

# THE COVENANTER.

---

JULY, 1850.

---

## THE LORD'S DAY, THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

“Offences must come, that they which are approved may be made manifest.” One end to be accomplished by the permission of error, is the trial of man’s faith, and the establishment of that of the truly and intelligently faithful. In this way, controversy more than compensates for any labour and anxiety to which it subjects the friends of truth. Among the topics of discussion at the present time, the claims of the Christian Sabbath occupy a justly pre-eminent place. The question has become, in all those countries with which we are most closely connected, a matter of no secondary practical moment, inasmuch as both here and in Great Britain, the friends and the enemies of the Sabbath have, of late, come into frequent collision. Indeed, it is plain, that the latter are endeavouring to concentrate and organize their strength, for a great effort, at some future and not distant period, in opposition to the whole of that legislation with which the most enlightened Protestant States have guarded the day of rest.

Into the Sabbath question in this general aspect, we do not propose to enter. We confine ourselves, at present, to that view of it which from circumstances painfully familiar to our readers, possesses a peculiar interest to us, at this time, viz.: Is the first day of the week now, the appointed day of rest, and of special religious observances? is it the Christian Sabbath?

Before we enter on the direct examination of this question in the light of the Scriptures, by whose authority alone it can be determined, it becomes necessary to vindicate the good name of Calvin, the greatest of the Reformers, from the aspersion—for we regard it as such—that he maintained “the abrogation of the fourth commandment as a ceremonial institution, and contended for a Sabbath or stated day of worship, under the gospel, only as a wise and necessary human arrangement.” That this eminent Reformer did use some expressions which give colour to these assertions, we do not deny, but this is all: he still maintained the Divine authority of the Lord’s day. In speaking of this institution, among other words, he thus defines its end:\*

“First, under the rest of the seventh day, the divine Lawgiver meant to furnish the people of Israel with a type of the spiritual rest by which believers were to cease from their own works, and allow God to work in them. Secondly, he meant that there should be a stated day on which they should assemble to hear the law and perform religious rites, or which, at least, they should specially employ in meditating on his works, and be thereby trained to piety. Thirdly, he meant that servants, and those who lived under the

---

\* Inst., Book II., Chap. viii. 4th Cant.

authority of others, should be indulged with a day of rest, and thus have some intermission from labour."

Having established this statement, he proceeds,

\*"There can be no doubt, that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished. He is the truth, at whose presence all the emblems vanish; the body, at the sight of which the shadows disappear."

"The two other cases ought not to be classed with ancient shadows, but are adapted to every age. The Sabbath being abrogated, there is still room among us, first, to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and public prayer; and, secondly, to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour. *It cannot be doubted that the Lord provided for both in the commandment of the Sabbath.* The former is abundantly evinced by the mere practice of the Jews. The latter Moses has expressed in Deuteronomy v. 14."

"Who can deny that both are equally applicable to us as to the Jews? Religious meetings are enjoined us by the word of God; their necessity, experience itself sufficiently demonstrates. But unless these meetings are stated, and have fixed days allotted to them, how can they be held?"

"But if the reason for which the Lord appointed a Sabbath to the Jews is equally applicable to us, no man can assert that it is a matter with which we have nothing to do. Our most provident and indulgent Parent has been pleased to provide for our wants not less than for the wants of the Jews. Why, it may be asked, do we not hold daily meetings, and thus avoid the distinction of days? Would that we were privileged to do so? Spiritual wisdom undoubtedly deserves to have some portion of every day devoted to it. But if, owing to the weakness of many, daily meetings cannot be held, and charity will not allow us to exact more of them, why should we not adopt the rule which the will of God has obviously imposed upon us?"

In this passage, Calvin vindicates the law of the Sabbath as of perpetual obligation. He then proceeds to vindicate the church from the charge of Judaizing; and in the same connexion asserts that the change was made not by "human arrangement," but by apostolic, and, of course, Divine authority.

† "I am obliged to dwell a little longer on this, because some restless spirits are now making an outcry about the observance of the Lord's day. They complain that Christian people are trained in Judaism, because some observance of days is retained. My reply is, That those days are observed by us without Judaism, because in this matter we differ widely from the Jews. We do not celebrate it with most minute formality, as a ceremony by which we imagine that a spiritual mystery is typified, but we adopt it as a necessary remedy for preserving order in the church. Paul informs us that Christians are not to be judged in respect of its observance, because it is a shadow of something to come, (Col. ii. 16;) and, accordingly, he expresses a fear lest his labour among the Galatians should prove in vain, because they still observed days, (Gal. iv. 10, 11.) And he tells the Romans that it is superstitious to make one day differ from another, (Rom. xiv. 5.) But who, except those restless men, does not see what the observance is to which the Apostle refers? Those persons had no regard to that politic and ecclesiastical arrangement, but by retaining the days as types of spiritual things, they in so far obscured the glory of Christ, and the light of the Gospel. They did not

\* Ibid.

† Inst., Book II, Chap. viii. 4th Cant. Beza held the same views. His language is, "Therefore the observance of the Lord's day, which Justin mentions in his Apology, is of Apostolic and truly Divine tradition."

desist from manual labour on the ground of its interfering with sacred study and meditation, but as a kind of religious observance; because they dreamed that by their cessation from labour, they were cultivating the mysteries which had of old been committed to them. It was, I say, against this preposterous observance of days that the Apostle inveighs, and not against that legitimate selection which is subservient to the peace of Christian society. For in the churches established by him, this was the use for which the Sabbath was retained. He tells the Corinthians to set the first day apart for collecting contributions for the relief of their brethren at Jerusalem, (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) If superstition is dreaded, there was more danger in keeping the Jewish Sabbath than the Lord's day as Christians now do. It being expedient to overthrow superstition, the Jewish holy day was abolished; and as a thing necessary to retain decency, order, and peace in the church, *another day was appointed for that purpose.*"

For the intelligent and candid reader this will suffice. Calvin needs to be studied. That the infidel should misunderstand him, we do not wonder;—we are surprised that any one taught in the truth and capable of discrimination should do so.

We now advert, as preparatory to our scriptural argument, to some statements of the earliest writers in the primitive church; in which it will be seen whether or not the institution of the Christian Sabbath was due either to the emperors of Rome, as has been asserted, or to Antichrist. We begin with *Ignatius*, a companion of the Apostle John, who says: "Let us no more Sabbatize, but let us keep the Lord's day, on which our Life arose." *Justin Martyr*, who lived, partly in the first and partly in the second century, a contemporary of John, gives this testimony: "On the day called Sunday is an assembly of all who live in the country, and the sermons of the Apostles and the writings of the prophets are read." *Irenæus*, a disciple of Polycarp, the friend of John, says: "On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keep the Sabbath, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God."\* *Tertullian*, who lived at the close of the second century, says, that "The Lord's day is the holy day of the Christian church assemblies and holy worship—every eighth day is the Christian's festival." *Dionysius*, of Corinth, also in the second century, says: "To-day we celebrate the Lord's holy day." *Irenæus*, wrote an epistle in which he maintains that the Lord's Supper should be administered "upon the Lord's day." At the close of the second century, a decree was drawn up by some "Synods and convocations" to the same effect. We add that in the second century Melito wrote a treatise on the "Lord's day;" and in the next century Dionysius, of

\* This will answer, in part, to resolve the following: "If you can prove that any one man among the millions of Adam's children, from the beginning of the world to the rise of Antichrist, ever called the first day of the week 'the Sabbath,' you will shed a light upon this controversy, for which a host of writers have searched in vain." As also the following: "The first day of the week was not classed by any of the children of men as a *Sabbath*, for three hundred years after the birth of Christ."

There was a sufficient reason for the far more frequent use of the term Lord's day, in the fact that so long as the Christian community were in close connexion with the Jews, who, of course, used the term Sabbath to denote *their* day, the seventh,—because many of the converts were, at first, Jews,—it was necessary to distinguish. That they did so, is an argument substantiating their observance of the first day. When that which "letted" was out of the way, the Sabbath would gradually come into use, and so it did.

Alexandria, an essay on the same subject, entitled, "The Sabbath." And, finally, so well was the observance of the Lord's day known to be a distinctive characteristic of the Christian, that it was made a subject of inquiry by their heathen persecutors—"Do you keep the Lord's day?" Their replies, as recorded by historians, were in substance, "I am a Christian, I cannot omit it."\*

But was there no more? Did not the primitive Christians also keep the seventh day of the week? Some of them did, but by no means all; and so, for a time, some of them were circumcised. That the observance of any other than the Lord's day, was not general, is evident from the language of Tertullian, quoted above, "the Lord's day is *the* holy day," and of Irenæus, "on the Lord's day *every one* of us keeps the Sabbath." This observance of two days, whatever there was of it, gradually faded away, and was finally abolished after the empire became Christian. This whole matter is very summarily and satisfactorily presented by Mosheim.

"All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious custom which was derived from the example of the church of 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 testimonies of the most credible writers.† The seventh day of the week was also observed as a festival,‡ not by the Christians in general, but by such churches only as were principally composed of Jewish converts, nor did the other Christians censure this custom as criminal and unlawful."

If in any thing we have clearly marked the footsteps of the flock, it is in this branch of our Christian practice. And we have also the mind of the Spirit.

Of this, we now enter upon the proof, purposing to show, I. that the phraseology of the fourth commandment is such as to admit the change; II. that there are sufficient indications in the Scriptures that such a change was intended; III. that this change has actually been made by Divine authority. And,

I. The terms of the fourth commandment do not put the seventh day of the week beyond the possibility of change, as the Sabbath. Its terms are, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Now, it does not say, "the first six days of *the week* shalt thou labour, &c., but the seventh day of *the week*, is," &c. It fixes merely the portion of time

\* This may serve to resolve another inquiry—"Tell me candidly was there ever a martyr who died in defence of the first day Sabbath?" It will be time enough to call for a martyr expiring in this land, when some persecution rises up to put to death expressly for this.

† Phil. Jac. Hartmannus, *De rebus gestis Christianorum sub Apostolis*, cap. xv. p. 337. Just. Henn, Bohmer, *Dissert. i. Juris Eccles. Antiqui de stato die Christianor.*, p. 20, &c.

‡ Steph. Curcellæus, *Diatriba de esu Sanguinis, Operum Theolog.* p. 958. Gab. Albaspinæus, *Observat. Eccles.* lib. i. *Observ.* xiii. p. 53. It is in vain that many learned men have laboured to prove, that in *all* the primitive churches, both the first and last day of the week were observed as festivals. The churches of Bithynia, of which Pliny speaks in his letter to Trajan, had only *one stated day*, for the celebration of public worship; and that was undoubtedly the first day of the week, or what we call the *Lord's day*.

to be devoted to labour and rest respectively, with that order in which they shall succeed each other. The very letter of the commandment is obeyed when we labour six days, as we now do, and then rest upon the seventh—although that seventh day is the first of the week. From this commandment merely, the Jews could not have known what day they were to keep. This must have been, and was, in fact, otherwise determined—either by the unbroken tradition from the creation, or as some suppose, by a fresh discovery in the wilderness. In a word, the terms of the fourth commandment are such that it would be, truly observed, both in the spirit and in the letter, when any day of the week should be observed by *divine appointment* as the day of rest.

II. It is sufficiently intimated that such a change as we vindicate was in contemplation. And, here, we argue, 1st. From the significant phraseology of this fourth commandment. It is so drawn as to guard the reader against the inference that it was designed to fix the Sabbath unchangeably to a particular day. It begins thus, "Remember the Sabbath day;" and closes thus, "and rested on the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the *Sabbath day*, and hallowed it." 2d. A change of day is clearly intimated in Isaiah lxxv. 17, "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: 'and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.'" It is clear that this passage refers to a change of dispensation: the creation of a new spiritual heaven and earth; for it is added, "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." All this being, in part, accomplished in the removal of the partition wall between Jew and Gentile in the abolition of the former ceremonial dispensation, and the consequent extension of all gospel privileges to the inhabitants of all nations—its full accomplishment taking place at that period when the kingdoms of the world shall actually receive and enjoy the benefits, personal and social, of the grace and dominion of Christ. The bearing of all this upon the change of the Sabbath is easily seen. The reason, in the fourth commandment, assigned for the observance of the Sabbath is, that "God rested on the seventh day," having made, in six days, "the heavens and the earth." In other words, the Sabbath was instituted as a standing memorial of the creation of the old heavens and the old earth. But the time was even then—under the Old Testament dispensation foretold—when this old heavens and earth should "no more be remembered, nor come into mind,"—that is, their glory should be so obscured by the greater glory of this "new creation," as that they should be comparatively forgotten. But if this be so, is it possible that the church should still be required, to the end of time, to observe a day of rest, the grand reason of whose observance was, that it was a memorial of a work which should "be no more remembered?" This argument is, to us, conclusive, as to the divine purpose to change the day of the Sabbath. It intimates, in language that can scarcely be misapprehended, that the entire system of worship under the new dispensation should be so arranged—including, of course, the time specially set apart for the duties of social religion—as to cast into the shade all other demonstrations of the Divine glory; so as to remind the worshipper, that the great work of God is the work of redemption—a work completed in Christ's resurrection.

3d. Not only was a change foreshadowed—the day was distinctly intimated; viz., the day of Christ's resurrection. And this, (1.) In the

fact that the Jews were to keep the seventh day as a memorial of their escape from Egypt: The fact is plainly stated in Deut. v. 14, 15, "And remember, 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." Indeed, it is nearly, if not quite, certain, that this was the very day on which the Israelites came up out of the Red Sea—the day on which their redemption from Egyptian bondage was finally consummated. But whether or not, the fact remains, that they were to remember the seventh day as a memorial of this grand event in their history, by which they received, in a certain sense, new life as a people. This entire transaction was typical. Its antitype was the resurrection of Christ. The inference is very direct, that the day of Christ's resurrection—the day when he came up out of the great waters—the day he lived again, and his people in Him—the day emphatically of the new creation, should be observed under another dispensation as a day of rest and rejoicing by God's spiritual Israel. (2.) This appears, with still greater clearness, in the 118th Psalm 22, 24. The passage refers to Christ. None doubt this. His rejection—spoken of in the 22d verse—was consummated in his crucifixion. He became the "head of the corner" in his exaltation, which began in his resurrection. And hence, in ver. 24, it is declared that "this is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it;" not merely in that one day in which Christ rose—we can hardly suppose the Spirit of inspiration to mean no more than this by terms so emphatic—but in that same day in its ordinary weekly returns. Nor does it avail, for the purpose of getting rid of the plain import of this prophecy, to say that Christ became "head of the corner" when he ascended from Mount Olivet. This phrase comprehends more than his mere investiture with dominion—it includes his entire right to save, as well as to seek his people—He is the corner stone of salvation—of the building of mercy. This passage is equivalent to a direct and specific declaration that the day of the church's spiritual rest and rejoicing, should be changed at and after his resurrection.\*

4th. None can question the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to make this change. He claims it, Mark ii. 28, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Indeed, by Him the Sabbath was given to the Israelites in the re-enactment of the moral law by his authority in the wilderness. Hence, the preface to the decalogue is well paraphrased by the Westminster divines, "Because the Lord is our God, and Redeemer, therefore are we bound to keep all his commandments." Now, if we have rightly interpreted the language of the fourth precept, did he, in this re-enactment of the moral law, bind himself to the permanent establishment of the day then observed? So far from this, the terms of the law were so devised, as to leave room for a change then contemplated, and, as we have endeavoured to show, not indistinctly fore-signified to the church under the former economy.

\* The arguments, except the first, adduced under this division, are cumulative. They all exhibit, as in a series, the design of God to magnify the work of redemption by making it the prominent object in every part of New Testament worship. There is a text, Ezekiel xl. 27, which can hardly bear any other interpretation than that which regards it as intimating a change of Sabbath: "And when these days are expired, it shall be on the eighth day, and so forward."

Nor can it be said that any obligation lies upon mankind by virtue of the bond of the covenant of works of such sort as to render this change impossible. (1.) It is by no means certain that the Sabbath was revealed to Adam before that covenant was broken. Certainly, the Sabbath—we mean the particular period and day—was not a part of the law written upon Adam's heart. These must always have been matter of positive enactment. We hear of no positive laws given to Adam, except that relating to the tree of knowledge. (2.) We cannot reason, from the covenant of works, in regard to the manner and circumstances of the worship to be observed under the new. (3.) It is absurd that we should now grope among the obscurities of a broken law and covenant for rules of duty, when we have the written word, to which we may appeal. The primitive law of magistracy—the patriarchal—was the mode of civil government contemplated, so far as we can see, in that covenant. Is this to be adopted now? or are we to take the principles and directions of the written word? “To the law and to the testimony.” (4.) The change which we maintain accords with the spirit and *order* of the new covenant, and seems to be required for the complete exhibition of that order. Under the old covenant, works preceded rest in God, and this was properly illustrated in the fact that six days' labour preceded a day of rest. Under the new covenant, we first find rest in Christ, and then work for him. And with this accords the order—a day of rest followed by six days' labour. Nor is it any objection to this view, that the Jews were required to observe the order of the primitive law. The development of the scheme of grace, in its entire and adequate illustration by the institutions of worship, was gradual; and besides, the former economy was, in its arrangements, comparatively burdensome. The church was then under age, and was introduced to the full enjoyment of her new covenant privileges at the erection of the present dispensation.\* Of this we have a beautiful exposition in the latter part of the fourth chapter of Galatians—the allegory of Hagar and Sarah—Ishmael and Isaac—Sinai, and Jerusalem that is from above. (5.) It is sheer nonsense to refer to the obedience of Christ to the law of the seventh day Sabbath, as if by this he confirmed it as the standing season of rest and worship. This is the same sort of *ad captandum* argument with which Baptists impose upon the ignorant, forgetting, as those who use the same argument in regard to the Sabbath do, that if it prove any thing, it proves that the church should circumcise her members, observe the forms of synagogue worship, offer sacrifices, keep the passover, conform, in short, to the whole Mosaic ritual.

The authority of Christ was, then, unrestricted by any previous enactment. His dominion over the Sabbath was ample to make the change.

We come now, III. To show that this change has actually been made by His authority. This we establish, 1. By the circumstances attending his burial and resurrection. He rose the first day of the week, having lain in the tomb the seventh; and this, as every Chris-

\* We will not be understood as intimating that the way of salvation was any other, under the former dispensation, than it now is—or that the Mosaic economy was not a dispensation of the covenant of grace. We refer to the outward aspect of that economy.

tian will admit, according to a deliberate purpose, and with design. Can we fail to see in this a settled intent to bury the Jewish Sabbath, and to institute another day as the day of rest and rejoicing? The Sabbath was to be a "delight." Was the day when Christ lay in the grave a "delight" to the disciples? They were filled with sadness. But the next day—the first day of the ensuing week—was there ever such a day of gladness—of spiritual gladness and joy as this to the church on earth? The day before had been to the disciples a day of fasting indeed; the Bridegroom had been taken away. But now, their sadness is turned into the brightest rejoicing. Could they ever forget either the one or the other? What more natural than the transfer of the emotions of holy delight with which they formerly observed the seventh day, to this new day which "the Lord had made?" This was of itself, at least, almost sufficient to bring about the existing change in the season of worship.

2. Christ eminently distinguished and honoured the first day of the week. (1.) On this day he appeared to his disciples. John xx. 19: "Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, . . . came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." This is not so remarkable; but, ver. 26, "after eight days"—on the ensuing first day of the week—"again his disciples were within. . . . Then came Jesus, . . . and said, Peace be unto you;" Now, in any view of the disciples assembling, this appearance of Christ signalizes the first day of the week. Did they meet every day; then why but to put singular honour upon it, as the day in which he would especially vouchsafe his presence to his people. Did he select this day to meet with his disciples?—then still more the probability is, that they met by design on this day, and that with the expectation of meeting Jesus. Mark the phraseology, "After eight days, again his disciples were within." In the language of Paley, "it has every appearance of a previous appointment." But in any event, the first day is here signally honoured, and begins in the very morning of the new dispensation to hold that place which it has since occupied, as the day of devotion and of Christian enjoyment. (2.) On this day, the Spirit was poured upon the New Testament church. We refer to the great event recorded, Acts ii.—the Pentecostal baptism of the disciples. This was on the first day, for, as we learn from Lev. xxiii. 15, 16, the Pentecost was observed on the fiftieth day after the paschal Sabbath. Now in this occurrence, the whole church, to the end of time, has a direct interest. It stands alone. It marks an era. It was a visible emblem and seal of the superior glory of the New Testament, that it was to be the ministration of the Spirit. Moreover, it constituted, at the time, as Peter afterwards declares, a visible testimony to the exaltation of Christ, that he had become the head of the corner. Christ did most eminently separate, and distinguish, and honour the first day of the week.

3. This day was observed by the apostles and the primitive church. True, the apostles frequented, when among Jews, their synagogues, but merely for the purpose of ministering to these the gospel. But among themselves, the first day of the week was their day of worship and of rest. This appears, (1.) In the meeting of the church in Troas for the dispensation of the Lord's Supper on that day. Acts xx. 7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together



to break bread, Paul preached unto them." To "break bread" is to dispense the Supper. It is absurd to suppose that they came together to eat a common meal; or that, if they did, it would be solemnly left upon record. The day is mentioned. Why, unless to distinguish it and honour it—to hold it up as the usual season of observing the solemnities of Divine worship? Moreover, Paul would not travel on that day; for it is added, "being minded to depart on the morrow."\*

(2.) In the command given to the Corinthians and to the Galatians to make their collections for religious purposes on that day. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Why, we again ask, specify the first day? But one answer can be given, it was a day particularly devoted to the observance of gospel ordinances, of which contributing for religious ordinances is one. Nor is it any objection to this view that the apostle says, "by him in store;" for the following clause, "that there be no gatherings when I come," removes all obscurity, and shows that the contributions were to be put into the public stock on that day: otherwise this very thing would have necessarily followed—there would have been "gatherings" when he came.

(3.) The first day of the week is called expressly the Lord's day. Rev. i. 10: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." This was evidently some particular day. Every day is, indeed, the Lord's; but here this epithet is distinctive: just as the city of the Lord is an epithet of Jerusalem—or as under the old economy, the seventh day was God's day. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." "The Lord's day," Christ's day, as the Lord's Supper is Christ's Supper. But how the Lord's, and why? His, inasmuch as, from his resurrection, made peculiarly his, to be devoted to his service. "This is the day the Lord hath made." If any doubt remains whether the first day of the week be really meant, this is dispelled, when we remember that from this very period, as we have seen in our quotations from the contemporaries and immediate followers of John, it was invariably so used in the primitive church. If the meaning of any term can be fixed by testimony, the interpretation of this epithet must be so regarded.

4. This day has ever since been observed by the Christian church. That it has been, none ever disputed. For a time, as stated by Mosheim in the extract that we have given on a former page, both days, the seventh and the first, were observed by some portions of the Christian church. And this was winked at, as was the observance of circumcision, for a time, in the case of Jewish converts. With this exception, the course of the church has been uniform. Doubts on this subject are of very recent origin. They date no further back than the ages subsequent to the Reformation, and then they arose chiefly among the same people who denied, because there is no command in the New Testament enjoining it, the propriety of infant baptism. Now, let it be observed, we draw no argument from any mere church authority. We lay no stress upon the canons of any council. Our faith rests upon no ecclesiastical dictum. Our argument is, that if the first day of the week be not the Christian Sabbath, then has Christ left the church for more than eighteen hundred years without a Sabbath at all? a divinely

---

\* Could the writer have read this clause, who says that this passage proves that Paul travelled on the first day of the week? The text says, "He was minded to depart on the morrow."

authorized and accepted Sabbath. Our argument here is analogous to that which we use against the Jews. We say, your system is abolished. God has abolished it: for eighteen hundred years, you have had no temple, no altar, no sacrifices of atonement: your ceremonies have been wiped out of existence by the strong and great hand of God, the Governor of the world. Now, so we argue on behalf of our Sabbath. If the first day be not the Sabbath, then has God himself wiped out this institution: there is then no longer any such day or season. Now, the infidel may adopt this alternative: the Christian will not. He cannot believe that the Most High has so bereft his church, as that he has left her for her entire course, as a church of all nations, to run counter to his will; and live in perpetual disregard of one of his express commandments. We add,

5. And lastly, God has blessed the first day of the week, and so put his seal upon it. God has not left his church without a Sabbath, nor without tokens of his approbation in her observance of the first day of the week as the day of rest and devotion. On this day his word has been preached for the conversion of sinners, and the sacraments dispensed for the edification of the faithful, for many hundreds of years. And where has religion flourished, with all the interests of morality, personal and social? Where have religion and good order declined? Any tyro can answer these questions. With Sabbath—first day Sabbath—observance, every spiritual and moral interest has flourished: with Sabbath desecration comes in a flood of all kinds of evil. As religion revives, is not the Sabbath more strictly kept? as it declines, is it not more loosely observed? God has blessed the Sabbath—the Lord's day—the Christian Sabbath. This argument, in connexion with the preceding, amounts to a demonstration: A voice from heaven could hardly make it more evident than does the manifest blessing of God upon this day. And it proves that it is his mind and will that his church and the nations should keep, to the end of this dispensation, the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath.

#### THE DEACON CONTROVERSY.

It is well, during the progress of public discussions on contested points, occasionally to pause, and examine with some care, what aspect it may have assumed. Without this, we may become confused by the very din of conflict, or even allow our sympathies with truth and right to become deadened by the frequent iteration and re-iteration of argument, assertion, response, on the one side and the other.

We seem *nearly* to have reached such a period in the Deacon Controversy, and we may, if circumstances permit, attempt at no distant day, such a review of its progress and existing aspects. At present, we allot ourselves a more limited task—an examination of some of the statements, &c., which have appeared on the other side, since the last meeting of Synod. And,

I. A studied attempt has been made to represent the advocates of the deacon's office, as inimical, more or less, to the Westminster Form of Church Government. And hence, in sermons, exhortations, and writings, no little has been said in behalf of adhering to the standards, as if the deacon brethren were endeavouring to wrest some part of the church's inheritance from her. Now, we remark, (1,) that these