

A
LETTER

S.H. 1827.

TO

GODFREY HIGGINS, Esq.

OF SKELLOW GRANGE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS

“HORÆ SABBATICÆ,

OR

AN ATTEMPT TO CORRECT CERTAIN

SUPERSTITIONS AND VULGAR ERRORS

RESPECTING

The Sabbath.”

—◆—
BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B. D.

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CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE IN THAT UNIVERSITY,
AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

CAMBRIDGE:

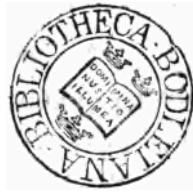
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1826

498.



A
LETTER,

&c.

Sir,

HAVING perused your pamphlet intitled "Horæ Sabbaticæ," soon after its publication, I felt strongly inclined to reply to it; but my immediate attention was at that time engaged upon a subject which permitted no delay, and a serious illness subsequently prohibited me from every kind of occupation. I seize however the first moments of convalescence, to combat several of the opinions you have therein advanced, and to support, as far as I am able, some of those doctrines which you have denounced as *vulgar and superstitious errors*.

As in the preface to your treatise you deprecate a reply, and state the means you have taken to prevent it, I beg leave to offer a few reasons in justification of my interference. In the first place then, I have a public duty to perform, which I think demands such interference.

(2.) I cannot allow to any man the faculty, which you have claimed, of knowing and determining all the arguments that can be brought against his own view of a question. (3.) If this faculty were granted him, it would by no means follow that he could satisfactorily refute them. (4.) It is possible that even old arguments may be so disposed as to throw new light upon a subject, and produce that conviction which they failed to produce under a different arrangement. (5.) I trust I shall be able, as I am sincerely disposed, to conduct this reply without affording you any reasonable cause for offence; especially as I am willing to give you full credit for your motives, and to make a fair distinction between your views, and those of many, who endeavour to attack religion itself through its forms and ordinances.

I may now perhaps be permitted to say a few words respecting the method which I have pursued in my answer. I at first intended to reply to your several arguments in detail; but I soon discarded that plan, for the purpose of maintaining an opposite opinion which might comprehend a refutation of all those objections which I thought intitled to notice: and I was led to this decision by discovering that in at least two thirds of your arguments we perfectly agree. To your opinions respecting the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial rites, and amongst them that of the *Sabbath*, I

cordially assent. I admit, with yourself and Paley and Beausobre, that no mention is made of a *Sabbath*, before the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. I grant that no passage is to be found in the New Testament directing the observance of a *Sabbath*; nay more, I allow that our Saviour himself, though no *Sabbath-breaker**, as you represent him, did, as Lord of the Sabbath, both by word and deed, give intimation to the Jews of its approaching abolition; and that St. Paul did exhort his converts to omit the observance of this and other ordinances, which Christ had, as it were, blotted out, nailing them to his cross.

Where then, you may say, lies the difference between us? To this I answer—chiefly in a definition, or in the signification of a term.

I will venture to affirm, that wherever the

* He particularly wished to make the Jews comprehend the proper distinction between the great moral duties, which are of eternal indispensable obligation, and the overstrained observance of ritual institutions. Jesus therefore took many occasions of performing deeds of mercy, and of exhibiting his miraculous powers, on the Sabbath, that he might shame and silence those hypocrites who carried the observance of its ordinances to excess, whilst they neglected the weightier matters of the law: but you can nowhere shew that he was not a strict though rational observer of this sacred institution, or that either his practice or precepts ever led his immediate followers into a contempt or neglect of its duties.

word *Sabbath* is used in Scripture, it either signifies that day of rest from every kind of labour, which was so strictly enjoined upon the Israelites; or it has metaphorically an allusion to that rest. You on the contrary apply it also to the Christian ordinance of the Lord's Day, as well as to the primæval Institution given to our first parents, I mean in your arguments concerning that institution, although you deny its existence. Again, you argue upon the supposition that our Christian rite is derived from the Jewish Sabbath. I, on the contrary, derive it, not from that abolished ordinance, but from the original decree of God, which was given even before the promise of a Messiah, which was delivered upon general and moral grounds, which has never yet been abrogated, but extends to all ages and all nations, wherever the word of God is known.

Feeling the strength of this position, I will not even descend to what I nevertheless conceive to be very tenable ground, viz., the obligation upon all Christians to keep holy a seventh day, from its association with the other commandments in that code of moral laws, which was not abrogated, but rather confirmed by our Saviour*.

* See Matt. v. 17. xix. 17, 18, &c.

Had you confined your discussion to the manner in which the Lord's Day ought to be observed, although I might have differed from you in opinion, I should not have felt myself called upon *officially* to enter into the lists of controversy. But since you endeavour to set aside the primæval sanctification of a seventh day, to propagate erroneous notions of the Sabbath, and to prove that our observance of Sunday, or the Lord's Day, is a mere human ordinance, unsanctioned by divine authority, I should be lamentably deficient in my duty, if I did not step forward in vindication of what I conceive to be the truth.

I now then proceed to shew, 1. That a *seventh day* was immediately after the creation sanctified by the Creator, or set apart to be kept holy in eternal remembrance of his having rested from his works. 2. That, after this ordinance had fallen into neglect through the corruption and ignorance of mankind, it was solemnly renewed in the moral law of the Israelites, and added to their ceremonial law, with strict observances and under severe penalties, to be a sign of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, a covenant between them and their deliverer, and a type of that rest which should come from the Messiah, by whom their ceremonial law was to be abolished.

3. When this sign, covenant, and type was actually abolished by the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, the primæval institution still remained in full force, to be observed by Christians in the spirit of the Gospel, and adapted to the covenant of grace.

SECT. I.

My first proposition, I assert, is made out by the testimony of Moses in Genesis ii. 3. To my mind nothing can be more satisfactory than this evidence. The sanctification of the seventh day is here plainly declared to have been instituted, because God rested on that day, or ceased from the works of creation. The declaration is made by the historian exactly in its proper place, immediately after his account of the six days of labour; whilst no other reason is, or can be assigned for the labour and rest of that Almighty Being, who could in a moment have called the universe into existence, but a design of securing the allegiance of his newly created subjects, by giving them both a motive and a precedent for resting from their labours, that they might meditate upon the works of their Sovereign Benefactor. The peculiar nature therefore of the ordinance, its propriety and adaptation to general usage, naturally lead us

to expect its institution immediately after the creation of the world.

You however assume that the passage of Genesis, in which this appears to be so stated, is written proleptically, and not in the order of succession: you suppose that God, who rested at the end of six days from the works which he had performed for the benefit of all mankind, did after the lapse of 2453 years, then bless the seventh day, and sanctify it, to be a sign or covenant between himself and his chosen people.

With reference to such an interpretation, which is by no means a new one, Archbishop Sharp^a very pertinently asks, "Whether any man of sense, that should meet with such a passage in any other historian, could possibly so interpret it?" I think not: nay more, I think it was not so interpreted by the most learned and inquisitive of the Jews themselves; certainly not by the philosophic Philo. This eminent writer, in his treatise concerning the creation of the world, declares, "that the Creator, after he had taken six days in forming it, peculiarly honoured the *seventh day*, (where observe he does not style this day a *Sabbath*;) and deigned to call it holy: for it is a festival not of one city or region, but of the *whole*

^a Serm. xii. Vol. IV. p. 271.

world." He also denominates it τῶν κόσμου γενέσιον, "the birth-day of the world,"

Let us however consider the reason which induces you and others to support this negative argument. You think that if a seventh day had been sanctified from the first, the sacred historian would, in narrating the annals of so long a period as that which occurred between the creation of the world and the Exodus, have made some mention of the ordinance itself, or of the guilt of those by whom it was violated: from his not having done this, you argue to the non-existence of the ordinance.

In answer to this reasoning, I would propose to your consideration a few instances of omission, analogous to that of which you complain, in the very brief and summary annals of the patriarchal ages. The first is that of public worship, a custom which I find intimated only in two places^b: these however, are quite sufficient to shew that it was both ordained and observed: yet when human nature is considered, we can scarcely conceive how an observance of the custom could be kept up, without the regular recurrence of a day sanctified to the purposes of devotion.

^a De Mundi Opificio, p. 13. ed. Paris.

^b Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. Job i. 6.

The next instance is that of circumcision; the practice of which rite, though regularly observed by the Jews, is not once recorded in Scripture, from the time of their settling in Canaan to the circumcision of our Saviour.

Thirdly, the observance of the recently instituted Sabbath itself, with all its pains and penalties, is not mentioned in any of the six books which immediately follow the Mosaic code, and which contain a much more particular history of events, than the very compendious book of Genesis.

These analogies are perfectly satisfactory to my mind; in accounting for the omission in question—the conviction they are calculated to produce, may perhaps be supported by the consideration, that no *peculiar penalties* were annexed to the violation of his ordinance by the Almighty at its first institution: perhaps also, in the early ages of the world, the very strictness with which it was observed scarcely gave occasion for any allusion to it; and when mankind afterwards became wholly corrupt, the sin of violating it would merge in others of a deeper dye: there would be no need to mention the breach of this precept, when the neglect of the whole worship of God, which comprehended and included it, was the subject of reprehension.

With regard to the Almighty's permitting mankind to remain for so long a period with

only a partial knowledge, and in total neglect of this law, which he did not think proper to restore till after the lapse of many ages, we must not measure the acts of the Supreme Being by our standard of right and wrong; we must be content to remain ignorant of those reasons which induced him "to wink at the times of this ignorance," until he shall please to enlighten us.

But although no actual mention is made of the ordinance for so long a period in the writings of Moses, still we may find traces therein leading us to the conclusion that it was both given and known from the first. The strongest of these perhaps is the established reckoning of time by weeks, which cannot be accounted for otherwise than by a reference to this divine decree; since it arises not, like the computation of days and months, and years, from obvious and natural causes, viz. the revolutions of our planetary system.

The observance of this septenary division of time may however be traced back, through many intermediate periods to the remotest ages of the world. Seven days were allowed to Noah for collecting the animals into his ark; and seven days did that patriarch stay, and again "other seven days," when he sent out the dove; as if he expected the peculiar favour of God to be

manifested on that day, which he had separated for his own glory. The same institution seems alluded to in that week of years, which was observed in the patriarchal ages, and incorporated, as it were in memory of the ancient custom, into the Jewish ordinances. Thus Laban proposed to Jacob the same service of seven years for Rachel, which he had already performed for her sister Leah; and this he calls "fulfilling her week." The period of a week seems also to have been generally adopted in mourning and lamentation for the death of friends, as well before as after the institution of the Jewish *Sabbath*^a: thus Joseph made a mourning for his father *seven days*^b: the friends of the afflicted Job lamented with him *seven days*^c; and a *seven days' fast* was observed by those who interred the bones of Saul and his sons^d. In addition to this we may remark an extraordinary sanctity and importance attached to the number *seven*, which pervades all the sacred writings. Of this peculiarity Cruden's Concordance will exhibit to you a concise but perfect view: without pursuing it through all its various, and in some instances perhaps fanciful analogies, I shall merely notice it in the sacrificial rites of the patriarchal times. In the

^a See Ecclesiasticus xxii. 12.

^c Job ii. 13.

^b Gen. L. 10.

^d 1 Sam. xxxi. 13.

days of Job seven bullocks and seven rams were offered up; as a burnt-offering, by the Divine command^a; and the very same number of each were sacrificed upon the *seven* altars built by Balaam. These circumstances are worthy of attention, and ought to be satisfactorily explained by him who denies the primæval institution of a *seventh Holy Day*^b.

^a Job xlii. 8.

^b The number Seven seems to have been held in equal reverence by the Pythagoreans and other philosophical sects. The Cumæan Sibyl gives to Æneas orders to make a sacrifice similar to that of the Chaldæan diviner.

Nunc grege de intacto septem mactare juvencos
Præstiterit, totidem lectas de more bidentes.

Æn. vi. 38.

Josephus accounts for the eminent personal qualities of Moses from the circumstance of his being the *seventh* in descent from Abraham. *Antiq. Jud.* lib. ii. 6. See also Philo upon this subject, who enters upon it at large in his treatise *De Mundi Opificio*, p. 14. I conceive that the period of the week was known to the Greeks in very early ages, from the following passages in one of the most ancient of their poems. See *Odyssey*, κ. 80. μ. 397. ξ. 249. ο. 475. From a consideration of these passages I am inclined to think that Homer had a knowledge of the septenary division of time; but I will not weaken my argument by adducing testimony to this point, which will not bear examination, as so many eminent writers on this subject, indeed all who have come under my notice, appear to have done. When Theophilus of Antioch declares that all mankind make peculiar mention of a seventh day, though

But another reason which induces me to think that Moses did not make use of the figure pro-

though they know not the reason, I am inclined to believe him under certain limitations. The same credit I give to Clement of Alexandria, when he asserts, that not the Jews only, but the Greeks also, are well acquainted with a seventh day. *Strom.* lib. v. The authorities however which he cites in favour of his opinion are not only foreign to his purpose, but I am afraid, distorted, misquoted, and even *forged*, for the sake of supporting that opinion. I am sorry to be forced to make such a charge against such an author, and I can only hope that he like his followers took the passages on trust from some preceding writer, or that he saw copies of ancient MSS. different from those which have come down to our times. Having made the charge however I am bound to support it. The first author which he quotes is Hesiod.

πρώτου ἔτη τετράς τε, καὶ ἑβδόμη ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ
καὶ πάλιν,
ἑβδομάτη δ' αὖθις λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο.

Now in the first of these lines the Poet is not describing the days of the week, but those of the *month*, and he calls the seventh day of the month sacred, because it was the birth-day of Apollo.

τῇ γὰρ Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορα γείνατο Λητώ.

The second verse I cannot discover in Hesiod, but it appears to refer to the same origin.

He next quotes Homer still more unfortunately.

1. ἑβδομάτη δ' ἤπειτα κατήλυθεν ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.

In looking for this verse among those of Homer, I have long strained my eyes in vain, and several of my friends have done the same with no better success.

2. ἑβδόμη ἦν ἱερή. The same may be said of this.

3. ἑβδομὸν ἡμᾶρ ἔην, καὶ τῷ τετέλεστο ἅπαντα.

Here

leipsis, is this: when God's command for the observance of the Sabbath, was inserted in the

Here I find the worst fault of all; for *ἑβδομον* appears to be substituted for *τέτρατον*, as it exists in all the copies of Homer which I have seen. Even if *ἑβδομον* were the right reading, the line would have nothing to do with the subject in question.

4. *ἑβδομάτη δ' ἠοὶ λίπομεν ῥόον ἐξ Ἀχέροντος*. This line also I am unable to find in Homer.

He next quotes some verses from Callimachus, which would be much more to the purpose in substantiating his opinion, were it not probable that Callimachus, an Alexandrian poet, acquired from the Jews of Alexandria, these notions which might be deduced from the Jewish sabbath rather than the patriarchal institution. After this he appeals to the Elegies of Solon. If any of these assisted him, they must have been some which have not reached our times. Amongst those which we possess, I can find only the fourteenth, as it stands in Professor Gaisford's excellent edition of the Poet. Gr. Min. which has the remotest bearing upon the subject. This merely treats of the age of man, divided into periods of seven years, shewing how his faculties, &c. alter at each period: moreover it may be observed that Porson considered this elegy as spurious.

Eusebius in his *Præp. Evang.* quotes all these authorities of Clement, and gives them also, together with some others from Linus, or as he might better be styled Pseudo-Linus, in an extract from one Aristobulus a Peripatetic Philosopher. Perhaps therefore this Aristobulus may deserve our censures, on the score of falsification, before Clement: yet even in this case the latter must submit to reprehension for very culpable negligence in not verifying his quotations: and in this I am sorry to say that such eminent authors as Rivetus, Grotius, Bishop Beveridge, Dr. Jennings, Mr. Faber, Dr. Hales, &c. must participate. The errors of this last-mentioned gentleman are very extraordinary. He not only boldly quotes
the

Decalogue or Moral Code, no such special reference was made to the case of the Israelites, as was made afterwards at the rehearsal of the Law, when that Sabbath was declared to be a sign between God and them. In the first case the Jews are reminded of the original ordinance which gave birth to the institution: the seventh day is there said to be ordained as a holy Sabbath, because on it God rested from his work of Creation; a reason which has a manifest reference to the whole race of mankind. In the second case, it is, because on that day God de-

the *ἑβδόμη ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ* of Hesiod as corroborating his opinion, but draws Æschylus also into the alliance, thus translating a passage from that author.

τὰς δ' ἑβδόμας ὁ σέμνος ἑβδομαγέτας
 "Ἀναξ' Ἀπόλλων εἶλετ'.

The weeks, the venerable author of the week
 King Apollo appointed. ἐπ. ἐπι Θεβ. l. 801.

Whereas in fact Apollo is represented by the poet as taking the seventh gate of the city under his guard; and that, not because he was the author of the week, but because he was born (as Hesiod tells us), on the seventh day; and the right reading is not *ἑβδομαγέτας*, (a word of extraordinary derivation, and one ἀπαξ λεγόμενον), but *ἑβδομαγένης*, which agrees with his birth, and is a reason for his custody of the seventh gate. But although I thus reject the commonly received authorities on this point, I still think there is good reason to believe that the heathen nations did keep up the patriarchal tradition by their observance of a septenary division of time, and that traces of this may be discovered in their oldest Poet.

B

livered the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage,—a reason which appertains to them, and to them alone. Bishop Horsley has an observation which may be worth notice here, whilst we are considering the reasons assigned by the Creator for hallowing the seventh day: it regards the distinction of tenses used in the fourth Commandment. “It is added (says that able prelate) that he therefore *blessed* and *hallowed* it; not *blesses* and *hallows* it now for the first time, because he delivers you, the children of Israel from a foreign yoke.” This observation would have been entitled to great weight if the institution of the Sabbath had been made known for the first time at the giving of the Law: but as Moses declared its existence at the cessation of the manna in the wilderness, the words of the commandment may possibly refer to that event, unless we suppose (as my own opinion inclines me to suppose), that this very declaration of Moses had a view *retrospectively* to the primæval institution, not prospectively to the law, which was not then given.*

* There certainly appears in this case to be a very remarkable distinction of tenses, leading to the conclusion above stated; “See, for the Lord *hath given* you the sabbath: therefore he *giveth* you on the sixth day the bread of two days.” Neither does it appear at all necessary that the people should have been thus introduced, and, as it were, accustomed to the Sabbatical

Many other arguments might be adduced against the proleptical view of the text which has given rise to this discussion. As brevity however is an object much to be desired, I hasten to what I consider as conclusive upon the subject, I mean the interpretation given to the passage in the New Testament. The Apostle, having observed at the conclusion of the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, that God swore in his wrath that certain of the Jews should not enter into his rest, viz. "those that believed not," takes occasion in the following chapter to excite in his Christian converts a religious fear, lest any of them by their unbelief should fail of obtaining the promise of his rest: and to remove all uncertainty respecting the nature of this promised rest, he draws a careful

Sabbatical rite, about to be imposed upon them by a lawgiver who imposed upon them many others equally burthensome without any previous preparation. Moreover the expression used by Moses (Exod. xvi. 23.) "To-morrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord," seems to imply in them some knowledge of a prior decree, without which it would have been very unintelligible. The words also of God himself, addressed to Moses, (ver. 28.) "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws," seem to represent those who went out to gather manna on the seventh day, as transgressors in some measure of a known ordinance. In fact the restoration of the ordinance appears to have been made the first point of attention after the Exodus, as the ordinance itself was the first given after the Creation.

distinction between the three kinds of rest which may properly be said to be of God. 1. The rest of the seventh day. 2. That general tranquillity obtained by the Israelites under Joshua in the land of Canaan. 3. That spiritual rest, or Sabbatism, which remains to the people of God in a future state. He then argues that the words of David, (Ps. xcv. 11.) "unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest," cannot be understood of the rest given to them by Joshua, nor of the *seventh day's* rest, into which men have entered ever since the foundation of the world; a rest intended for *all*, imperative upon *all*, and therefore not that rest to which the promise belongs. In his very explicit declaration upon this point, the Apostle observes, "for we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, *if* they shall enter (i. e. that they shall *not* enter) into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Heb. iv. 3, 4. Here we see no reference made to the peculiar *Sabbath* of the Jews, but all to the original decree of God, to the foundation of the world, and to God's rest from the works of Creation. The conclusion which might have

been perhaps expected at the end of the 4th verse, "therefore God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it," is omitted in the writer's concise elliptical style, as well known to his readers, who were Jewish converts. If this commentary upon the passage in Genesis be not deemed satisfactory in destroying all notion of a prolepsis, I have nothing more to offer, since after it every thing must be of inferior weight and authority. I proceed therefore to my second proposition.

SECT. II.

IF to keep holy the seventh day, be a law which is obligatory upon all mankind, how, it is asked, could that law ever have been a peculiar sign between God and the Israelites? "Verily (says the Almighty by Moses) my Sabbaths shall ye keep: for it is a *Sign* between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exod. xxx. 13. And again, "The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, and observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. v. 16. But what particular distinction could that give to the Israelites which was common to the whole world? The answer to this is—that it was not the mere keeping holy

a seventh day, as in times past, which distinguished the people of Israel, but the *peculiar manner* in which they kept it holy; for every species of labour on that day was prohibited under the penalty of death. Bear in mind then the true meaning and definition of the *Sabbath*, and you will find it in the strictest sense of the word a *sign*.

Moreover in the very institution of this Sabbath we may remark how clearly the Lawgiver refers to two distinct ordinances. In the first notice of a Sabbath, no reference whatever is made to any peculiar rites, but simply to the Lord's rest; and again at its solemn insertion into the Decalogue, as I have before observed, the people are reminded of the antiquity of that primitive ordinance which gave birth to the new institution. But at the rehearsal of the Law*, their deliverance from Egyptian bondage is given as a reason for that strict *Sabbatical rest*, which was thenceforth to continue, a sign and covenant between God and themselves, until that great Deliverer should arise, who would free them from the burthen of ceremonial rites. As we cannot suppose any contradiction to exist in these two statements of the inspired Lawgiver, so neither will there be any ambiguity, if we keep in view

* Deut. v. 15.

that distinction which is to be made between the two ordinances, as well as the situation of the Jews themselves. They were to keep the seventh day holy, as it were, under a double injunction. As a portion of mankind they were to hold it sanctified in memory of God's resting from his work, and in obedience to his primæval command: as God's peculiar people they were to keep it as a *Sabbath*, or sign, by which they recognized his mercy in their temporal deliverance, and his covenant to grant them a future and more excellent rest. That this idea was also entertained by the best informed of the Jews themselves, we may gather from the writings of Philo and Josephus, who sometimes refer the sanctification of a seventh day to the creation of the world, and at other times confine it to the Jewish ordinance. I cannot therefore but dissent from those persons, who, in advocating the same side of the question with myself, endeavour to account for the *Sabbatical sign* by analogies drawn from the rainbow, or from the rites of circumcision and family marriages, the first of which existed as a natural phenomenon, and the two last as rites, before they were converted into signs and covenants. The case of the *Sabbath* is not at all analogous to the one, nor strictly so to the others; for these received no change or addition, like it; and the comparison serves perhaps to confound the Jewish

ordinance with the original patriarchal institution; instead of preserving that peculiar definition of the Sabbath, which is necessary for our argument. So far indeed the two last-mentioned cases may be usefully introduced, as they shew that all the ordinances of the Mosaical Law were not new ones. These rites existed long before the giving of the Law, and were by Moses adopted into it. The Sabbath also was adopted by him, but it was also adapted to the peculiar circumstances of his nation.

SECT. III.

I now come to the third Proposition, which is generally considered to contain the greatest difficulties: the principal part of these however will be removed, as I think, by placing the original ordinance of a seventh day's sanctification upon a firm and sure foundation. If this ordinance be coeval with the creation of the world, addressed to, and obligatory upon, all mankind, its relation to all mankind cannot be altered either when it is adopted into the Levitical Code under certain modifications, or when those modifications are afterwards abrogated. To do away with the universality of the original command, you must shew where *it* has been repealed: but this is by no

means shewn when you cite St. Paul as reckoning the Sabbath days amongst the other ceremonial ordinances abolished by Christ. When the Apostle speaks thus, he means only that which was ceremonial or political, and therefore strictly Jewish, in the institution ; all that related to their delivery from Egyptian bondage, and to their separation from the rest of mankind, by the Ceremonial Law of Moses. That Law was strictly one of separation. The Gospel, on the contrary, is a comprehensive scheme which opens the arms of God's mercy to the Jew and the Gentile alike, if they obey its laws. It becomes us therefore to consider the nature of these laws.

The laws of the Gospel then are (1), those which it promulgates as peculiarly its own ; (2), those which it adopts from the original moral laws or positive ordinances of the Creator. Now it may be said that all of these latter are recognized by the Gospel, even in its silence respecting them ; yet whenever doubts are raised concerning the actual existence of an ordinance in the Old Testament, it is very satisfactory to find those doubts removed by the special adoption of that ordinance in the New Testament. Apply this to the case in question. I assert that God originally sanctified the seventh day, or set it apart to be kept holy by all to whom the knowledge of his word should come, in memory of his sacred rest. You deny this

position, and assert that the institution of the Sabbath in the wilderness, was the first separation of a seventh day, to be kept holy by the Israelites only, as a sign between them and their Deliverer. In the mean time both of us acknowledge that the Ceremonial Law was but a shadow of good things to come, and that its ordinances, amongst which the Sabbath is reckoned, were abolished by the manifestation of the Messiah. This being the case, if it be shewn that the custom of keeping holy a seventh day was continued without any interruption under the Christian Dispensation and sanctioned by its highest authority; is it not at the same time proved that the original institution was revived, or rather continued in the spirit of the Gospel? The rite is evidently not the Jewish one, for that was declared to be abolished; neither is it entirely a Christian one, or else it would have been so specified either by Christ or his disciples. But that it was adopted into the Christian scheme there is abundant evidence. On the very day that our Saviour rose from the grave, his Disciples were met together, and Jesus appeared in the midst of them. On the same day in the following week, i. e. the first, (or after eight days, as it is expressed in the Gospel) they were also met together in conclave, when Jesus took that opportunity of again appearing to them and convincing Thomas of his personal identity.

After his ascension, on the same day of the week, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon them and endowed them with the miraculous gift of tongues. That the custom of assembling together on this day continued thenceforth in the Church, we have the testimony of St. Paul; who, in the 16th chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians, advises each person to bring in his offering or alms on the first day of the week: we have also that of St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. xx. 6.) who confirms the opinion that it was customary to meet on that day for the purpose of religious worship, for expounding the Scriptures, and for breaking of bread, i. e. partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. That the custom continued in full vigour throughout the Apostolic age, we feel assured by the remarkable expression of St. John, who, in his book of Revelations, calls this day the *Lord's Day*, from the notoriety of its ordinance, and the veneration in which it was held. That the same was religiously kept up in succeeding generations we have a host of witnesses, whose testimonies, as they have been collected by many writers, need not be repeated here: it will be sufficient to state that Justin Martyr, who flourished in the third century, declares that on this day, which was then called Sunday (*τῆ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρα*) all Christians used to assemble together from town and

country, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, hearing Sermons instructive and exhortatory, offering up prayers to God, partaking of bread and wine and water, and making collections to assist their indigent brethren. There is no necessity therefore for going with you to Constantine for the origin of our Sunday ordinances, though he certainly made some regulations concerning them; for the very preamble to one of these regulations shews at least the prevalence of the Apostolic customs, although certain irregularities might have crept in by time. “ Sicut indignissimum videtur, diem Solis, *veneratione sui celebrem*, altercantibus jurgiis et noxiis partium contentionibus occupari*, &c. With respect to the change of day, from the first to the last day of the week, under the Gospel scheme, if any change were made at all, (for some learned persons have thought that the change was made at the institution of the Jewish Sabbath, and the right order of the seventh day restored in the Christian scheme) this change was made by the inspired Apostles of Christ, sanctioned by the approbation of their Lord and Master, consecrated by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and continued by the practice of the Church until its final establishment under an

* Vid. Euseb. Vit. Const. IV. 18. and Sozom. I. 8.

Imperial Edict. This, I think, is sufficient to satisfy the tenderest conscience; and here I might close my argument, if I did not think it right to give a more detailed answer to the objections which you have urged against this part of the subject.

“Some well-meaning persons” (you observe,) “looking about for any thing which might aid them in support of the early prejudices of their nurseries and education, have fancied, that they could find a Sabbath in the practice of the Apostles, of meeting together on the first day of the week. This question we will now examine, and see whether they, on that day, did meet, and if from these meetings a rite of such prodigious importance as the renovation of the Jewish Sabbath can be inferred.” p. 25.

On this point I admit the conclusion to which you would arrive, though I deny the premises by which you would make your way to it. I willingly agree with you in referring to the prejudices of a nursery education, every notion drawn from the meetings of the Apostles, concerning a renovation of the *Jewish Sabbath*: but I will not shelter myself under this subterfuge: let the term, “primæval institution,” or any other to denote God’s original ordinance of a seventh day’s sanctification, stand in the place of “*Jewish Sabbath*,” and the argument proceed*. You say that “there are only three

* I am not sorry however to have an opportunity of
the

passages in the New Testament, which make mention of the Apostles' being assembled on the first day of the week. The first is on the day of the resurrection," John xx. 19.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst of them."

"Jesus Christ is described to have risen that day before day-light in the morning, and after all the various events which in the course of the first part of that eventful day had happened to several of them, it was very natural that they should assemble together as soon as possible, to confer respecting them, and to consider what was the proper line of conduct for them to pursue. It is absurd to suppose that this assembly could be held to celebrate the rites of the religion, before the Apostles were all of them satisfied that he had risen, and that his body had not been stolen, as it is stated that some of them at first suspected."

"But it is necessary to observe, for the information of such persons as have not made the Jewish customs and antiquities their study, that the computation of time amongst the Jews was very different from ours; and it is evidently necessary to consider the words of the texts with reference to their customs, not to ours. Our day begins at or after twelve o'clock at night, theirs began at or after six o'clock in the evening. In Genesis it is said, And the evening and the morn-

quoting the passage, as a specimen of what (I repeat it) at least two thirds of your arguments turn upon, viz., a confounding of the *Jewish Sabbath*, with God's original ordinance, or with its revival in the Christian institution of the Lord's Day.

ing were the first day. If the day had begun as ours does, it would have said, The morning and the evening were the first day; and in Levit. xxiii. 32. it is said, *From even to even shall you celebrate your Sabbath*; consequently, the Jewish Sabbath began on Friday evening at about six o'clock, and their supper, or, as it is called, their breaking of bread, took place immediately after; the candles being ready lighted, and the viands being placed on the tables, so that no work by the servants might be necessary; and there they remained on the tables till after six the next evening."

"By the word day two clear and distinct ideas are expressed; it means the light part of the twenty-four hours, in opposition to the dark part of them, and it means the period itself of the twenty-four hours—one revolution of the earth upon its axis."

"In the expression here, *the same day at evening*, the word day must mean, the day-light part of the day, in opposition to the dark part of it—the night; because Jesus *could* not have appeared literally on the evening of the first day of the week; that is, after six o'clock on the Saturday evening, he not having risen at that time; therefore this meeting, being probably after six o'clock in the evening, on account of the return of the two Apostles from Emmaus that day, the day of the resurrection, Luke xxiv. 30; it, in fact, must have taken place, though on the first day-light day, a little before sunset; yet, on the second, not on the first Jewish day of the week."

"For these various reasons, whether the meeting named in John xx. 19. be considered the first day of the week, or the second, no inference in favour of a Sabbatical observance of the Sunday can be deduced: for it was merely accidental whether it were the first day or the second."

“In the 26th verse of the twentieth chapter of John, it is said,

And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them.”

“Whether the meeting above alluded to was on the first or second day of the week, it does not seem clear how this, the day after eight days, should be the first, i. e. the eighth day. It may have been the ninth in one case, and the tenth in the other; but in no case can it have been the first or the eighth day. If this passage meant to describe the meeting to have been on the first day of the week, it would have said, On the first day; or, After seven days; or, On the day after the Sabbath. The expression evidently proves that it could not be the first.”

“The next passage, which is in the Acts of the Apostles, xx. 7, is as follows :

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, (ready to depart on the morrow), and continued his speech until midnight.”

“As a learned layman, in his controversy with Dr. Priestley, has just observed: This meeting, according to the Jewish custom, and form of language, and computation of time, could have taken place at no other time than after six o'clock on Saturday evening: there was but one time, viz. the evening of each day, when they met for the purpose of breaking of bread; and it therefore necessarily follows, that the preaching of Paul must have taken place on the Saturday night, after six o'clock, by our mode of computation, ready to depart on the morrow, at day-break. Surely the preaching of Paul on Saturday night, and his travelling on the Sunday, cannot be construed into a proof that he kept the Sunday as a Sabbath.”

“In the only subsequent passage where the first day of the week is named, 1 Cor. xvi. 2, the same gentleman has shown, that if any interference is to be drawn from the words contained in it, they go against the observance of it as a Sabbath, and imply that a man on that day was to settle his accounts of the week preceding, that he might be able to ascertain what he could lay up in store against Paul came.”

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

“How can any one see in this verse, a proof that the first day of the week was to be kept by Christians as an obligation, as a Jewish Sabbath? It is well known that at first the Christians strictly kept the Jewish Sabbath; therefore they could not make a weekly settlement of their accounts till the day after the Sabbath, which was the first.”

“The texts here cited, being disposed of, it is only necessary to observe, that there is not the smallest evidence to be found, either positive or presumptive, that the *Apostles or disciples* of Jesus considered the first day of the week in any way whatever different from the following five.”

I have extracted these copious extracts, in order that I might not run the least hazard of misquoting your words or misrepresenting your opinions. I now proceed to make some remarks upon them. In the first place then, I see no reason to agree with you in supposing that Christ appeared to his disciples on the second day of the week, contrary to the Apostle's express declaration. It being granted that Sunday began at six o'clock

on what we call Saturday evening, and ended at six o'clock on the next evening, what is there in the passage quoted from St. John, which authorizes you to say that Jesus appeared to his disciples after six o'clock on that latter evening? The expression is "the same day at evening;" (οὐσῆς ὀψίας) an expression which is used by St. Matthew xiv. 15. and 23. Having undertaken to comment so learnedly on the text, you should have known that the word ὀψία had two meanings^a among the Jews, by the first of which the ninth hour of the natural day, about the decline of the Sun, or 3 o'clock in the afternoon was signified, and by the latter the eleventh hour, or 5 o'clock. Without this distinction you will find it impossible to reconcile the texts of St. Matthew just quoted^b,

^a The sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb was required to be made between the two evenings. "See marginal reading to Exod. xii. 6. The time is accurately explained by Josephus. Οἱ δ' ἐνστάσης ἑορτῆς, πάσχα καλεῖται, καθ' ἣν θύουσι μὲν ἀπὸ ἐνάτης ὥρας μέχρι ἑνδεκάτης, κ. τ. λ. *De Bell. Jud.* Cap. ix. Sect. 3.

^b He expresses the *two evenings* by the same phrase, ὀψίας γενομένης. By this the former evening was meant at the commencement of the miracle, as we learn from St. Luke, who on the same occasion observes, "the day began to decline," Chap. ix. 12.; but the latter evening must be understood, when our Lord dismissed the multitude; for St. John who uses the same phrase "when it was evening," adds in the next verse, "and it had been already dusk," to mark the time when the disciples embarked. Chap. vi. 16, 17.

but with it you will easily remove all difficulty both from them and from the text in question. This point being established, you will see that our Lord may easily be supposed to have appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week. But even if this point were granted to you, and it were admitted that he appeared to them after 6 o'clock, I see not what you would gain by it: at any rate his disciples had assembled together on the first day of the week (or Sunday,) and it was their Lord's re-appearance to them on the first day of the week following, (or the next Sunday,) without mention being made of any intermediate appearance, which gave his sanction to the day. But you deny that this re-appearance took place on the Sunday following, being misled by your own interpretation of the phrase "after eight days" (μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀκτώ). This expression might perhaps be more correctly rendered "on the eighth day after" or "eight days after" including the two extreme days. It is fully explained by a comparison of St. Matthew xxvii. 63. with xvi. 21. where the Jews had not the least idea of misrepresenting the words of our Lord, when they declare that he said "*After three days* I will rise again," though his expression was, that "he should be killed and be raised again *the third day.*" So the rite of circumcision is prescribed to take

place when the child is "eight days old," in Gen. xvii. 11. and "on the eighth day," in Levit. xxii. 3. Thus Jesus is said to have been circumcised, "when eight days were accomplished." (Luke ii. 21.) but John the Baptist "on the eighth day." (Luke i. 59.) Josephus uses the same phraseology, of which more instances might be selected from the New Testament: but it is not a Hebraism, as some learned persons have supposed; for it is found in the best Greek and Latin authors*.

I now come to consider the passage in which you attack St. Paul. In the first place I might defy you to prove that it was the practice of the Christians to observe the day according to the Jewish manner, that is, to consider it as beginning at 6 o'clock on the preceding evening. It is much more probable that they considered the day and night as we do, without any respect to the Mosaic law. Our Lord's resurrection took place very early on what we call Sunday morning. John xx. 1. It is also certain, from John xx. 19.

* A remarkable exemplification of the usage is seen by the comparison of a passage of Theophrastus, with a corresponding one of Pliny. The former (Hist. lib. iv. c. 3.) speaking of the Egyptian Thorn says, *ὅταν δὲ κοπή, μετὰ τρίτον ἔτος, εὐθέως ἀναβεβλάσθηκεν*, which the latter renders by—*cæsa, anno tertio resurgit*. N. H. xiii. 9.

that the first assembly of the disciples was on that Sunday afternoon. It is also most likely, though it cannot be proved, that the meeting of the next Sunday, as well as the vast assemblage of persons on the day of Pentecost, came together in the day-time of Sunday, not on Saturday evening. Add to this, that although the Jewish Sabbath began on Friday at even, the Sabbatical service was in the day-time of Saturday: more than all the Sunday's service is commemorative of our Saviour's resurrection from the grave. Is it not then contrary to all reason that his resurrection should be commemorated on Saturday evening, at which time it had not taken place? You see therefore how every probability is in favour of the notion that the religious assembly in Acts xx. took place on Sunday afternoon, and that St. Paul had *travelled* on the preceding Jewish Sabbath, whereby the transfer of the day consecrated to religious purposes, from the last to the first day of the week, appears plainly indicated. But here again I might grant your assertion "that the preaching of Paul did take place on the Saturday night, after 6 o'clock, and that the Apostle did travel on the Sunday," without any prejudice to my own argument. As far as St. Paul's preaching goes, even upon your own shewing, it proves that the disciples had met

together on the *first day of the week*, for the purpose of breaking bread, i. e. of celebrating the Lord's Supper: as for his travelling on the Sunday, call it an offence if you please, it does not render that assembly less an assembly, nor the custom, if it was one, less a custom. But in fact it was no offence at all: we want no proof that either he or the disciples kept the Sunday *as a Sabbath*; nay, we even deny that they did so. Moreover Paul's travelling was that of a missionary in the service of a Master, who had taught that works of charity and mercy, even performed *on the Sabbath*, were no transgression of the law.

Having thus endeavoured to answer your statements in this passage, I must now beg leave to comment upon your omissions. You observe Sect. 61. "that there are only three passages in the New Testament, which make mention of the Apostles being assembled on the first day of the week." Surely the day of Pentecost has slipped your memory, when, as the historian of the Acts informs us, "they were all with one accord in one place;" when the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon the followers of Christ, thus sanctifying the day in the most eminent manner possible.

Your omission of the epithet given by St.

John^a to this day, which so strongly marks the customary celebration of its religious ordinances, is not to be urged against you as a breach of memory, inasmuch as you subsequently deny the conclusion drawn from the Apostle's expression. You derive the epithet *κυριακὸς* from the Sun, which Deity you observe is frequently styled *κύριος*, or Dominus, "the Lord Sun." Now not to mention the extreme improbability of a disciple of Jesus giving a name to this his peculiar day derived from an idolatrous source; why, it may be asked, do you not give the same meaning to the epithet in the only other instance in which it is used in the New Testament? why do you not suppose *δείπνον κυριακόν*, or the Lord's Supper, to be derived from Apollo's Delphic Feasts? Moreover in your argument you endeavour to prove too much; you say that the Sun was called Dominus Sol, and thence the day Dies Dominica, just as the Moon was called Domina; but there your analogy fails, you can bring no instance to shew that Monday was ever styled Dies Dominica, or Lady's Day: you have not indeed produced any example of the Sun's being called Dominus, or *κύριος*, but I am not inclined to deny the fact, or even that the Greek

^a Rev. i. 10. *ἡμέρα κυριακή.*

word ἥλιος itself may be derived from the Phœnician Hel or Hal, which signifies Lord, and is the root of the Hebrew Elohim: neither do I deny that Sunday is so named from that day being dedicated to the Sun: but what has this derivation to do with the sanctity of our Christian ordinance? whenever that day is mentioned by the early Christians as *Sunday*, it is called ἡ ἡλίου ἡμέρα or dies Solis, which evidently shews that they understood the term ἡμέρα κυριακή in a different sense. And why was the term ἡ ἡλίου ἡμέρα or Dies Solis, used by them at all? Because when they were writing apologies to Pagans or holding an argument with them, they expressed themselves thus, in order that they might be clearly understood. For example, Justin Martyr, writing to a Roman Emperor, adopts the name common to Pagans, ἡλίου ἡμέραν; but when he writes to Trypho a Jew, he calls the Lord's Day, unam Sabbati, (the first day of the week), in compliance with the Jewish custom. If you will look into Eusebius *περὶ τῆς ἡμέρας*, (p. 2.) you will find it stated that the day was called ἡμέρα κυριακή because it was considered as κυρία τῶν ἡμέρων, for before the death and resurrection of our Saviour it was called πρώτη ἡμέρα. In fact the day happened to be that which was called 'the Sun's day;' but no more took its appellation from the Sun than it did from the Moon.

With regard to your observation, that many of the early Christians did strictly observe the Jewish Sabbath, I deny not the fact as far as regards the converts from Judaism; but this only proves the forbearance and toleration shewn by the Apostles and first rulers of the Church. Circumcision was in like manner permitted to these early converts; but they were rebuked when they wished to burthen the consciences of their fellow Christians with the observance of this and other rites of the Mosaic law.

Your remarks in Sect. 71. upon 1 Cor. xvi. 2. where you represent the Apostle's recommendation to his converts of laying by a portion of their wealth in store for their indigent brethren, as an exhortation to *settle their accounts*, as it were with book and ledger, need no answer. But even if such *business* had been required of them, your very next paragraph would afford one; for I fairly acknowledge myself unable to see in the text quoted, or in any other text of Scripture a proof that Christians are obliged to keep the first day of the week as a *Jewish Sabbath*.

I must now bring this letter to a conclusion, having proved I hope satisfactorily, 1. That God's ordinance concerning the sanctification of the seventh day did exist from the very creation of the world. 2. That the additional observances attached to this ordinance, constituted it a *Sabbath*,

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sign and covenant to the Jews, which was to last until the repeal of their ceremonial and political law took place. 3. That when that repeal did take place by the manifestation of the Messiah, the original ordinance of God still remained; that it was acknowledged by Christ and his Apostles, sanctioned by the Holy Spirit of God, and kept as a sacred festival through all the successive ages of the Church. With the decrees which may have been promulgated concerning it in later ages, I have nothing to do, but to obey them when they are legally instituted, and not contrary to the word of God. Concerning the manner of keeping holy the seventh day, I leave this to every man's own reason and conscience, merely remarking, that, if we go back to its origin, we shall find that a rest from the ordinary business of life appears to lie at the very foundation of the institution. Our best guide in all such matters will be the practice of the Apostolic ages, as far as it can be collected. Lastly, I conceive that a day spent in the worship of God, in meditation upon his word, in reading his law, and in appropriate conversation with our friends and neighbours, though it may not be enlivened with *cricket and football*, is any thing but a *gloomy, puritanical, pharisaical* employment; and when Sunday is described by ancient writers as a day of rejoicing, and a *festival*, they, like David and other pious characters

do not consider its festivity as consisting in secular amusements, much less in riotous or intemperate pleasures.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

T. S. HUGHES.

CAMBRIDGE,
June 13, 1826.

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