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Art. I.—EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY, ESPECIALLY OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT.\*

By CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D., Prof. in Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.

EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY is one of the four grand divisions of Theological Science. It is related to the other divisions, historical, systematic, and practical, as the primary and fundamental discipline upon which the others depend, and from which they derive their chief materials. Exegetical Theology has to do especially with the sacred Scriptures, their origin, history, character, exposition, doctrines, and rules of life. It is true that the other branches of theology have likewise to do with the sacred writings, in that their chief material is derived therefrom, but they differ from Exegetical Theology, not only in their *methods* of using this material, but likewise in the fact, that they do not *themselves* search out and gather this material, directly from the holy writings, but depend upon Exegetical Theology therefor; whilst their energies are directed in Historical Theology in tracing the development of that material as the determining element in the history of the people of God; in Systematic Theology, in arranging that material in the form most appropriate for systematic study, for attack and defense, in accordance with the needs of the age; in Practical Theology, in directing that material to the conversion of souls, and training them in the holy life.

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\* The substance of this article was delivered as an Inaugural Address, by occasion of the induction of Dr. Briggs (Sept. 21, 1876) into the chair of Hebrew and the Cognate Languages in the Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.

Dr. Riggs, of the Sioux mission. Much was accomplished by the school for the whole surrounding region.

It is not surprising that a life so variously useful, and a character so strikingly symmetrical, have elicited affectionate eulogies. "He was always spoken of with great reverence by my mother," says one who in childhood was accustomed to see him at her own home. "I met him first in Presbytery," wrote another, "and I well remember that the impression of his goodness derived from others was heightened in me by the first day's observation. . . I was never with one whose flow of feeling savored so much of heaven."\* "He has left a name," said Dr. Martin M. Post, "which suggests a wise counsellor, a true worker, a thoroughly honest and godly man. May a double portion of his spirit rest on his successors in the Synods of Indiana."

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#### Art. V.—THE SABBATH QUESTION.†

By REV. BYRON SUNDERLAND, D. D., Washington, D. C.

ONE of the latest expositions of the Sabbath ordinance is the paper of Rev. S. M. Hopkins, D. D., Professor in the Auburn Theological Seminary, read before the Evangelical Alliance, at Pittsburgh, last year. He concedes a Christian *consensus* "as to the duty of consecrating one day in the week to the ends of physical rest, and moral and religious culture."

"But," he continues, "at that point the agreement ends. As respects the grounds of the obligation and the manner of performing it, there prevails a wide difference of opinion." He speaks of it as "the Sunday observance," and, beginning with the Sabbatarian Pharisees, in the time of Christ, he alludes to the dispute which then arose, and recalls the views and practice existing from that day to the present. He argues the

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\* Henry Ward Beecher, in *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iv : p. 519.

† Published at the special request of a large number of the clerical and lay members of the Baltimore Synod.

abrogation of the fourth commandment, from the teaching of Christ and of Paul, and from the testimony of Barnabas, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Luther, Calvin, and Alford. He concludes, "that Sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolical times;" and says that the term "Sabbath" was then never applied to the day of Christian convocation.

Finally, however, he places "the sanction for a Christian Sabbath" on "the ground of custom," or, of what he terms, "a fixed, invariable usage"—"corroborated by a wide observation of its beneficial influence."

We confess that we are not satisfied with this exposition. Nor has any advocate of the Christian Sabbath, either in earlier or later times, with whose views we are acquainted, presented the subject in what seems to us to be the best form. From the days of the Christian fathers down to this hour, there is no symbol of the Sabbath doctrine which fully meets the case. Even the Westminster Confession is no exception. To much of the moralizing on the need of the day and the manner of its observance, we, of course, assent. But in regard to an ordinance of such import to mankind, it seems that there must be some expression of the will of God. The Scriptures are supposed to contain His will. If, upon a fair and candid investigation, it shall be discovered that all divine legislation on this subject has been swept away, and that we are remanded to tradition and custom, and the grounds which pertain thereto, for the only sanction of the day, then we see not how, as Christians, we are to defend the Sabbath against overwhelming assault.

Setting aside, therefore, the whole controversy, as it has stood in the history of the church and of the nations, let us go back to the Word of God.

*What is the Scriptural Authority, Design, and Observance of the Christian Sabbath?*

#### I.—AUTHORITY.

Christ asserts that he came not to destroy, but to fulfill, the law and the prophets (Matt. v : 17). Whatever may be embraced in these terms, we suppose the decalogue—that is the moral law, to be included. He says he did not come to repeal that law, but to confirm it—to expound, exemplify, and

emphasize it. The fourth commandment is a part of this moral law; we have no right to separate it from the rest. It stands or falls with the body to which it belongs. If the prohibition of theft, or adultery, or murder, remains, so does the sanctity of the Sabbath. And not only do the moral reasons of the law remain with it, but also the *exempli gratia*, the divine example. If the fact, that God rested from his labors on the seventh day, was ever a reason why any man should remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, that reason remains to-day in all its force.

That Christ recognized this truth in his contest with the Pharisees is evident from his doctrine. (Mark ii: 27; Luke vi: 5.) He claimed lordship over the institution, and declared that the Sabbath came to be through the man, not the man through the Sabbath. And while it is true, as Prof. Hopkins suggests, that the Jewish Sabbath was appointed for the Jewish man; this does not limit the teaching of Christ, nor does it seem to have been in his contemplation at the time. The Jews complained that their Sabbath had been violated by his disciples. Christ answered, first, by a precedent specific to the Jewish law, and, second, by the broad assertion of the relation of humanity itself to the Sabbatic institution. He plainly teaches that this institution arises on account of human nature, and not human nature on account of the institution. And he crowns the whole by assuming the right, in pursuance of the commandment, to fix not only the status, but the manner, of observing the Sabbath ordinance. This he did by his doctrine and example. As to the obligations of the Jewish Sabbath, he did treat them as no longer binding. But did he thereby abrogate all Sabbath law and institutions? That is the question. Did he intend then and there to abolish the fourth commandment, and leave his followers and the world thenceforth without the sanction of divine authority for a Sabbath ordinance? Others may think he did, but we can come to no such conclusion. The lordship of the Sabbatic ordinance must imply its existence; and the truth that it exists on account of humanity, involves a parallel of continuance. So long as mankind remain, so long must the Sabbath remain. It is constituted by Christ, and founded in the needs of human nature. This is not an abolition or repeal of the fourth commandment, but rather its confirmation. That law, by the very doctrine of

Christ, is carried over the existing Sabbath in every dispensation.

If this view be correct, what shall we say of the subsequent teachings of the Apostle Paul? We cannot suppose him to contravene the doctrine of Jesus, or to assail the perpetual obligation of the moral law. Therefore, all that he says must be applicable to the Jewish system only. And what he does teach, is that this system, with its types and its calendar, is now abolished; it is no longer binding, either on Jew or Gentile. To term this "a quibble," as Prof. Hopkins does, is to fly in the face of a logical necessity.

We admit, then, that the Jewish Sabbath is abolished. Its requirements are no longer obligatory. But how do we show that the Christian Sabbath, with all the sanction of the fourth commandment, endorsed and re-endorsed by Christ himself, has supervened?

On this point we first introduce the *weekly* period. In the Mosaic cosmogony we find a provision for the measurement of time—"for signs and seasons, days and years—" but none for a *septenary*. Yet, the *week* is one of the most important divisions of time in the word of God. How does it arise? Let us take three examples, the Creation week, the Jewish week, and the Christian week. Here are three distinct cases of a division of time, consisting of six secular days, followed by a seventh and sacred day. They are each and all *founded upon and reckoned from some great providential event*. Thus, the Creation week is founded upon, and reckoned from, the providential event of the creation. The Jewish week is founded upon, and reckoned from, the falling of the manna. The Christian week is founded upon, and reckoned from, the greatest event of all, the Resurrection of Christ, the Saviour of the world! For these statements, see Gen. i and ii; Ex. xvi and xx; John xx: 1, 19-26. We have here the narrative of the origin and measurement of the weekly periods, affording, in this respect, a beautiful and striking analogy in the successive dispensations. Though in the Scriptures we find no trace of identity, or even connection, between them; yet, each is constituted on a similar principle, with a similar number of secular and sacred days, following in a similar order, while each has a special and peculiar design, and each is reckoned from a dis-

tinct and separate providential event. It hence follows, that as the Creation Sabbath was the seventh day of the Patriarchal week, and the Jewish Sabbath was the seventh day of the Levitical week; so the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, is the seventh day of the Christian week.

We next introduce, in the Scripture view, the change of calendar, on which we remark two things: first, that in the Bible record, *no special notice of this change is given*, either from the Creation week to the Jewish, or from the Jewish to the Christian; and, second, that in each case the narrative proceeds with the change of reckoning *as though such* notice had been given. Thus, we find in the sixteenth of Exodus an account of the Jewish reckoning, involving the Jewish calendar without the slightest allusion to the cessation of the Creation week, or to any change of calendar. What became of the Creation week or its calendar the Scriptures do not inform us. We only know from the record, that the Jewish reckoning, or calendar of weeks, began after the Exodus, and at the falling of the manna. In a similar manner we find the Scripture narrative, proceeding with the Christian calendar, or reckoning of time, after the resurrection of Christ, and this without any special notice given of the change. But that then there was such a change of calendar appears in three particulars, viz.:

(a) There was a change of era. Before, the year had been counted from the beginning of the world; afterward, it was counted from the birth of Christ.

(b) There was a change in the beginning of the day. Before, it had been at sunset; afterward, it was at midnight, as would appear from Mark xvi: 9, unless the passage be rejected as spurious; still, in that case, as a matter of fact, the Greek construction favors the change which has actually taken place, so that the day in the Christian calendar is reckoned from midnight, and not, as formerly, from sunset.

(c) There was a change also of the week; the Christian week displacing the Jewish week, and the Christian calendar supplanting the Jewish calendar, in all the nations of Christendom. In John xx: 26, we find the narrative proceeding with the reckoning of the first Christian week. The phrase "after eight days" is evidently equivalent to the Hebraism for a *week*.

This first Christian week, or octave of days, is inclusive of the day on which Christ rose, and the seven days following it, six of these days being secular and the seventh a Sabbath!—for the seventh day of the established week is always a Sabbath according to the instruction of the Fourth Commandment. But why, it may be asked, do we not count our week from the first seven, rather than the last seven, of this octave of days? The reason why we do not will presently more fully appear. It is sufficient now to say that a new reckoning is made, and a new calendar is adopted.

This brings us directly to the consideration of the next point of investigation, which involves the accuracy of our English version. It is said Christ arose “on the first day of the week,” meaning the Jewish week. If the Jewish calendar is to be retained, then, as a matter of fact, Christ did rise on the first day of the Jewish week. And on the same principle, if the Pagan calendar is to be employed, Christ likewise rose on the Sunday of the Pagan week; and one coincidence has just as much to do with the occurrence of the event as the other; but both are wholly foreign to anything which we are able to extract from the Greek original. There are just eight passages where this English phrase, “first day of the week,” appears, namely:

1. Matt. xxviii: 1—*εἰς μίαν σαββάτων.*
2. Mark xvi: 2—*πρῶτῃ τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων.*
3. Mark xvi: 9—*πρῶτῃ σαββάτον.*
4. Luke xxiv: 1—*τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων.*
5. John xx: 1—*τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων.*
6. John xx: 19—*τῇ μιᾷ σαββάτων.*
7. Acts xx: 7—*τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων.*
8. 1 Cor. xvi: 2—*κατὰ μίαν σαββάτων.*

A careful examination of these passages leads us to wonder how the whole Christian world have consented to such a construction. As to the force of interpretation, all these passages may be regarded as but a *single case*, since the Greek expression, whether found in the New Testament, or cited by the Fathers, with some slight grammatical variations, is substantially the same in all; and its literal English signification is, “On one of the Sabbaths.” That we are not presuming, without a precedent, to array our individual opinion, as to this rendering, against that of the entire conclave of Christian

scholars, let us here observe, that no less a man than John Calvin, in his notes on 1 Cor. xvi: 2, gives it this identical construction—"On one of the Sabbaths!"

Where, then, is the authority in any other Greek usage for making the phrase mean "the first day of the week?" Out of the hundreds of places where this word *σάββατον* occurs, both in Scripture Greek, and all other Greek, so far as we can find, there is not one single instance where the word in any of its forms has, or can have, the signification of *ἐβδομάς*. We are aware of the almost universal consent to give the word in these eight or nine passages of the New Testament the meaning of *week*. Scholars seem to have blindly followed one another, generation after generation. As a specimen of this arbitrary and forced construction, we may refer to Dr. Edward Robinson, one of the most eminent of modern exegetists. What does he say? Why, that wherever the word *σάββατον* is preceded by a numeral it has the signification of *week*. And what are his examples? Substantially *only two* in all Greek literature, namely—the eight passages already cited, which for this purpose can only be counted as *one*, and another passage in Luke xviii: 12, where the phrase, *νηστεύω δις τοῦ σαββάτου*, is translated, "I fast twice in the week." But why not give the literal rendering, which would much better suit the circumstances, "I fast twice on the Sabbath?" This constitutes the entire array of Greek precedent and usage for the present English version of the phrase. If there be any other authority or principle on which our version can be justified, we should like to see it produced. But in the absence of all such proof, we are not inclined to take any *ipse dixit*—and feel constrained, like Galileo, in his day, to reject the general opinion, and adhere to the literal version—"On one of the Sabbaths."

What then follows? Why, simply, that Christ rose on a day which is called in the Scriptures *a Sabbath*; that on that day he first met with his disciples; that "eight days after," which is confessedly the idiom for a *week*, he met with them again, so that the last of those days which closed the first Christian week was *the Christian Sabbath*. If Christ rose on a Sabbath, as we have shown, and on the same day met with his disciples, and then "eight days" after they met again, the second meeting must have been likewise on the Sabbath. For, counting the



*Sabbath* on which he rose an intercalated day, as commencing a new calendar, then the eighth day after would be another Sabbath, which with the six intervening secular days, or Christian week, fills out the octave, and gives us the demonstration required. Hence we see why the last seven days of this octave must be counted as the first Christian week. If this be correct, we have, in that narrative of John, the introduction of the new calendar and the reckoning of the first Christian week, with its seventh day for the Christian Sabbath, and so onward from that time to this. Now, discarding our English version, which is simply discarding the Jewish calendar, which with the whole typical system, the apostle in his writing says, again and again, was abrogated, we come back to the real narrative of the Christian Sabbath, and find that, despite the frequent assertions to the contrary, this day of Christian convocation is called a *Sabbath*, and that this is the first and principal title given to it in the New Testament. In one place (Rev. i: 10) it seems to be called "the Lord's day," τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ. In another place (Acts xiii: 42) it appears to be described as τὸ μεταξὺ δάββατον, "the Sabbath intervening," or, between two Jewish Sabbaths, and it is never called "the first day of the week," much less "Sunday," which belongs to the Pagans.

In further confirmation of this point, look carefully at the Greek of Matt. xxviii: 1. What is it? ὀψὲ δὲ σαββάτων—literally, "but late of Sabbaths"—or, as we should say, "at the close of the Sabbaths," that is, the series of Jewish Sabbaths—τῇ ἐπιφωσκουσῇ—literally "in the dawning;" εἰς μίαν σαββάτων—literally, "on one of the Sabbaths," that is, the new series of Sabbaths then commencing. So far as we can see, this passage distinctly relates to the close of one series of Sabbaths and the beginning of another series, which is precisely according to the fact. The Jewish Sabbaths were then legally closed, and the Christian Sabbaths began. So we find two Sabbaths coming together at the Resurrection of Christ. He slumbered in the sepulchre during the Jewish Sabbath, and rose from the dead on the next day, which is styled, in a narrative inspired by the Holy Ghost, μίαν τῶν σαββάτων—"one of the Sabbaths." And this concinnity, by which the Christian Sabbath is made to supervene the Jewish Sabbath, finds a striking parallel in the narrative of the Pass-

over and the Eucharist. At the institution of the Lord's Supper, the two feasts come together, one immediately after the other. From that day the yearly observance of the Passover was legally concluded, and the Lord's Supper succeeded it. Although the Jews continued afterward the Passover observance, it had no binding authority of law. In like manner, the Christian Sabbath succeeded the Jewish, although the Jews continue the observance of their Sabbath to this day. Their calendar, however, is no longer in vogue but among themselves, and it never had any obligatory or legal force among the nations of Christendom. But what a gloss on this passage has been perpetuated in our English version! Not only does it violate the grammar of the passage, but it gives to the second *σαββάτων* a meaning altogether different from the first, and for no reason in the premises. The construction is purely arbitrary and calculated to mislead. After thus turning the text of Scripture upside down, it is no wonder that men deny to the Christian Sabbath its proper title.

Having now shown the clear existence and recognition of the Christian Sabbath in the New Testament, we cannot fail to see how completely it comes under the direct application of the fourth commandment. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." "The seventh" of what? Certainly the seventh day of the established week, whatever it may be. Under the Patriarchal dispensation it was the seventh day of the Creation week; under the Jewish dispensation it was the seventh day of the Jewish week; and now, under the Christian dispensation it is the seventh day of the Christian week. Hence our present Christian Sabbath has all the sanction and obligation which the fourth commandment can give to it. It is the Sabbath of the Lord our God; Christ is God and the Lord of the Sabbath. He has fixed its status in the Christian era by his resurrection, and has taught men how to observe it. The doctrine is simple and the proof is clear. Stated from the Bible stand-point, it seems to be impregnable.

*What it obviates.*

1. In the first place we avoid the old false issue, respecting the alleged change from the seventh to the first day of the Jew-

ish week. We have nothing to do with that. The mere circumstance, that our Christian Sabbath happens to fall on the first day of the week in the Jewish calendar, has no more to do with its origin and establishment, than the fact that it also happens to fall on the Sunday of the Pagan week. It is nothing more than a coincidence of time—and we might as well call the Pagan Sunday the first day of the Jewish week, and *vice versa*, as to call our Christian Sabbath either “Sunday,” or “the first day of the week.” It is this misapplication of Pagan and Jewish terms to our Christian Sabbath which has brought confusion, error, and long protracted controversy. Let us call it by the name which is given it in the New Testament, and not by any foreign title. This point, we are glad to say, was insisted upon in our last General Assembly. So with the falling of this old issue falls a great part of the discussion which constitutes the vast and tiresome literature of the Sabbath question.

2. Again, we thus avoid the necessity of demoralizing the Decalogue, of conceding that the fourth commandment is no part of the moral code. True, as applied to the observance of the Jewish Sabbath for the Jews alone, peculiar restrictions and rigors were added to it. (See Ex. xxxi : 13–17, and xxxv : 2–3 ; and Num. xv : 32–36.) Christ, however, struck these off in the new dispensation. He distinguished between the form and spirit of the law as it stands in the Decalogue on the one hand, and on the other, those conditions and peculiar regulations of the Jewish Sabbath, which were designed for that people and that ordinance alone. But the abrogation of these regulations left the fourth commandment still in all its force—just as His abrogation of the Mosaic causes of divorce left the validity of the *one cause* unimpaired. The law which requires the sanctity of the Sabbath stands upon the same footing in the doctrine of Christ, with the law which protects the marriage state. The seventh commandment is no more a part of the moral code than the fourth. There is no cause for its segregation, save and except only the supposed change from the seventh to the first day of the Jewish week. This fruitless speculation assails the integrity of a law which was designed to be, and is, perpetual.

3. Again, we avoid the necessity of tracing any identity of time between the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian

weeks—and so between their respective Sabbaths. Specious but doubtful arguments have been adduced for their chronological identity, as though this would add to their authority. But the question is wholly immaterial, and as we find in the Scriptures no trace of their historic connections—as each of them stands on the merit of its separate nature and design, and as one supersedes the other without any special notice of the change, it is only idle to moot the point at all.

4. Again, we avoid the necessity of answering arguments drawn from all those notices of the Jewish Sabbath in the New Testament, on which were held assemblies to whom Christ and his apostles preached. Notwithstanding the Jewish Sabbaths were then legally closed, yet the Jews, by force of custom, held then, as they do now, to their Sabbath ordinance. In the beginning it was necessary, for an effectual ministry, that Christ and his followers should be brought in contact with the collected people. But the fact that they used for this purpose the Jewish days of convocation no more invalidates the origin and authority of the Christian Sabbath than the fact that they preached to the multitudes on other days of the week negatives the existence of the Jewish Sabbath custom. And so all arguments drawn from this source against the Christian Sabbath are seen to be irrelevant.

5. Again, we thus avoid the necessity of refuting arguments, drawn from the doctrine of Paul, respecting the sacred days of the Jewish calendar. These days in all their routine, he plainly tells us, are no longer of divine sanction and obligation—no longer binding on the conscience, whether of Jew or Gentile. They have all alike become indifferent—men may keep them or not, at their pleasure. But we are not for a moment to suppose that this teaching of Paul is designed to abrogate the fourth commandment, or to detract from the doctrine of Christ himself in regard to the Sabbath ordinance. When we hear from the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews—see iv : 9—that “there is left a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God,” and have grounds to believe that these are the words of Paul, we must look for some principle of harmonizing one part of this statement with the other; and the only conclusion is, that while he altogether sets aside the Levitical economy, he plainly shows that the Sabbatic Institution

changed to a different day, by the change of the Hebrew week, is to continue in perpetuity to the people of God.

6. Again, we thus avoid all devious reasoning on the Institution of the Christian Sabbath, from the days of the early fathers until now. We find such reasoning fanciful and inconsistent, full of assumption and contrariety, and the fruit of a capricious and fertile imagination. It proceeds often from the confusion of subjects, from false analysis, from imperfect investigation, from dubious illustration, from a traditional credulity, from the power of custom, from the weight of great names, from the spirit of partisanship, and from the pride of victory. One proposal is, that the law requires only one-seventh of the time—one day in seven, no matter which; another is, that the requirement is impracticable, since the antipodes cannot observe the same time—nor can the observance of any time be enforced on multitudes of human beings; another is, that there is no trace either of the name, or of the observance of *our* Christian Sabbath through the first three centuries; another is, that the day observed by Christians was never called “the Sabbath” until the time of Origen (A. D. 254); another is, that the Sabbath ordinance had its rise in the decree of Constantine the Great (A. D. 321), and so on *ad libitum*. Now we know that all these propositions are inadequate—if not unfounded; and, by simply adhering to what we find in the word of God upon the Sabbath question, we can afford to cast aside all arguments and expositions which spring from other quarters. And thus we think we show a valid Bible ground for the authority and obligation of this Christian ordinance—one of the most beneficent of God’s gifts to man, and for the maintenance and defense of which we are sacredly bound to use all lawful means in our power, both with individuals and nations.

## II.—DESIGN.

Time in itself is an abstraction. It is of no value separate from life and history. Events in their succession give to it a measurement and periodicity. Creation, with all it contains, subsists in conditions of activity and repose. A period of motion followed by a period of rest is the requirement of all living beings. This is pre-eminently true of human nature, an apti-

tude which is recognized and utilized in the Word of God. The weekly period of labor and rest is not founded in caprice, but in the constitution of man himself. The design of the Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, is not arbitrary, but fits into the needs of mankind. The Scriptures show this design to be, physical rest and moral uses, suspension from secular and engagement in sacred things. The Sabbath is God's memorial in the earth—one of those grand religious land-marks by which the course of generations is to be traced throughout successive ages. Its design is to break the current of human affairs and create a pause for the advantage of man's higher nature. It is to grant occasion to turn away the thoughts from perishable things to those which are imperishable, from converse with the mundane to communion with the heavenly sphere, from His works of creation to God himself. In other words, the Sabbath is to be a day for those hallowed uses of all things, those humane deeds and religious acts which lift up society to a nobler plane of existence, and fit mankind for a better life here, and a sublime immortality hereafter. We surely know this both from the law and the prophets, the evangelists and apostles, and, more than all, the living Christ himself.

“And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work.”—*Gen.* ii: 3.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”—*Ex.* xx: 8, 9, 10.

“Blessed is the man that doeth this; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it.”—*Isa.* lvi: 2.

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord—honorable—and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father.”—*Isa.* lviii: 13, 14.

“And it shall come to pass from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”—*Isa.* lxvi: 23.

“There remaineth therefore a *Sabbath-keeping* to the people of God.”—*Heb.* iv: 9.

And to crown this testimony by showing the perpetual design of the Sabbath, we have both the acts and the doctrines of the ascended Saviour. The transcript of his example and the great fact of his resurrection from which our Sabbath is reckoned, and of which it is the continued memorial, is all before us. And then, as we have already seen, we have the positive instruction of his words: “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” This, as expressed in the original, is a deeply philosophical statement of the very design of the holy day. How is the Sabbath made for man? First, a seventh day, the last of the weekly period is set apart. It is so much time to be consecrated and employed for the highest and most enduring interest of our nature. Next, this time man devotes to such uses, and by such devotion it becomes a hallowed day; man keeps it holy according to the commandment. The Sabbath does not hallow the man, but the man the Sabbath. This is the order and mode in which it comes to be. In doing this man honors the Lord of the Sabbath, and receives in return the promised blessing. The Sabbath cannot make man holy, but he can make it holy, and therein glorify God and enrich himself. This is the truth which Christ unfolded while declaring himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. It would be long, and is, perhaps, now needless, to show in how many ways the full working of this benignant design among men would benefit the world. It may be safely said that there is no real good for man, however considered, which it would not promote, and no evil which it would not tend to mitigate or remove.

### III.—OBSERVANCE.

Having now shown the authority and design of the Christian Sabbath, as a divine ordinance of perpetual obligation, we come to submit some observations on the manner of its observance. What light do the Scriptures cast on this important practical subject? While the teaching of God's word is mainly general, yet it is broad enough to cover the whole question of human duty, and the obligations of individual conscience in every condition and generation of mankind. The Bible is a book of principles, as well as of institutions. The law is clearly

stated, but at the same time, in its detailed application to specific acts and circumstances, much has been left to the individual conscience and judgment of men. It is here that our responsibility begins. Here we must seek to know the will of God, and to cherish the spirit of obedience.

A studious collation of Scripture hints would disclose the following particulars of a Christian observance of the Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath must be remembered.—*Ex. xx: 8.*
  2. It must be hallowed.—*Ex. xx: 8.*
  3. It must be secure from ordinary secular occupation, being, in this respect, a day of rest.—*Ex. xx: 9.*
  4. It must be employed in divine worship—private and public—with meditation, prayer, and the preaching of the word.—*Isaiah lxvi: 23, and Acts xx: 7.*
  5. It must be hailed as the honorable of the Lord, and held in delight as a day of gladness and of the Eucharist.—*Isaiah lviii: 13; Ps. cxviii: 24; Acts xx: 7; 1 Cor. x: 16.*
  6. It must not be dishonored by frivolous recreation or idle pleasure.—*Isaiah lviii: 13.*
  7. It must not be disturbed by unseemly noise and tumult.—*Hab. ii: 20; Matt. 24: 20; Heb. iv: 9.*
  8. It must not be outraged by gala spectacles and vain parades.—*Isaiah lviii: 13; Ps. lxxv: 1, 2, 4, 7.*
  9. It must not be profaned by traffic for gain or sordid industry.—*Neh. xiii: 15-22; Isaiah lviii: 13; John ii: 13, 17.*
  10. It must not be polluted by any form of vice or dissipation.—*Isaiah lvi: 2.*
  11. It may be used in acts of social intercourse; spent in imperative travel; visiting the prisoner, the sick, or the poor; in religious instruction, and deeds of charity.—*Matt. xii: 1, 13; Luke xiii: 10, 17, and xxiv: 13, 31.*
  12. It may be employed in any works of necessity or mercy.—*Mark ii: 23, 28, et passim.*
- These conditions of Sabbatic obligation apply generally to human society. They belong alike to the individual, the family, the community, the church, and the state. They are equally binding on young and old, and find their modification only in those cases of exigency which are clearly sanctioned under some phase of Providence.
- Such is the Scripture outline of a Sabbath observance which



seems equally removed from that of the Jewish synagogue, and that of a German beer-garden. A Pharisaic austerity and a French indulgence are alike excluded. In the reaction in this country from Puritan Sabbatism, the nation has been drifting to the opposite extreme of continental license, and the danger now is, that with such views as have passed current among professedly Christian teachers through many centuries, the divine ordinance, as it was left by Christ and his apostles, may be undated and practically swept away. Are the Christian church and this favored Republic prepared for such a catastrophe?

It remains for us, in this light, to distinguish the more prevalent forms of Sabbath desecration, or Sabbath abuse, in our time, to show the consequent demoralization, and to offer an appeal for a return to the old Scripture path, wherein is the right way of prosperity and peace :

1. In the first place, the Sunday press, as conducted among us, must be regarded as a monstrous example of Sabbath desecration. Its very name denotes its Pagan origin and spirit. Under the Sabbath law, as Christ left it, the only possible justification of any Sabbath publication must be found in public necessity for the diffusion of current intelligence. It is possible that on this ground a Sabbath journalism can be made to stand. But we all know the general nature of the product of the Sunday press, and the outrage upon the quiet of the Christian Sabbath, and the public morals, which its sale inflicts. It may be truly stated as a rule, the exceptions being rare, that the reading thus furnished to the nation, and, unhappily, to large portions of the church, is of a fearfully debauching character. No possible necessity exists. It is simply a transcendant and unblushing violation of the law of God.

2. Again, Sunday parades and noisy processions in time of peace, excursions of pleasure, and open places of amusement, or dissipation, are, as a rule, clearly in conflict with the law of the Christian Sabbath. So far from securing one of the primary objects of the Sabbath—physical repose and refreshment—they tend to just the opposite result—fatigue, exhaustion, and disease of body; a clouded mind; a seared conscience; and the paralysis of the whole moral man. They thus unfit their devotees for the succeeding sober and necessary duties and respon-

sibilities of life. Their influence is every way pernicious, giving rein to disorder, and disregard for all law, human and divine. In the light of the Christian Sabbath ordinance, they must be condemned as flagrant offences against the welfare of society, both in church and state. The specious pretexts by which they are upheld are only worthy of their heathen origin and Pagan name. The Christian Sabbath is not a holiday for riot, and noise, and public pageantry, even though it were guised in Romish ceremonies or funeral solemnities. The poor and friendless laboring classes may sometimes find a pitiful relief in this uncertain and transient excitement, but they will invariably pay for it in subsequent animal depression, and the utter prostration of the moral sense. It is all very fair to talk about going forth to feel the balmy air, and bask in the clear sunlight : about opening libraries, and furnishing art galleries, and the like, for the gratification and improvement of the lower orders, but let us not for this purpose conspire to cheat both God and man out of that day which is consecrated to our Redeemer's worship, and to the paramount interests of the human soul !

3. There is another prevalent form of Sabbath abuse, from which continual evil flows, and that is the work and travel of those who, in official station, or in a wide connection of industrial, commercial, or governmental affairs, plead necessity from lack of time or pressure of business. It is possible that exceptional cases may exist for such a deviation from ordinary Sabbath law, but, at the very best, it is an evil without any other palliation : and where submission to it is voluntary or habitual, it becomes an offence against the Lord's Day. That there is a stolidity of conscience and a laxity of practice in this regard, widespread and increasing, is obvious to the most careless observer. The whole usage is wrong and pernicious. It is subversive of the very intent and spirit, as well as the letter, of the Sabbath law. It perverts the Sabbath to improper uses, and prepares the mind for other and grosser forms of Sabbath violation.

At this point we may hold the government of the nation and corporate bodies responsible for every causeless infraction of the Sabbath law, either by themselves or those whom they employ ; whatever can be avoided out of respect to the divine authority of this Christian ordinance, men in every condition

are bound to avoid. Whether in legislation or its execution this principle holds good, and its wanton contravention will produce unmixed evil with the growth of the country and the advance of civilization. Certain great forms of public demands have come into existence, requiring arrangements for the running of cars and the movement of vessels, for telegraphic operation, for mail transportation, and the transmission of intelligence. It is most difficult to draw the exact line of necessity about transactions of so wide a scope and so complicated a casuistry. But this one thing is plain, the principle of the Sabbath law remains, and there can be no case of rational and beneficent exertion for which it does not provide, while its sanction is withheld from all needless, selfish, or sordid application or employment of the day.

Nor are we clear that even in the church itself there has not grown to be an excessive and exhaustive labor. The necessity for preaching is as great as ever. The pulpit is more in demand than ever, but the quantity of ministrations, especially in the centres of population, has been largely compensated by the changed circumstances of society. Books, periodicals, newspapers, and Sabbath-schools have, to a great extent, supplemented the work of the Gospel's ministry. Attendance upon Sabbath preaching, morning and evening, in addition to all the other duties which have their claim upon us, has become in many cases burdensome, if not impracticable. In this intense life and exacting civilization, both body and mind all the more need rest, while the demand of home life and family religion are likely to suffer neglect as well on the Sabbath as on other days of the week. Meanwhile, the labors of the Christian ministry have been augmented in many other directions. Their hands are full of appropriate work aside from pulpit preparation. And when to this is added the growing custom of Sabbath funerals, may it not be a question of the reduction of sermons to be preached on the Sabbath to the stated congregation, and of the discountenance of Sabbath funerals which but too frequently amount to a mere Sunday display.

#### *Demoralization.*

Upon a review, therefore, of the whole situation, can there be any doubt of the tendency to Sabbath desecration, and of

the moral deterioration it inevitably involves? We have already seen the connection of this most beneficent ordinance of Heaven with the highest welfare of human nature; and we think there is no doubt that the most upright men among us—those of the deepest religious convictions, and the purest daily lives, other things being equal—are those on whom in childhood was impressed by a pious parentage the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the fidelity of its observance. There is a wondrous connection, as all experience and observation show, between the influence of this hallowed day, and the varied welfare of humanity. When, therefore, it is prostrated, wantonly and wickedly trampled under foot, we may expect nothing but an outbreak of irreligion, infidelity, vice and pollution on every hand. Its general disregard would be like the opening of Pandora's box. It would be hoisting the flood-gates of iniquity, to deluge the land with all forms of immorality, all deeds of turpitude and shame. The very permanence of society would be thus endangered, and the people would be fitted for such calamities and wars, as have been so often the sad maturity of human infatuation. History is full of examples of the most solemn warning. And it is no wonder that when men like Luther, the ruling spirit of the Reformation, came to tell the people of Central Europe that they are at liberty to trample down this ordinance of God—all the licentiousness of a continental Sunday should be the result—or that when men like Prof. Hopkins, eminent in the church of our own time, come to tell Americans that there is no express divine authority for the Christian Sabbath, all the grosser elements of society should hail the announcement, and prepare themselves with greater freedom for a carnival of Sunday pleasure, low and unrestrained! Such, I am sure, is not the doctrine of the holy prophets and apostles. Such is not the will of Christ himself, the Head of the church and the supreme Lawgiver of the world!

#### *The Appeal.*

When, therefore, we come to read in God's word, the blessings which fall on the keepers of the Sabbath, and the curses which overtake all those who habitually neglect or dishonor it; when to the voice of the written Revelation is joined the

testimony of nature, and of man himself, the evidence of individual experience, and of national prosperity, the support of historic demonstration, and of providential care; do we not find the strongest motives to a united and earnest effort to rescue the Christian Sabbath from profanation, and to defend it from all assaults? When we recall the attitude of the founders of the Republic, the noble words they uttered for the Sabbath, and their warnings against its popular demoralization; when we remember the recent attempt to blot out the Sabbath during the progress of that grand Centennial Exposition, which is designed for a memorial alike of the birth of the Republic, the mighty deeds of our fathers, and of all the triumphs of the first great century of our national existence; an attempt which was happily frustrated by the energies of the most noble and Christian men of the country; and when, at this moment, we are reminded of the convention of European Protestants, at Geneva, during this very year, to consider in what way they may bring back their nationalities to the simple doctrine of the New Testament, upon the question of the Christian Sabbath; must we not, in all this, find a new incitement and a fresh encouragement in every honest effort to maintain the sanctity of the Lord's day, and to impress upon our government, and upon all classes of our people, an immanent sense of its overwhelming importance?

Let us then hear no more and have no more of that vain liberalism, which virtually surrenders the battle before it is begun. But let the Christian ministry and the Christian church, let every patriot and every philanthropist, join hands together in this divine cause, and let the resolution be, never to quit the work of Sabbath Reformation, till everywhere the day shall be sincerely acknowledged, and held with reverence in every heart.

If the Sabbath of the Christian is such as we have described it, we may well feel that it is the sheet-anchor of our individual, social, and national prosperity. Its faithful observance will not alone be pleasing to God, which is the highest consideration, but will also surely entail his gracious Benediction on us, and on our children, and children's children, to the latest generations.