

ARTICLE II.

THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATION OF THE
SABBATH EXAMINED.

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NOTHING can be more obvious than the obligation, resting upon all intelligent and accountable creatures, to devote some portion of their time to the immediate worship of God, to the devout study of his Will, to the contemplation of the spiritual interests of their own being, and to such other exercises as are fitted to elevate the mind to the perfection of which it is morally and religiously capable. Even in the absence of any distinctive and divine revelation, beyond that which the Most High has supplied in the constitution of our nature, it could hardly fail to have been felt, that a solemn responsibility of this order existed. But, how much time ought to be set apart for these specific purposes, whether it should be indeterminate, or fixed and definite in its recurrence and intervals, and in what manner it can be employed, so as best to promote the Divine glory and effectually to secure the benefits desired,—these are questions which reason might be inadequate to solve, and which it might demand a direct communication from Heaven to decide.

But this communication being made, and supposing that the whole duty, both as to essential principles and minutest details, were placed under the guardianship and sanctions of a Divine edict, still, our judgment would readily discriminate, between that part of the obligation which is founded upon immutable, moral relations, and that part which arises out of such positive precepts of the great Lawgiver as owe their binding authority simply, or chiefly, to his wise but sovereign appointment, as the supreme Ruler of the universe. We can conceive it perfectly possible for God to change the season, or to limit or lengthen it, at his good pleasure ; but we cannot conceive it possible even in Him, without an en-

tire and unimaginable inversion of all the conditions of our being, to annul or remit the duties which give to the prescribed period all its peculiar significance and sacredness.

Thus, in the question of Sabbath observance, as usually stated, we readily detect the presence of two elements: the one having reference to what has been styled *moral*; the other, to what has been styled *positive* law. While, however, this distinction is well founded, and not unimportant, in the general discussion of the theme, it is needless, at present, to dissociate these elements; still more especially, since there are few institutions of revealed religion, which, if duly analyzed, will not be found to combine both. For, even when the obligation is such as to find its fundamental root and reason in the moral relations subsisting between us and the Most High, it is common to discover, that He has affixed some increment to the required duty, which brings it largely within the sphere of positive ordinance and law.

In appealing to the Inspired Volume on the question at issue, two courses lie open for adoption: the one is, to begin with the information supplied by the writings of the New Testament, and then to carry our investigations upwards to the ancient Scriptures; the other is, to begin at the beginning, and, with the lights derived from the primeval economies, to descend downwards to the times of the Gospel. Now if the question to be discussed bore any analogy to the questions of natural science, the former method would seem to recommend itself as partaking more of the analytic character. But since it is one of pure revelation, and since the Scriptures constitute one whole, gradually unfolding itself, and each part in succession presupposing the existence, if not the knowledge, of all that preceded, it is obvious, that the true path of inquiry is that which starts with the earliest intimations of the Bible, and thus traces the subject onward to the fuller and brighter disclosures of later times.

It may contribute to the object in view, to state in general terms, at the outset, the opposite sentiments commonly entertained upon this question. By one class of theologians it is contended that, from the beginning, God required man-

kind to set apart one day in seven from the ordinary avocations and toils of life, to be consecrated to his immediate worship and service; that, under all the successive dispensations of religion, this requirement has been binding and authoritative; and that it is still (though with certain changes) in full, unabated force, beneath the Christian economy, but clothed now, as might be expected, if not with greater authority, certainly with greater interest and brighter glory. By others, it has been maintained, that the Sabbath was first instituted among the Jews; that it constituted part of the Jewish economy; that with that economy it expired; and, consequently, that any sacred day to be now observed (if such there be) owes its authority to some New-Testament source alone, or to some other source, ecclesiastical or civil. It is not necessary, now, to refer more specifically to the theories of those who adopt the latter views — this general statement being sufficient for our purpose at present.

Thus, the course of our inquiry leads us to examine the claims of the Primeval, the Jewish, and the Christian institute.

The Claims on behalf of a Primeval Sabbath Examined.

Here the language of Moses, Gen. 2: 1—3, demands attention, as presenting what is alleged to be the great initial record upon the entire theme: “ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” This, according to many, is the inauguration of the Sabbath, thus appointed and signalized to commemorate the completion of the creative work in this lower world. And there are several circumstances which, in this view, invest the record with peculiar value and significance: not only its being, as already stated, the first intimation as to a sacred day; but the fact that this institution takes the precedence of all others in the order of the original, spiritual economy, established among men; and that it was introduced during

the period of innocency, before any change had taken place in either the character or condition of the species.

Here the believer in divine revelation is called to observe, that, — since man was formed on the sixth day, and (as the perfection of sentient life, and the crown of this fair creation) formed, in all probability, towards the close of the same day, the first integral, measured period of his conscious, active existence, was the sacred Sabbath. So early, and at once, was he made sensible of the duty and the delight of keeping “holy day;” and thus, instead of commencing his career under the regimen of pure, unmixed, moral law; his first lesson of obedience would be one in which the authority of a positive precept, as to time and circumstances, regulated the discharge of a duty to which conscience and the heart would, themselves, instinctively prompt, as the fitting exponent of the spontaneous, inborn sentiments and principles of the newly-created and divinely-illuminated soul. Such may be regarded as the position taken by the advocates of a primeval Sabbath.

But it has been strenuously maintained, that the first establishment of the sabbatic observance took place under Judaism, and that, to all intents and purposes, it was a Jewish institute. This tenet has been advocated by two very different classes of persons: both by those who deny the existence of any special sacred day whatever, under the Christian economy, and by some who, nevertheless, admit this. A very different rank, in some respects, must be assigned to such as hold these dissimilar ultimate views. But in regard to the point now at issue they are agreed. It might, indeed, be argued that, even if it were of Mosaic origin, this would not invalidate the claims of a sacred day as now observed. But, meanwhile, we have to deal with the opinions of those who, with objects widely apart, assail, together, the primitive appointment of this ordinance.

Going back to the early times of the Gospel, we find the names of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, ranged on the side of those who contend for the Jewish origin of the institute. But, without prejudging the question before us,

it may be safely asserted, that few, who have paid much attention to the writings of the Fathers, will be disposed to ascribe to them an authority which, in matters of opinion, they in reality never claimed. We have precisely the same inspired documents, from which they professed to derive their sentiments; and it is surely not affirming too much, on behalf of our modern theological science, to assert that it possesses facilities for arriving at just conclusions upon questions of this order, quite equal to any to which they could lay claim. Nor should it be forgotten, that, as there existed not only the speculations of a Gentile philosophy, on the one hand, but the cherished preconceptions of a Jewish cultus on the other, to disturb and bias their investigations, it is our duty to pause before we receive any dogma, however recommended, which might possibly have received its character and complexion from either of these sources. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Were it our object to trace the history of this opinion, we might point to some who have, in later centuries, expended no ordinary measure of intellectual acumen and erudition in its support. But, on the whole, we may regard Paley as among the most accomplished, if not the most original, defenders of the theory in question, and certainly the one whose writings have given it the widest currency, at least in recent times. His object being to set aside the authority of the Sabbath in the stricter sense of the term, and to establish a modified view of the duties and obligations pertaining to the first day of the week, under the Christian dispensation, he, in the first place, seeks to explode the notion of a primeval Sabbath; and then, assuming that it constituted a part of the positive and ceremonial institutions of Judaism, he concludes that it was abolished with the abolition of that peculiar polity. At present, we are concerned only with the former part of his design.

Adducing the passage already given from Gen. ii., he observes: "After this, we hear no more of the Sabbath or of the seventh day, as in any manner distinguished from the other

six, until the history brings us down to the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness, when the following remarkable passage occurs." He then quotes the transaction recorded in the 16th chapter of Exodus, and in the manner of his quotation (we refer to the original editions) makes the words speak a sense which, as we believe, they were never intended to convey. He then proceeds: "Not long after this, the Sabbath, as is well known, was established with great solemnity in the fourth commandment. Now in my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited was the first actual institution of the Sabbath. For if the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs, which, in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the Sabbath, then appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency. The passage in the second chapter of Genesis, which creates the whole controversy upon the subject, is not inconsistent with this opinion; for as the seventh day was erected into a Sabbath on account of God's resting upon that day from the work of the creation, it was natural in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add: 'And

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God created and made;' although the blessing and sanctification, i. e. the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterwards. The words do not assert that God *then* 'blessed' and 'sanctified' the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason*; and if any ask why the Sabbath or sanctification of the seventh day was *then* mentioned, if it was not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand: the order of connection, and not of time, introduced the mention of the Sabbath, in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate. This interpretation is strongly supported by a passage in the prophet Ezekiel, where the Sabbath is plainly spoken of as *given* (and what else can that mean but as *first instituted*?) in the wilderness (Ezek. 20: 10, 11, 12). Nehemiah also recounts the promulgation of the Sabbatical law amongst the transactions in the wilderness; which supplies another considerable argument in aid of our opinion (Neh. 9: 12—14)."¹

We have thus exhibited this argument at length, that its strength or weakness may be the more readily discovered. The first thing which strikes us in the survey of this entire passage, is the at least apparent violence done to the narrative in the book of Genesis. Paley may well lay great stress upon this narrative, as creating, if not as he asserts, "the whole controversy upon the subject," at least an important part of it. But, certainly, it seems to demand the existence and exigencies of some preconceived theory, to account for the gloss which he has put upon it. Who that had no such theory to defend, would imagine the sacred writer here to describe a transaction, which, according to the supposition, had not occurred for two thousand five hundred years afterwards? It would not be asserted by Paley, or any of those who occupy the same side in this controversy, that the interpretation thus given to this passage is the one which would naturally present itself to any one of ordinary intelligence upon the first perusal of it. We will not allege, in-

¹ Vide Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Book V. Chap. 7.

deed, that the obvious, or seemingly obvious, import of a passage is always the true one. But if there be no dispute respecting the terms employed (and there is none here), and if the subject matter be of easy comprehension (as in the present instance), then, the *onus probandi* rests upon those who would reject the obvious for the more recondite construction.

Here is an historical statement; and the only question is, Does Moses, after describing the work of the six days, suddenly, and without any intimation, alter his style, when he comes to describe the procedure of the seventh day? and, using a highly rhetorical figure does he set down in connection with the record of this procedure an event which did not take place until twenty-five centuries had elapsed? We have said *without intimation*; but it should be added, also, in the face of the fact, that the whole, being a plain narrative, would inevitably be differently understood by all who might read it apart from the light of such an hypothesis as the one now under examination. This, assuredly, is not what we might have expected to discover in any book, written beneath the guidance of the divine Spirit, and intended for the instruction of the unsophisticated in all ages. We utterly deny, then, that "it was natural in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add" the words in question, unless they are expressive of an event which actually occurred at the creation. And to state, in the way of argument, that Moses does "not assert that God *then* blessed and sanctified the seventh day," but simply that he did so for a certain reason, is to be guilty of a species of sophistry very unworthy the gravity which becomes the discussion of such a theme. How could he have conveyed more lucidly the idea that this was done *then*, than by recording it, as he does other things, in the past tense, and also in immediate connection with that very cessation from work, on the part of God, which it was designed to commemorate? True, he assigns the reason of this consecration; but he does this in such a manner as to imply, that as the reason existed

from the beginning, so also did the consecration. And it is but natural to ask, What ground could there exist for the appointment of such a memorial in after ages, which did not operate "from the foundation of the world?" On the whole, it does appear to us, that, until all the principles of sound criticism are abandoned, and we are at liberty by a dexterous and convenient application of the figure prolepsis to convert history into prophecy at our pleasure, we cannot adopt the interpretation which this celebrated writer has so strenuously advocated. We can understand what is meant by the total rejection of this inspired record, or by the reduction of it to the rank of a mere myth; but we are at an utter loss to understand the position which accepts its divine authority, and acknowledges this opening portion of Genesis to be the narrative of real transactions, and yet, to serve the purposes of a theory, would mutilate and distort its obvious meaning, and that in gross violation of all the laws which guide the historian's and chronologist's pen.

It has been alleged, though it forms no part of Paley's argument, that, in the early records of the Bible, localities are designated by names which they had not received for ages subsequently to the period adverted to in the narrative. But the answer to this is manifest. What possible analogy can there be between the employment of the existing names of mountains, rivers, cities, in a relation which speaks of these same mountains, rivers, cities, in former periods, and the representing an event as having taken place in the annals of the world, long before it actually occurred? In the one case, the narrative is rendered more clear by the very identification which results from this method, and no misconception can arise. In the other case, confusion is inevitable. Deception is practised, and practised upon system; and that in reference not to so unimportant a thing as the chronology of a name, but in reference to the chronology and the existence of a fact, whose date and origin vitally affect the views we entertain of the economy of religion. Suppose it were the business of a writer to portray the former condition of some city of our land, whose name has

been altered in modern times, or whose ancient name has sunk into oblivion; would it be felt that any of the proprieties of topography were violated by the use of the modern designation? But should the same writer, transferring some conception of the present age back to past eras, so set forth the substantial verities which he records as to invest them with a meaning and aspect which did not belong to them in the past, but which they have borrowed from the present, and do all this without a note of warning, or any break in the continuity of the narrative, would it not be at once felt that the writer had ceased to deserve our confidence, because he has violated, wholly violated, the integrity of history? And yet this is precisely what has been done by Moses, according to the showing of Paley, in the passage that has now passed under review.

But let us now advance to what this author deems the account of "the first actual institution of the Sabbath." And, employing a just analysis, it will be found, if we do not greatly err, that the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus implies that the Sabbath was known to the Israelites before the period which it describes; and if so, then it could have been only in consequence of its original appointment at the creation, for we certainly read of no other promulgation of it, antecedent to the solemn and august enthronement it received on Sinai.

This chapter, as we understand it, might seem to have been written for the express purpose of meeting the objections which would, in after times, be preferred against the primitive establishment of the sacred day. It will be observed that it records events which transpired a month after the exodus, and some short time, probably a fortnight, before the people came to Sinai. We learn that they murmured for want of bread. "Then said the Lord unto Moses: Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no." A certain test of obedience is here proposed, and a law or standard of obedience indicated. But what

law? and in reference to what? The answer will be found in a subsequent portion of the chapter (verses 27 to 30). Now, surely, the hardiest opponent of the primeval appointment of the Sabbath will not venture to say that Moses inserted all this, in anticipation of an ordinance to be afterwards established? The only question is, Was there anything in the previous communications of God with Moses, and of Moses with the people, which might be fairly regarded as the proclamation of a sabbatic law, now for the first time introduced? In vain do we explore the narrative for a shadow of foundation for such a thing. All that the Most High had said, in addition to the words already quoted, was: "And it shall come to pass that, on the sixth day, they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Not a word is here uttered respecting the Sabbath, although this is the place where, if this "transaction in the wilderness" marks the era of its commencement, we might have expected to find the statute of institution. But the very absence of any direct reference to the Sabbath here, taken in connection with what precedes and follows, is full of meaning. In these Divine words, there is an evident implication as to some existing and recognized law; one so well known to Moses as to require no more explicit notice. The double provision of the sixth day being stated, there is no reason assigned for this exceptional case; and that simply, as it would seem, because the reason was so patent to him as to require no formal announcement. The hiatus, if it could be thought such, would be filled up by the instantaneous remembrance of the ancient custom of dedicating the seventh day to hallowed repose. And thus silence is here more expressive than words; and we are thrown back upon the primeval law as that which alone can solve the enigma, and explain the grave and otherwise unaccountable omission.

Then, the progress and sequel of the narrative will be found to harmonize with the view now taken. We read, that "on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congrega-

tion came and told Moses. 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, and seethe that ye will seethe ; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning." Now, in reading these words, we must beware of the error into which Paley has fallen, whether from inadvertence or (for we are unwilling to attribute it to anything approaching disingenuousness) from the secret and almost unconscious influence of preconceived views. When Moses observes, " This is that which the Lord hath said," he evidently points back to the communication which God had made to him respecting the double-gathering of the sixth day (the circumstance now reported) ; and what follow, are his own terms of direction, in which he announces the bearing of this event upon the duties and obligations of the morrow. Paley, from the mode in which he has put the quotation (and others, as Hengstenberg, adopt the same method), would have us to understand, that the words, " To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord," were God's words. But this seems a false and unwarrantable construction of the passage ; for we do not find that He had anywhere spoken thus, or that He had spoken of the Sabbath at all, in the previous communication which he had made to his servant. Moses is not, so far as we see, announcing a new statute, with a " thus saith the Lord," as this writer would insinuate ; but simply recording a fact, ancient and established, and setting forth the mode in which the copious supply of manna should be made available, so as to secure the undisturbed repose of the sacred day.

It may not be very easy to determine with what idea the rulers addressed Moses on this occasion ; nor indeed is it, probably, of much importance to investigate this matter, while we have so much, besides, to guide us in our conclusions upon the specific question. It is impossible to suppose that, if any sabbath law had been recently announced for the first time, they, holding such a responsible position, could have been ignorant of the fact. The explanation of their conduct

may be found, in all likelihood, in the course of preceding events. It does not appear that Moses had extended his instructions beyond the ordinary rule of gathering an omer each, for daily consumption, no part of which was to be left "till the morning." All further direction was reserved for the fitting occasion. To imagine that more was supplied at this time, is to go beyond the record, which we have no right to do, either for the construction or support of a theory. But now, on the sixth day, something extraordinary had occurred. The people had not been, at any time, careful as to the quantity of manna they collected. They "gathered some more, some less; and when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." This was the ordinary state of things. But here is something new and unexpected,—a double supply,—two omers, instead of one. We cannot think the people had purposely gathered this twofold quantity, all combining to act in entire opposition to the only direction they had, as yet, received on the subject. Nor can we think, with some (however it would appear to favor our views), that this was done deliberately and systematically and in concert, in prospect of the approaching Sabbath, supposing it to have been known to them, as we believe it was. This seems a gratuitous assumption; and, while it is needless in the argument, it attributes to the people, at large, a measure of piety which their history in the wilderness will not authenticate. The thing cannot be explained, we think, without resorting to the supernatural. Whatever may be alleged about the manna having been a natural production of Arabia, it is clear, if from nothing else, at least from the fact of its not falling on the seventh day, that the Divine hand so controlled and governed the entire phenomenon, as to bring it, to all intents and purposes, within the class and category of miraculous events. And the very manner in which God made known to Moses the fact, now realized, and now reported by the rulers, strengthens our conviction that the result was, on the part of the people, undesigned and unanticipated. They were to "prepare" that which they

brought in on the sixth day, and it would be "twice as much as they gathered daily." This seems to have been the statement of a fact, not the utterance of an edict. Had it been an edict, how could we justify Moses in withholding it from the people, as he did, if we take the record for our guide?

The Most High had commanded the people to gather a certain rate daily, without then fixing the rate. Subsequently, Moses, doubtless under divine direction, had assigned the exact quantity, one omer, not so much to be gathered, as to be kept for use. But while, as yet, no direction had been issued respecting the sixth day, the people find, when they have prepared and measured what they have brought in on that day, that it amounts to two omers; and this is the case throughout the entire camp of Israel.

Here, then, is the finger of God; and the rulers seek an explanation from their leader. That explanation is at hand, and this is the opportune period for making it known. The whole has fallen out according to the Divine declaration; and all this is preparatory to the sabbatic rest. Long had the Sabbath law fallen into desuetude, partly from criminal neglect, and partly from the enslaved and oppressed condition of the people in Egypt. It was fitting that God should revive its observance in a manner that would signalize its importance; and nothing could do this more effectually among a people in their condition, than the stupendous miracle that had now spread itself through every household in the camp of Israel. We can easily imagine with what peculiar force the voice of Moses would be now heard, saying: "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." But while all this is most intelligible, if his object was simply to reinstate a neglected ordinance in its original glory and to invest it with its rightful authority, it is impossible to regard this as actually the first announcement and proclamation of the Sabbath law. *And if it originated in the wilderness, this is its first announcement and proclamation;* for here, for the first time, do we find any mention of the Sabbath.

Even should any one still prefer to regard these as the words of God, still it is incredible that He should, in the first

instance, proclaim in this cursory manner a law of this order, affecting as it does, so materially, all the arrangements of life, and entering, so deeply and vitally, into the entire scheme and economy of religion. In reality, however, it does not come before us as the proclamation of a law, but as the statement of a fact: "*To-morrow is the rest,*" etc. And we cannot look upon it in any other light than as a solemn declaration, upon the part of Moses, under divine guidance, of a well known, established, but greatly neglected ordinance. And how else can we understand the words that follow: "Six days ye shall gather it (i. e. the manna); but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none?"

And this is the place to make the close and important connection between the commencement and close of this interesting but much contested narrative. Before any thing whatever had been announced respecting the Sabbath in any form, the Most High, speaking of the gathering of the manna, had said, "that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no" (verse 4). And now we read in the sequel that, notwithstanding the prohibition of Moses, "there went out of the people on the seventh day for to gather and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, *How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?*" (verses 27 and 28). The experiment, so to speak, was made, and here is the result. We cannot fail to identify the language of the 28th, with that of the 4th verse. And should any one be inclined to suppose that, when God had spoken of his "law" (verse 4), he referred to some statute about to be enacted, and not to one already in existence, the idea is set aside by the very manner in which He now addresses Moses. For what force or propriety could attach to the words "*how long*" in such a connection, if the law had been originated only the day, or, at the very farthest, the week before? We put it to the candid inquirer, anxious to know the truth upon this question, Is this the language in which God would refer to the violation of a statute (if statute it could be called), so recently issued as, on the supposition, to have had hardly time to circulate among the people thus severely re-

buked for their violation of it? We submit that the whole transaction is in perfect keeping with the process of resuscitating an ancient and well known, but not with the establishment of a new institution. Admit this, and all is clear and intelligible; but if this be denied, then the whole appears to sink into hopeless obscurity, and we are compelled to feel that it finds no parallel in the entire history of God's dealings with his people either before or afterwards.

Paley, as we have seen, adduces two passages of Scripture, one from Ezekiel, the other from Nehemiah, as corroborative of his views. In the former, God is represented as *giving* his Sabbaths to the Israelites in the wilderness; and our author considers this equivalent to the statement, that they were then "first instituted." But, in the very same passage, God is represented as *giving* to them his *statutes*; yet, surely, no one will assert that these were "first instituted" in the wilderness. The ceremonial might be so described, but the more important branch of the divine statutes, the moral, were in one form or other taught from the beginning. The truth, however, is that Paley has strangely overlooked the real spirit and tenor of the prophet's language. It is not said that God gave his Sabbaths, but that he gave them "to be a sign" between himself and the people. And this no more implies that they were now for the first time established, than Genesis 9: 13 implies that the bow was never seen in the clouds, before it became a sign or token of the covenant which God then made with Noah. Elsewhere, this writer remarks: "It does not seem easy to understand how the Sabbath could be a *sign* between God and the people of Israel, unless the observance of it was peculiar to that people and designed to be so." But for a thing to become "a sign," it is not necessary that it should be either novel or exclusive. The reference made to the covenant with Noah in part proves this. And in Deut. 6: 8, it is written, in regard to the precepts of the decalogue: "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes;" yet, even if for the sake of argument we omitted the fourth commandment,

these statutes in their essence and principles, instead of being new and restricted, were, and are, as ancient and wide spread as human relations and human responsibilities.

In all this, we have proceeded upon the supposition, that the passage in question has respect to the Sabbath in the sense which it bears in the present discussion. This, however, is an assumption. And, from the plural form employed by the prophet, we are inclined to think that the word has here a far more extensive signification, including various appointed seasons of rest, to which the epithet was applied; such as the commencement and close of the great national Jewish festivals, and the periodic Sabbatic years, ordained as part of the peculiar social economy under the Theocratic government. These were all "signs," and some of them, of course, pertained exclusively to the Israelitish people. But, in whatever way we understand the term employed by Ezekiel, the phraseology upon which Paley rests, utterly fails to help his argument.

And then, with regard to the language in Nehemiah, we cannot see how the slightest shadow of support can be drawn from it, in favor of the hypothesis in question. Here the Most High is represented as *making known* his holy Sabbath to the Israelites. But this surely cannot be construed into anything tantamount to the proclamation of them for the first time. In 1 Chron. 16: 8, David exclaims in the language of thanksgiving: "Make known his deeds among the people." In Psalm 145: 12, God is described as "making known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." In Eph. 6: 19, Paul entreats the prayers of the disciples, that he may be enabled to "make known the mystery of the gospel." But in none of these instances—and they are but a specimen of what might be adduced—does the phraseology convey the idea of a first announcement. We can indeed perceive enough, in the previous degraded condition of a people just issuing from "the house of bondage," to require on the part of Jehovah, the proclamation, *the making known*, and that in the most solemn and august manner, of the great maxims

and principles of religion and morality, including the formal republication of the Sabbath Law. But we cannot allow the consideration of this, to set aside the evidence derived from other quarters, that this institute existed and was recognized in the world before the transactions in the wilderness, to which Paley traces its rise and origin.

We now advance to a consideration of the remaining part of this boasted argument of Paley, where he infers the non-existence of the Sabbath from the silence which, as he alleges, is maintained in respect to it,—the absence “of even the obscurest allusion to it,” from the mention made in Gen. ii. down to “the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness.”

Now, it did not require the sagacity of this acute writer to perceive that mere negative evidence is of little or no avail, in the face of that which is positive. If we have arrived at a just conclusion as to the import of the passage in the Book of Genesis, and the somewhat extended record in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, the total silence of the Scriptures on this point, during the interval, although it might cause surprise, should not be allowed to disturb our faith, if we profess to be guided, in our deductions here, by those laws which are acknowledged in the department of inquiry to which this question belongs. It goes far to neutralize all the force of any conclusion derived from such premises, to observe that, at times, the very silence of a document speaks volumes on behalf of the thing which is omitted; indicating, as it may do, the notoriety of it.

But had our author extended his investigations into the field of Old-Testament story, as he was bound to do before he hazarded an argument upon such a basis, he would have discovered very remarkable parallels to the omission upon which he presumes so much. He would, for example, have found that there is absolutely not even a reference to the rite of circumcision (of which the Jewish people were so proud), from the time of their entrance into the land of promise down to the days of Jeremiah,—a period of at least eight hundred years,—and that then it is referred to

(Jer. 4: 4) simply in a figurative sense, in relation to the heart; while there is no account of the actual observance of the rite, or any further mention of it whatever, from the entrance into Canaan until we come to the record of the circumcision of John the Baptist, being a period of nearly fifteen hundred years. And yet how minute, circumstantial, and extended is the history of these centuries, in comparison with that of the earlier ages of the world. It has been generally admitted, that the institution of sacrifice was established immediately after the fall; and yet, during a period of fifteen hundred years, according to some computations, two thousand years according to others, — from Abel downwards to the flood, — we find no allusion to it. So, likewise, from the death of Moses to the death of David, a space of four hundred and fifty or five hundred years, we have no mention of the Sabbath itself; which is the more remarkable when it is remembered with what solemnity it was enjoined, amid the glories of Sinai, and that it had become a special sign to the Jews of the relations into which they had been brought; and let it be added, that the records of this period are not wanting in circumstantial lineaments.

The student of sacred Scripture need hardly be reminded how very succinct and rapid, in general, are the notices both of the antediluvian and postdiluvian times onward to the exodus. Nor ought it to be imagined that it was the object of Moses, at the distance of so many ages, to supply a full and minute account of primitive institutions and customs. Whether he wrote from some existing records, under the guidance of inspiration, or whether his narrative is altogether and in every sense of the term an original, divine communication; it is clear that his design was, after the enunciation of the great fundamental principle of theism and the record of man's fall, to convey, by a few bold strokes and a few biographic sketches, the form and spirit of those primeval times, and to mark the footsteps of the chosen seed, until God had separated his people from the surrounding nations, and given them "a local habitation and a name" in the midst of the earth. Hence we find centuries upon

centuries despatched without more than the record of a line. A few pages carry us from the creation to the call of Abraham; and a few more, from that event until the enslavement of Egypt, when the ordinance of the Sabbath, in common with all other Divine ordinances, must have fallen, almost, if not altogether, into disuse. Certainly, as Paley remarks, we do not find "any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency." This would, indeed, have been a strange and unparalleled procedure upon the part of Jehovah; and to suppose that the absence of it supports this writer's design, is to betray (to say the least) most remarkable inattention. God, in the government of his creatures, is not wont to repeal his statutes, or to grant formal dispensations, though He doubtless measures individual responsibility upon the scale of individual means and opportunities.

It is fully admitted that there is no direct mention of the Sabbath in these early memorials. But neither is there any allusion to *any set time whatever*, specially set apart for the more immediate worship of God, during all the extended period represented by these memorials. Yet we cannot suppose that the pious posterity of Seth before, and the pious posterity of Shem after, the flood, lived without the observance of such seasons; or that religion could have been preserved in the world, in the absence of such fixed times for the study of the Divine character and claims, and the cultivation of the spirit and habits of devotion. The sum of human nature is the same in every age; and we may fairly argue back, from the admitted necessity of such regularly recurring services in our own day, to their necessity in the earlier patriarchal eras of the world's history.

But while there is no direct mention of the Sabbath, there are statements of such a character as are always deemed peculiarly valuable in the authentication of such facts as lie beyond the sphere of ordinary observation. Broad and palpable coincidences might be contrived and adjusted, for the express purpose of investing a narrative really fictitious with

an air of verisimilitude ; but the indirect and incidental references to which we now point, are the more valuable because of the improbability of their having been made with any such design. And it might have been supposed that the author of the "*Horæ Paulinæ*" would have given greater weight to this species of evidence ; for, certainly, it would require only the due application of the principles which he employs in that incomparable work, to elicit much important confirmation of the existence of a primeval sabbatic ordinance.

Thus, in Gen. 4: 3, 4, Cain and Abel are represented as bringing their offerings to the same common altar ; and this is said to have taken place "in process of time," or as the Hebrew terms might be rendered, with greater propriety, and in consonance with their usage elsewhere,¹ "in the end of days ;"—a mode of expression, which seems to indicate here a fixed and definite period, when men were wont to recognize, by some outward and visible means, their dependence upon God, and to render to him the homage which is his due. In like manner, do we perceive still more specific references bearing upon this subject in the narrative of the flood, which is somewhat more extended and minute in its delineations. In Gen. 7: 4, it is written, "For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights ;" and it is added in the tenth verse, "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." Then in Gen. 8: 10, it is said, "He stayed yet *other* seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark ;" and, in the 12th verse, it is added, "And he stayed yet *other* seven days, and sent forth the dove which returned not again unto him any more." So, also, in the account of the burial of Jacob, Joseph and his brethren are described (Gen. 50: 10) as mourning "with a great and very sore lamentation" for their father "seven days." And in Exodus 7: 25, we read that "seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smitten the river."

¹ See Job 6: 11. 28: 3. Eccl. 12: 12. Gen. 8: 6. 41: 1. Hab. 2: 3. Dan. 8: 17. 12: 13.

This is the place to notice also the fact, that this septenary division of time becomes the basis of many Scriptural symbols in the writings both of the Old and New Testament. Those which belong to the ages subsequent to the journey of the Israelites into the wilderness, might be understood as drawing their significance from the events which then occurred, and cannot therefore be so confidently employed in this argument. But let the following passages be examined, and it will be seen that the number seven had become emblematical and sacred before the Mosaic period: Gen. 4: 15, 24. Gen. 29: 18, 20, 27, 28. Gen. 33: 3. Gen. 41: 2—7. We omit the language of Balaam and the act of Balak (Num. 23: 1, 29), lest it should be supposed these were derived from more recent transactions, though this it would be impossible to prove. And we omit Job 1: 6. Job 2: 1, 13, since the age of the author of this book is a matter of doubt and controversy. Enough, however, has been adduced to demonstrate that some septenary arrangement existed from the beginning, being recognized, both as a fact, and as the foundation of a symbol, before the establishment of the Jewish economy on the promulgation of the Jewish code. Moreover, it is impossible to read the portions of Scripture adverted to above, without perceiving the artless and undesigned character of the allusions; that incidental air and manner, upon which Paley, in common with all who have examined the laws of evidence, have been accustomed to lay so much emphasis.

Now, how are we to understand the notices of this division of time, thus pervading the early narratives of the Bible? What meaning must we attach to a week? Where shall we discover its archetype and model? To us, nothing seems more obvious than this, that finding its origin in the creative process, and the consecrated day by which the close of that process was signalized, the rest and sanctification of the Sabbath would form an essential and integral part of the very idea and practices of this measured, rotatory period. Six days' work, and one day's hallowed rest;—is not this the conception, the very ideal, of the Scriptural week? And if

six days were to be given to labor, after the divine pattern, surely the seventh day would be assigned, after the same exemplar, to repose; and, among the godly seed, it would not be wanting in its appropriate celebration and peculiar use. What, then, becomes of Paley's assertion, that there is not "even the obscurest allusion" to the rest of the seventh day in that section of the Scriptures which has thus passed under review? This cannot be maintained, without impairing and dismembering the week, and viewing it in a light altogether different from that, by and in which alone we can learn its history, trace its rise, or even comprehend its nature and import.

We have thus examined, at some length, and with some care, the views of this celebrated writer upon the question of a primeval Sabbath, and, if we do not greatly mistake, their inconclusiveness becomes more evident, the more closely they are investigated.

It is the opinion of Hengstenberg also, that the Sabbath was first ordained in the wilderness, and that it was essentially a Jewish rite. But we are wholly at a loss to perceive the soundings of the foundation on which he has built this opinion. There is far too much of the *à priori* style of reasoning pervading this attempt to explode the doctrine of a primeval Sabbath. He says, "the rest¹ to which, with adorable condescension, God invites us by his own example, presupposes work,—hard, oppressive work,—which tends to draw away from God. Rest is the remedy for the ills which are inseparable from this toil. If anything is clear, the connection between the Sabbath and the fall undoubtedly is. The work which needs intermission, lest it should endanger the divine life, is not the cheerful and pleasant occupation of which we read in Gen. 2: 15, but the oppressive and degrading toil spoken of in the following chapter, work in the sweat of the brow, upon the earth which brings forth thorns and thistles." It is in this unwarrantable manner, that this writer endeavors to set aside the idea of a paradisiacal ap-

¹ Vide "The Lord's Day," by E. W. Hengstenberg, Doctor and Professor of Theology at Berlin. Translated by James Martin, B. A.

pointment of the Sabbath; and, having done so, he then proceeds to make the language of Gen. 2: 3 speak of a future event, asserting that it "simply mentions the divine intention that the seventh day *shall be sanctified.*"¹ Now, whatever indefiniteness there may be in the past tense of the Hebrew verb, as to the precise time when the action terminated, it will not be doubted by any one at all acquainted with the principles of the Hebrew language, that the conversive power of *Vav* compels us to understand this passage as pointing to an act really and truly accomplished; nor are we at liberty thus to set aside well known and established grammatical laws, in accommodation to preconceived theories. With such arbitrary modes of procedure we can have no sympathy.

At what exact period Moses penned the narrative of the creation, we cannot determine with any precision, but, in all probability, it was after the giving of the law; so that the fourth commandment would have its place on the table of stone, and set forth the fact of God's resting on the seventh day and sanctifying it, before this more extended account of the creative process found its place on the page of inspiration. This has not been sufficiently considered, even by some of the ablest advocates of a primeval Sabbath. And hence we find Dr. Wardlaw, in speaking of the terms of the fourth commandment, adding: "It is clear as day, that, in the terms of the reason annexed, there is a reference *to the terms of the history;*" and he proceeds in his essay on the Sabbath to argue apparently on the assumption that the narrative of the creation in its present, authoritative, inspired form, had an existence prior to the promulgation of the decalogue. This certainly cannot be maintained; nor is it at all necessary to take such a position. It is sufficient for our purpose to affirm, that, at whatever date Moses wrote, he wrote with the view that his words should be interpreted

¹ It is hardly requisite to refer the reader, in connection with so elementary a matter, to any authority. But, for a statement of the power and use of the *Vav* with *preterite* and *future*, in *historical records*, the learner may profitably consult Bödiger's edition of Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar.

according to the laws that determine the import of historic Hebrew records. But, without the total abandonment of such laws, we cannot understand these words as describing the future, although it is, of course, the future form of the verb which is employed; with the prefix, however, already referred to, changing this, as the other portions of the narrative, into past time.

The only plausible mode in which verbal criticism can be brought to favor this side of the question, is, that Moses, writing after the actual establishment of the Sabbath, as a Jewish ordinance, and having in his mind the reason assigned in the fourth commandment, might refer to the blessing and sanctification as having recently occurred, though grounded upon a transaction long anterior. Thus, as the Hebrew language had but one past tense, and this of necessity indefinite, the verse might be rendered, "God has blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it, he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

The objection, however, to this mode of interpreting the passage is strong. The sacred historian had just adverted, in the previous verse, to the fact of God's resting from all his work at the close of creation. Nothing, then, would seem more obvious and natural, than that whatever human observance He had founded upon this, should exist from the beginning, instead of being introduced so many centuries afterwards; and, besides, as thus incorporated with the story of creation, only that interpretation of the statement which recognized this historic and chronologic link of connection, could be deemed, by the inspired writer, as likely to be the one which would be permanently assigned to his words. Had he been writing merely for his contemporaries, the supposition might have been allowed to have some weight; but, in a document designed for the instruction of all future ages, it is not at all probable that he should have been permitted to adopt a style so calculated to mislead all but the few initiated into the special knowledge of the assumed Jewish origin of this sacred observance.

We have to observe, also, that there is little consistency in

the views advocated by Hengstenberg. He considers that the Sabbath law had strict relation to, and was needed by, man in his fallen state; and yet, according to the doctrine which he supports, it was not established for ages after the race had come into the circumstances which demanded this weekly respite from oppressive toil. In this aspect of the question, what reason could there exist for the appointment at the period of the departure from Egypt, which did not exist from the time when the penalty of man's fall began to operate? To the silence, or the alleged silence, of the sacred writer as to any sabbatic observance before the exodus, upon which Hengstenberg as well as Paley fixes, allusion has been already made. Nothing need here be added, unless that the absence of any specific reference is more easily understood when we remember that the history was written at so late a period, and rather, as it would seem, as a general introduction to the details of the economy now established, than as a professed account of the various institutes and customs of the earlier patriarchal eras of the world.

In the analysis which this author has given us of the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, containing as he believes the first introduction of the Sabbath, we find not a little which appears arbitrary in interpretation. He assumes that the rulers could have felt no astonishment or perplexity at the double proportion of manna on the sixth day, "if the Sabbath had been already known and observed." But is not their perplexity (their astonishment is nowhere either implied or expressed) sufficiently explained by the contrariety of the fact they reported to the direction which their leader had so expressly given, and which made no exception whatever; and also by the universality of the event, throughout the whole camp; which indicated, as we have ventured to suggest, a Divine interposition in the circumstances? Nor do we think that much importance attaches to another point, on which he founds his argument; namely, that "notwithstanding the instructions of Moses, some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather, showing how new a thing it was to the people, and how difficult it was, at first, to conform." Certainly, if disobedience and

rebellion could be any proof of the *novelty* of precepts and laws, few of those given to the Israelites could be deemed *old*, at any stage of their national career, however founded, too, they might be, upon principles coeval with the race; and the *difficulty of conformity* was felt, and manifested, throughout every period of their history. It was the complaint of God in the days of Ezekiel, that the people had despised his holy things, and profaned his Sabbaths (Ezek. 22: 8). So that, to build upon such a foundation as this, is to jeopardize, in no ordinary degree, the soundness and stability of the superstructure; more especially when we recall, what has been already noticed, that the Most High rebuked the daring impiety of these sabbath breakers in the wilderness, by exclaiming: "*How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?*" On the whole, we are constrained to believe that, had not this celebrated author been under the influence of a foregone conclusion, he would never have regarded the grounds he presents as sufficient to disprove the existence of a primeval Sabbath.

Pursuing our inquiries, we must not overlook, here, the efforts which have been made to set aside the authority of the primeval Sabbath, by means of certain hypotheses as to the origin of septenary institutions. We have been accustomed to regard these as supplying at least some collateral evidence on behalf of a weekly rest. And the portions of Scripture to which we have appealed, are held by us to denote the existence of an economy of this order among those whose history is given in the volume of inspiration; while the records of other nations, and in some instances even their architectural remains, attest the extended empire of the idea. "The period of seven days, by far the most permanent division of time, and the most ancient monument of astronomical knowledge, was used in India by the Brahmins with the same denominations employed by us, and was alike found in the calendars of the Jews, Egyptians, Arabs, and Assyrians; it has survived the fall of empires, and has existed among all successive generations, a proof of their common origin." Such is the testimony of Mrs. Somerville, in the "Connec-

tion of the Physical Sciences ;” and it is corroborated by various distinguished writers who have explored the antiquities of nations.

A recent writer, however, has insisted that, because this septenary division of time has not been universally observed throughout all the nations of the earth, it cannot supply any argument on behalf of the Divine primeval institution of the Sabbath.¹ “From a passage in Genesis, in which the first reference to a Sabbath occurs, the inference has been drawn (an inference not warranted by the text), that the first parents of the human race were taught by God himself to divide time into weeks, and to set apart a seventh portion as a day of rest and for religious purposes. If so, it would of course follow that this institution, or some traces of it, would be found among all nations ; and the impression, therefore, on the minds of a large class of persons is a very natural one, that however much a Sabbath may have fallen into disuse or be now disregarded, the week of seven days has been kept by all generations of mankind from the days of the creation, and continues to be observed in every part of the world.”

But this reasoning is most inconsequential. For, on what principle can it be shown, that the Sabbath tradition and observance must have been universally diffused and universally preserved, in order to the authentication of the divine, primitive origin of the institution. It would appear to us that the fact of its very general extension and perpetuation, even supposing it not to be absolutely universal, is a circumstance so remarkable as to warrant the inference drawn from it. That it should have existed and prevailed throughout the Eastern world, and that it should have found its way among Western nations who had no connection with the Jewish people, and most of whom would have scorned to adopt any custom derived from such a quarter ; that it should have penetrated, not only the regions of civilization, but into the very centre of Afri-

¹ An Inquiry into the Origin of Septenary Institutions and the Authority for a Sabbatical Observance of the Modern Sunday. Republished from the Westminster Review.

ca,—as we learn from Oldendorf,—and been at home among the aboriginal Saxons of Europe and Peruvians of America; and, finally, that it should have been preserved and continued for so many ages, and amidst the social changes, the rise and fall of institutions and dynasties, upon so wide a theatre;—this is a fact, or rather congeries of facts, which has to be satisfactorily explained, even if we admit that some tribes and nations of the earth have been found wanting in regard to it. Significant allusions to the week of seven days, and even to the sacredness of the seventh day, are observable both in Grecian and Roman writers; and the symbolic use of the number seven is familiar to every reader of the ancient classics. And yet we are told that “the week was unknown to the Greeks of the classical ages, and also to the Romans, till it was gradually adopted, along with Christianity, under the late emperors.”¹ We place, side by side with this statement, the following testimonies, bearing upon not only the assertion quoted, but upon the broader question at issue. Philo says, speaking of the seventh day: “It is a festival celebrated not only in one city or country, but throughout the whole world.” Hesiod, in his “Days,” observes, that the “seventh day is holy.” Homer and Callimachus speak in the same strain. Lucian observes, in his *Paralogue*, that “boys were used to play on the seventh day.” Eusebius, quoting the quotation of Aristobulus, brings out the statement of an ancient author, to the effect that the “seventh day” was “distinguished by all men.” And the same historian writes: “Almost all the philosophers and poets acknowledge the seventh day as holy.” Clemens Alexandrinus represents the “Greeks as well as the Hebrews” observing “the seventh day as holy.” And Josephus declares: “No city of Greeks or barbarians can be found, which does not acknowledge a seventh-day’s rest from labor.” These quotations are sufficient to demonstrate the wide diffusion of the Sabbath tradition. Nor is it possible to derive the whole, or even the greater part, of the knowledge implied in

¹ Penny Cyclopædia, Article “Week.”

these testimonies, from a Jewish origin. We must go farther up the stream of time for the rise and spread of this distinction, so extensively known and practised, in relation to the seventh day, among communities so widely separated, both by geographical limits and by the more formidable boundaries of natural customs, laws, civilization, and manners.¹

But with all this, we repeat, it is not necessary to establish the universality of the knowledge of either the week or of a sacred day. We can easily understand how the tradition might be lost among some portions of the human family, in the progress and revolutions of ages; but we cannot see how it could be so widely diffused, and thus perpetuated, without looking for its origin in some event beyond and above the era of human dispersion, and an event invested with the highest authority and sanction, such as that to which the advocates of a primeval Sabbatic ordinance are wont to trace it.

Attempts have been made to account for this septenary arrangement on other grounds. The lunar month has been referred to as the basis of the whole; and its division into four parts has been regarded as yielding the measure of time required for the verification of this hypothesis. But who can examine the detail and development of this notion, without perceiving its futility? "The recurrence of the lunar period is about twenty-nine and a half days." Is it not wholly unnatural and improbable, that men should fix upon the number seven, which constitutes no aliquot part of this period; and do so, not in one land, but in so many lands, and among tribes and nations in all stages of civilization? And why should such an unsatisfactory approximation to a fourth of this lunar revolution be adopted, instead of any other fractional portion of it? and wherefore any division whatever of the period of a lunation? The ancient Greeks had their *decade*; and the Romans had their *nundinæ*,² occurring every

¹ Vide Dwight's Theology, Lect. 107, and Grotius on "The Truth of the Christian Religion."

² Vide Article "Sabbath," Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.

ninth day; and the Mexicans had a period of five days. It may be naturally inquired, Why did not one or more of these chronological systems spread and establish itself among distant nations, instead of being limited within such narrow bounds? The more we reflect upon the subject, the more are we compelled to reject this method of solving the historic problem under consideration.

And the scheme patronized by Baron Humboldt and by Acosta, is equally wanting in soundness. They have endeavored to trace the origin of the septenary institution to the number and names of the primary planetary bodies, as arranged under the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. But while this may throw light upon the origin of the names given to the days of the week, in certain parts of the world (a thing of comparatively little importance in this discussion), it utterly fails to solve the enigma of the existence of this method of computing time, in regions where that system of astronomy was unknown, or where the designations of the days were altogether different from those which are supposed to have originated in this manner. Above all, it is utterly at fault, when we come to mark the presence of this method in the astronomy, for example, of the Hindoos; which, however we may reduce its pretensions as to antiquity, can never be brought within the limits of an argument founded upon the system of Ptolemy. This sage flourished about 140 B. C. The Hindoo astronomy was in existence many centuries before. It is probably the most ancient of all such systems. But it presents, everywhere, marks of this septenary division of time, and the number seven is in constant use in the Hindoo legends.

The failure, then, of all these attempts throws us back, with stronger confidence, upon the only satisfactory solution of the whole matter. Here is a hebdomadal arrangement of time, observed from the beginning, perpetuated through ages, found in the records of the antediluvian and postdiluvian worlds, and found not only among the peoples whose annals are placed in the inspired volume, but likewise among most if not all the nations of antiquity, wherever we follow their

early migrations, or mark their settlement. An effect so almost if not altogether universal, so continuous, so unvaried, so early manifest, and so deeply wrought into the customs of the generations of the world, must have had a corresponding and adequate cause. And it is in vain we look into the constitution of human nature, or abroad upon the mechanism and laws of the external universe, into the heights above or the depths beneath, for any principle or fact which might give birth to such an economy. It is evidently the offspring of the pure, sovereign, revealed will of Jehovah. The ordinance, in the early pages of Genesis, meets and satisfies, and this alone can, all the conditions of the problem. And to reject this, which constitutes a sufficient and the only sufficient solution of the question at issue, is to discard all the established and rational principles of historical evidence and deduction.

[To be continued.]

ARTICLE III.

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

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By this designation, we refer to those Psalms in which the writer devotes his enemies to destruction. The terms in which this is done, although of varied form and fulness, and relating to contexts of every shade of devotional sentiment, from humble penitential longings after holiness, to triumphal exclamations of confidence in God, evince the most intense and permanent hatred of the persons doomed, with not a single expression of sympathy or regret for their miserable end. There are no tears, such as were wept over Jerusalem, no yearnings, as were felt for Ephraim, no prayer like that of the Redeemer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," but *antheas*, which for depth and