u) John 19: 31. (v) Lev. 24: 5, 8. (w) Ex. 40: 17-23. (x) Deut. 4: 12, 13.

(y) Ex. 34, 27, 28. (z) Deut. 5: 22. (a) Gal. 4: 21-30. (b) Heb. 8: 6-8. (c) Heb. 8: 13.

pel covenant with the covenant made at Sinai, says:

"For if that which is *done away* was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech; and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that [covenant] which is [now] abolished." (d.)

Here that covenant is said to be "done away," and "abolished." This same Apostle expresses the same idea again when he speaks of Christ

"Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, nailing it to his cross. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the *Sabbath* days: which are [were] a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (e.)

The evident sense of this is, let no believer accuse another of transgression for not observing these things, for they all belong to a covenant that has been superceded by a better; and hence it has *waxed old*, is *ready to vanish away*, is *done away*, is abolished. And lest some should cling to the Sabbath, the sign of the abolished covenant, Paul names the Sabbath days as a shadow—a sign of the first covenant and shadow of the second cast before, and of course could not be followed beyond the substance that cast it.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labor in vain." (f.)

Who cannot see that St. Paul understood that for a believer in Christ to do this, was turning "again to the weak and beggarly elements" that *gendereth to bondage*.

"One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike: let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (g.)

Here the regarding of a day unto the Lord is placed on the same level with eating unto the Lord, or of *meats and drinks*, which St. Paul placed in the same category of works with circumcision, which was *nothing*.

Thus we find that the Sabbath dating

from the fifteenth of Abib, the commencement of the series of the seventh day Sabbaths, ended on the fifteenth of the same month, the day on which Christ rested in the sepulchre; and "on the morrow" after their last Sabbath, "Christ, the first fruits of them that slept," appeared and confirmed the new covenant wherein he "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (h.)

We will now pass to the consideration of

4. THE SABBATH OF THE CHURCH.

And here we are met with the same significant silence as pervaded the Patriarchal Age, and while Moses, the Mediator of the covenant of Sinai, taught emphatically the Sabbath to all their generations; Christ, the Mediator of the new *covenant*, is silent upon the subject of the Sabbath as an institution under it. The impracticability of continuing the Sabbath as instituted through Moses to the believers among the nations where the gospel was now to be carried, will appear when we consider the manner in which that Sabbath was ordained to be kept, and the penalty for its violation. To kindle a fire or to cook was forbidden, and the transgressor must surely be put to death. This certainly confines that Sabbath to that people to whom it was given, and only while they remained in their own mild climate and maintained their nationality, could they keep or enforce it. Hence no allusion is made to it as part of the precepts of the gospel by Christ or his Apostles; but on the contrary, what we do find, both in the New Testament and in the history of the first ages of christianity, is this: that the disciples were wont to assemble for prayer and religious exercises, and we meet with several commandments requiring this of the believer:

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (i.)

"And being assembled together with them, commanded them," &c. (j.)

(d) 2 Cor. 3:11-13. (e) Col. 2:14-17. (f) Gal. 4:10:10, 11. (g) Rom. 14:5.

(h) 1 Cor. 15:20, 23. 2 Tim. 1:10. (i) Mat. 18:20. (j) Acts 1:4.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." (k)

"If there come into your assembly," &c. (l.)

These scriptures show that they were wont to assemble together, and were also required and encouraged so to do by Christ and his Apostles; and this implies a time as well as a place; and a stated time is also implied, and if a stated time, that must fall upon some stated day. Now, if the Sabbath, (seventh day), was continued, that of course would be the day; but instead of this we learn that it was "the first day of the week," whenever a day is named that they met together.

"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." (m.)

"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." (n.)

This last passage certainly shows that it was a custom of the church at that time to meet on "the first day of the week to break bread;" for here were a number of the Elders with Paul who had been there in all seven days, and of course, had been there on the seventh day or Jewish Sabbath, but did not, it would seem, meet on that, but on the first day. The instructions of Paul to the Corinthian Church to lay by in store on the first day of the week, implies an assembling on that day. (o.)

Thus, so far as the history in the New Testament goes, it does show that the Saints did assemble for religious worship on the first day of the week, though no commandment to that effect is found; and whether this was voluntary on the part of the disciples, or whether Christ pointed it out as the fittest day, and the writers omitted this among the "many other things which Jesus did" which were not written, we cannot tell. But when we are assured that the Apostles were empowered to

teach all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded, it is a fair inference that the custom of the Church to assemble on the first day of the week to break bread, and for other religious duties, was derived from their teaching, and that the "Lord's day" (p) was that same first day of the week, on which the Lord rose from the dead. We will now see what the history of the first three centuries contains upon this point. Mosheim says:

"All christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Savior rose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious 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 was observed universally throughout all the christian churches, as appears from the united testimony of the most credible writers." (q.)

It is a fact to be borne in mind, that in the second century, the day on which Christ arose from the dead, was so recognized by decree:

"And all [the Bishops] unanimously drew up an ecclesiastical decree which they communicated to all the churches in all places, that the mystery of our Lord's resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the *Lord's day*." (r.)

There can be no doubt that this is the same day that Pinytus in his epistle to Dyonysius, Bishop of Corinth, about A.D. 175, calls the Lord's holy day; he says, "To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle," &c. (s.)

The practice of reading communications in the assemblies of the Saints was derived from Apostolic injunction.

The historian, referring to the Ebionite heresy, says:

"They also observe the Sabbath and other discipline of the Jews just like them, but on the other hand they also celebrate the Lord's day very much like us in commemoration of his resurrection." (t.)

This sect had its origin early in the second century, and this statement concerning them is significant; it shows

(k) Heb. 10:25. (l) James 2:3. (m) John 20:19. (n) Acts 20:7. (o) 1 Cor. 16:2.

(p) Rev. 1:10. (q) Mosheim, part 2, ch. 4, sec. 4. (r) Eusebius, page 7. (s) Eusebius, p. 160. (t) Eusebius, p. 113.

that in that early time the Sabbath and the *Lord's day* were distinct; that the former was regarded as part of the "discipline of the Jews," and that the latter was the day of the resurrection, or first day of the week.

The exact light in which the Sabbath of the fourth commandment was regarded in the second and third centuries is set forth by Eusebius, as follows; speaking of the righteous before Abraham, he says:

"They did not therefore regard circumcision, nor regard the Sabbath; *neither do we*: neither do we abstain from certain foods, nor regard other injunctions which Moses subsequently delivered to be observed as types and symbols, because such things as these *do not belong to christians.*" (u.)

One more quotation shall suffice under this head to show that Sunday, instead of the Sabbath, was the day of public worship in those early times; it is from Justin Martyr, first apology, about A.D. 150:

"On the day called Sunday, there is an assembling together of all who dwell in the cities and country, and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as circumstances permit. Then when the reader has ceased, the president delivers a discourse, in which he admonishes and exhorts to these good things; then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, after prayer being ended, bread and wine are brought, and the president offers prayer in like manner and thanksgiving, and the distribution of that over which the thanksgiving has been pronounced, takes place to each, and each partakes; and a portion is sent to the absentees by the deacons." (v.)

We have thus, both in the New Testament and early church history, shown that the first day of the week, or Sunday, was observed for religious services, but nowhere is it called a Sabbath or rest day; but so far as it was devoted to religious duties, (and it was unanimously so observed), it really was a rest from common pursuits, and in this light it was a Sabbath or rest day; but it is clear that the church for three hundred years or more did not understand that the Jewish Sabbath was transferred to the christians, only, that the day was

changed. This view was of later origin, and due, no doubt, to the idea of the Jewish Sabbath originating in Eden, which became a tenet subsequently, when creeds were formed. We now come to the consideration of

5. FIRST DAY AND SEVENTH DAY OBSERVANCE AT PRESENT.

Under this head some further difficulties will be noticed and objections answered. But first, in the same manner that we find the disciples of Christ and the Church in the first century assembling for worship on the first day of the week, and thus resting from ordinary pursuits, just so do we find the Saints and Church organized on April 6th, 1830, observing this same day, for the same purpose, until August 7th, 1831, on Sunday, when the following is given:

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; for verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High; nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days, and at all times; but remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations, and thy sacraments, unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord." (w.)

This we think can only be understood as referring to the day then being kept, without forcing a construction that can only be legitimate upon the hypothesis of an Eden Sabbath, which has been shown to be a fable. But it is objected by seventh day advocates, that the prophets often spoke of the sanctity of the Sabbath; and to this it might be added that Jesus always observed it, and his disciples, during his life. The prophets lived and taught under the law of which the Sabbath was a part. Ezekiel 22:8, 26 says, "Thou hast despised my holy things, and profaned my Sabbaths; her priests have shewed no difference between the holy and profane, between clean and unclean." Now to find out what these holy things, clean

(u) Eusebius, page 27. (v) Sewell, Church History, page 169.

(w) Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 59, par. 2.

and unclean things were, we must go to the law under which the prophets lived. It may be found in Leviticus twenty-third to twenty-sixth chapters, and elsewhere; and the "holy things" include six Sabbaths beside the seventh day Sabbath; it also includes the shew bread upon the altar and in their houses; it is most holy; it includes all the beasts allowed for sacrifice, and all gifts and offerings, and implements, and furniture of the tabernacle, and the garments of the priests.

Now, if it is insisted that the prophet taught the perpetuity to all time of the Sabbaths, as part of the "holy things," it includes just as many Sabbaths as the law ordains, which we find to be seven, at different times appointed, and all of them are holy; and this would also require the same observance of all these other things made holy by the same law. (x.)

Upon this same principle Jesus observed the Sabbath, and also the pass-over, and also circumcision; and when he healed the leper sent him to the priests to make the offering required by the law. (y.) If his example was good for Sabbath sanctity now, it is also good in the other cases cited. Jesus did recognize the existing law; he "came not to destroy, [transgress], the law, but to fulfill it,"—complete it—and to abolish it; it is the last "will and testament" that abrogates any or all previous ones. But in this case we find all that was perfect in the first covenant incorporated in the second, all the rest was nailed to the cross; and thenceforward Moses' seat itself was superceded by that in heaven where the second Moses sat down at the right hand of his Father.

Some of the difficulties attending seventh day keeping derived from the seventh day of creation, may now be considered. If its sanctity dates back to that time, its identity becomes essential. Is it possible to determine which is the exact seventh day from creation? If we adhere to the theory of the Eden appointed Sabbath, such must answer

yes; or else their faith in their present seventh day must rest upon doubt. But let us see. In the weakness of man he has not yet been able to subdivide the time of the earth's revolution through its orbit into any number of equal parts, hence the months are unequal, requiring now and then a supplementary or intercalary month thrown in; this went on from time to time, until the months were changed, so that here and there a day was thrown in to adjust the seasons to the calendar. And this has been going on from time to time, from Romulus to Julian, the Council of Nice, and finally to Pope Gregory; making it next to impossible to identify any one day throughout this period. But what shall we say of the three thousand three hundred years, or four thousand eight hundred, chronologists are not sure which, before Romulus? Who kept the calendar, and readjusted them during this time? History is silent! To identify the day would involve the knowledge of the number of days; but so far from this being known, no system of chronology has yet demonstrated the number of generations; to say nothing of the years, weeks, and days. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament Scripture chronology makes two thousand five hundred and thirteen years from creation to the exodus; the Septuagint makes the same period to be three thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine. Here is a discrepancy of one thousand three hundred and eighty-six years. Our present version, King James', is from the Septuagint translation; but the chronology is from the Hebrew text. Why is this? And which is right? The Samaritan and Septuagint are both versions of the Hebrew, according to which the age of the world is to this year, 1874, five thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight; according to the Septuagint, seven thousand seven hundred and forty-six; according to the Samaritan, six thousand five hundred and seventy-four.

The above facts and reasons show the utter impossibility of anything definite respecting numbers being gleaned from

(x) Lev. 10:10. Chron. 16:4, 23; 22:6, 14. (y) Matt. 8:2, 4.

any chronological tables known. But in the face of all these difficulties, a Reverend Doctor, Peter Akers, President of McKendree College, in a work published by the Methodist Book Concern, Cincinnati, proceeds to count up the days from the Eden Sabbath, down to the exodus, and also on down to our time. He says the age of the world was seven thousand four hundred years on Wednesday, September 26th, 1855. He says the resurrection of Christ occurred on Sunday, March 28th, A.D. 28, in the year of the world 5573; making two million thirty-five thousand three hundred and sixty-nine days. (z.)

The Doctor says, "A.M. stands for the year of the world this era began—five thousand, five hundred and forty-five years, three months, and nineteen days before the common era of Christianity." (a.) The doctor then divides his number of days by seven, and finds two hundred and ninety thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven weeks, or Sabbaths from the first in Eden, to Sunday, the day on which Christ rose, thus contradicting every other system of chronology; and counting from Eden down to the exodus, makes Abib 16th, or the first day of the week the genuine Sabbath of Eden in succession. So that Sunday is the true seventh day from creation, according to this elaborate count; and this makes the Jewish seventh day Sabbath to have been on the sixth day, though called by Moses, the prophets, and the historian the seventh day, and requires us to contradict the Evangelists and the whole New Testament, and call the first day the seventh. The doctor's conclusions on this point may be stated thus: the Lord deceived the Jews, and they kept the sixth day, supposing it to be the seventh. And the Christians keep the real seventh, supposing it to be the first. Such extraordinary efforts are put forth to identify the present with the supposed Eden Sabbath, and such are some of the contradictory results.

Add to these difficulties herein stated

still another; the Eden Sabbath theory makes its obligation universal and perpetual, that sanctity attaches to the identical day in succession. Now it is simply impossible, in different latitudes and longitudes, to observe the same day at the same time; so that while in one part of the world, songs of praise ascend on Sabbath morning from one point of the globe, at another the same Sabbath keepers are swinging the sledge and plying their looms; and on the next day this is reversed. If it is answered, that it is not the identical time that is the Sabbath, then the first day or any other day is equally the Sabbath.

It is sometimes argued that the words "remember" the Sabbath, in Exodus twentieth, implies that it had been known or commanded before—long before. It had been some three weeks before this commanded. (b.) Remember often signifies to keep in mind. (c.) Moses says to Israel a few days after they left Egypt, "Remember this day in which ye come out of Egypt." (d.) So if the word *remember* is an argument for the antiquity of the Sabbath, it is equally so for the antiquity of the Exodus.

Again; if the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is binding to-day, the law defining how it shall be observed is certainly binding also. Here is the definition, "Ye shall do no work on the Sabbath day; ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day." And here is the penalty for violation, "Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death." (e.) So that look at it in any light we may, attempting to keep the Eden-Jewish Sabbath is untenable, as tested by reason, facts, chronology and scripture.

It is sometimes urged that if the fourth commandment is abrogated, then are the other nine also; that they rest upon the same authority. We have shown that these identical ten commandments were called the covenant made at Sinai; that God found fault

(z) Biblical Chronology, by Dr. Akers, pages 8 and 31. (a) *Ibid*, page 41.

(b) Ex. 16:1-23; 19:1. (c) Num. 15:39. (d) Ex. 13:3; 35:1, 2.

with that covenant, and made a new one, based upon better promises. (*f.*) Now then the decalogue itself was defective. (Reader, don't be shocked at this, but listen.) What do the ten commandments promise? Why he that doeth them shall live in them. The preface to the first is, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." This only applies to Israel. The second is, "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath." This, no doubt, was meant to apply to Israel alone; or if this prohibition extends to all mankind, the sculptor's art, statuary, photographing, painting are evident violations. There can be no doubt but that the fourth verse of Exodus twentieth chapter should be read parenthetically, then the fifth verse, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them," would refer to the other god of the third verse. "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children."—This is found fault with, and repealed in Ezekiel, 18. Next comes the Sabbath which is ineligible for universal observance, and therefore, as before proved, was of local application only. Then follows the only one of the ten with a promise; and that promise relates solely to Israel, "That thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

(*f.*) Heb. 8:7.

But we learn in Leviticus, twenty-seventh chapter, that the whole law of sacrifices and offerings were given at Sinai; and it was after the tenor of this law of types and shadows that Moses was commanded to write the covenant, "even ten commandments." (*g.*) Thus it is seen that the ten commandments is but an epitome of the whole law of sacrifice and offering of types and shadows, and as such, as a whole, of local application only, and was abolished as we have shown. Not a promise is contained in them singly, or as a whole covenant, except some temporal or local advantage pertaining solely to this life. But the new covenant which superceded it was established on better promises, not only of "the life that now is, but of that which is to come," for therein is "brought life and immortality to light." But, as we have before observed, all the precepts of that defective or local and typical covenant that could not be found fault with, that were of universal application, were incorporated with the new covenant. Hence, in conclusion, we recognize the First Day of the Week as the rest day from all secular business, and for religious services, after the example of the first disciples; and that this rest is in agreement with the physical wants of mankind, and with the spirit of the Sabbath institution for Israel; and that its observance is required both by the moral and religious obligation, as well as the civil law under which we live.

(*g.*) Ex. 34:27, 28.