

Arthur J. Pearson

28

The six Her Commandments. VII

As to the grounds of the change from the seventh to the first day, there is more to be said than there is time now to say. If anyone is punctiliously particular, the privilege may still be conceded of observing both days. But several considerations may be mentioned as bearing upon the question.

First, as already hinted, the main matter seems to be the consecration of a seventh of our time to worship. The "seventh" day is so called not so much with reference to any particular point of time at which the week begins as to the six days of labor preceding. He who labors six days and rests on the seventh, whenever his week

may happen to have begun, is keeping a sabbath  
to the Lord; and the only reason for beginning  
the week of ~~work~~ at any exact point of time would  
seem to be the advantage of uniformity. For one  
man to be keeping a rest-day while another  
is keeping his work-day would introduce confu-  
sion & clashing. The alternation of six days of  
labor and one of rest is what meets the spir-  
it of the command, and general agreement  
is the other element which makes sabbath ob-  
servance complete.

Sabbath day according to the commandment.  
Paul kept it at Antioch in Pisidia, and the dis-  
ciples observed it even at the very time when



The first day of the week was kept as a day of prayer by the apostle Paul, Acts 16: 13, the scriptures were read and the word of God preached by the early disciples; and although it may be said that this was in connection with Jewish customs or in conformity therewith, it at least shews that the observance of even the Jewish Sabbath was not felt to be hostile to the spirit of Christianity. The Sabbath was honored by the women at the sepulchre who even from the sacred work of embalming the body of Jesus rested upon the Sabbath day according to the commandment. Paul kept it at Antioch in Pisidia, and the disciples observed it even at the very time when



the first day began to be kept as the holy day. The  
Scripture and history dissolve all doubt that in  
the primitive Christian church both the last  
& the first days of the week were observed for some  
time as sacred seasons. At first the change of days  
was repulsive to some Jewish converts. They  
gladly kept the first day as the festival of  
the Resurrection; but they could not easily &  
quickly wheel out of the hard deep rut of pre-  
vious prejudice and venerable custom; and so  
they were countenanced by the apostles in keep-  
ing both days. By and by the new leaven perme-  
ating the whole mass, naturally introduced  
a well nigh universal usage which finally

dropped out the seventh day observance altogether and substituted the first.

I have hinted that the observance of the first day instead of the seventh, is even yet an apple of discord in the Christian church, a small portion even now keeping the seventh day, on the ground that there is no authority for such a change, as the bulk of Christendom sanctions. I am prepared, I think intelligently, to defend this change. But by way of preface, let me remark that to insist upon any particular septennary cycle, or daily division would appear to be a stretch of literalism, since the day can not be identical in different parts of the world. Day to us is night to those at antipodes with us. If the Sabbath begins with the rising



or the setting sun, the actual 24 hours observed by different peoples cannot be the same. When we are concluding the holy day it is but beginning elsewhere. Can it be then that the question of the exact hours in the week kept holy unto the Lord can be important enough to justify a new sect among christ's disciples? Is it not rather the proportion of time which is most important. It is a well known fact that in sailing round the globe navigators lose or gain a day according as they move with or against the sun's apparent course. Suppose a vessels company to lose their reckoning, and to keep what they

supposed to be the sabbath which was really the day before or after - would it render their service a whit less pleasing to God. Of course exactness & uniformity are eminently desirable; needless departure from the very day appointed by God is to be shunned; but I cannot but feel that we lift such a matter to a prominence which is absurd when equally conscientious servants of God separate from each other upon the question whether the first or last twenty four hours of the week are to be consecrated holy unto the Lord, especially when what is the last day to some will be the first day to others at the opposite side of the globe

There is more than a suspicion that the Jews  
are even now one day behind hand having  
lost their reckoning during the captivity -  
An English author has written a work to  
show that their seventh day is not corres-  
pondent to the day kept as such before the  
Exile in Babylon.

The universality of a seven-day arrangement  
in the earliest ages, will be found noted in Kiri-  
tobates, Josephus, Philo, Clemens Alex. &c.  
But the worship of God was even corrupted to a  
worship of the sun as his image; which worship  
prevailed all over the East, as early as Roman  
times. And thus the Eden Sabbath among  
the Gentiles became their Sunday; as noted  
of the ancient Persians by Tertullian; and also,  
it came to be considered the beginning of  
the week, the "first-day," or first day of all,  
as noted of the ancient Egyptians by the  
Glossa.

And so, the Israelites while in Egyptian bond-  
age fell into the same numbering of the sun-day  
as a first-day; especially as their task-masters  
looked on their observance of it as the seventh-  
day Sabbath of rest. When, therefore, upon  
their leaving Egypt, a "seventh-day Sabbath"  
was again ordered, as at the giving of Moses,  
Ex. xvi, they were providentially allowed to  
take up for this purpose the popular seventh day  
of those times, as learned by them in Egypt;  
so as to avoid syncretizing with the heathen sun-  
worship;—and so as to distinguish them as a  
people from all other nations;—and so as to  
throw them along twenty four hours, upon the  
original Canaan Sabbath intended especially for  
them, which (as we saw) preceded by twenty-  
four hours the Eden Sabbath of Eden.

The new Sabbath or observance was either  
not, or was given; example was enough for the  
remained, untouched and still unchanged, the  
original Lord's day, the great Sunday festival of  
the world, hidden down all through the centuries,  
as the "Sabbath kept for ever." This cele-  
bration, not, like the Jews' day, the first twenty-  
four hours of rest began in Canaan, but the last  
twenty-four hours of finished each rest, a type  
of the Paradise now at length restored!

A. B. C.



THE CREATION SABBATH.—A correspondent adds to this discussion :

Every day, starting from the date-transit meridian, (now considered to be in the middle of the Pacific Ocean,) has twenty-four successive hours of beginning, and then twenty-four successive hours of ending; and covers forty-eight hours in all with each particular day-date. Thus, God's "seventh day" of creation rest, from first beginning till final ending, covered forty-eight hours: starting westward from the Eden sunset preceding man's creation, and leaving in its progress the consummated animal life; until, after twenty-four hours, at the crowning creation of man, near sunset, it began for twenty-four hours more in Eden, (then regarded as the turning point of days). Thus, those earlier twenty-four hours of rest begun, preceding man's creation, were the original natural Sabbath of Canaan and the West, designed for the use of the first special dispensation, when it should come. But that later Eden Sabbath, the twenty-four hours following man's creation, as *his* seventh day, the "Sabbath made for man" as a race, was kept of course by man consecutively onward down the ages; and was carried from Eden and Ararat, westward as well as eastward, by the untamed Gentile tide,—the date-transit meridian being pushed before it, first into the Mediterranean, next into the Atlantic, and finally into the Pacific Ocean!

The universality of a seven-day arrangement in the earliest ages, will be found noted in Aristobolus, Josephus, Philo, Clemens Alex., &c. But the worship of God was soon corrupted to a worship of the sun as his image; which worship prevailed all over the East, as early as Moses' time. And thus the Eden Sabbath among the Gentiles became their Sunday; as noted of the ancient Persians by Tertullian; and also, it came to be considered the beginning of the week, the "first-day," or foremost day of all, as noted of the ancient Egyptians by Dio Cassius.

And so, the Israelites while in Egyptian bondage fell into the same numbering of the sun-day as a first-day; especially as their task-masters broke up their observance of it as the seventh-day Sabbath of rest. When, therefore, upon their leaving Egypt, a "seventh-day Sabbath" was again enjoined, as at the giving of manna, Ex. xvi, they were providentially allowed to take up for this purpose the popular seventh-day of those times, as learned by them in Egypt;—so as to avoid synchronizing with the hated sun-worship;—and so as to distinguish them as a people from all other nations;—and so as to throw them along twenty four hours, upon the original Canaan Sabbath intended specially for them, which (as we saw) preceded by twenty-four hours the finished Sabbath of Eden.

The Israelites thus slipped their Sabbath along one day sooner; if not on leaving Egypt, when manna was given, yet certainly on entering Canaan, when Joshua by miracle interpolated a new and extraordinary day, with no night before or after it. By numbering this with their other days, (as other nations proceeding astronomically could not do,) they would of course get their Sabbath moved along one day earlier than the true solar reckoning of all other nations. And so, through a premeditated Providence, the Jews were separated for a special temporary dispensation, by means of their peculiar Saturday Sabbath, as well as their other peculiarities. And when that Sinai covenant "waxed old and was ready to vanish away," our Saviour on Calvary "nailed to his cross" that ritual Sabbath of the Jews, and, in that sad Saturday tomb-rest of his, providentially buried from reckoning the day, which for a transient purpose they had been allowed providentially to gain.

No new ordinance or commandment was needed, or was given; example was enough; for there remained, untouched and still sanctified, the original Lord's day, the great Sunday festival of the world, handed down all through the nations, as the "Sabbath made for man." This celebrates, not, like the Jews' day, the first twenty-four hours of rest begun in Canaan, but the last twenty-four hours of finished Eden rest, a type of the Paradise now at length restored!

G. B. G.



THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH.—One of our Iowa Home Missionaries has lately been obliged to defend the Sabbath against the assaults of Second Adventists, and has paid great attention to the change of the day from the seventh to the first. He has given several lectures intended to show that as man's first full day on the earth, the day after his creation, was the seventh day of the creation week, the reckoning of sevens from man's creation would make our "first day of the week" and God's seventh day of rest coincide. He therefore argues that we are keeping the original Sabbath; there is no change, but there *had been one before the Christian Sabbath*, putting the holy day one day back of the true day.

I have found a singular coincidence with this view in a most unexpected quarter. Among some unpublished writings of President Edwards in my hands are certain "Miscellaneous Observations on the Holy Scriptures," not contained in his works, the first of which reads thus:

"1. Gen. ii: 3.—'And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,' &c. It is rendered very probable by Bedford, in his 'Scripture Chronology,' (1730 folio) that this first Sabbath being the first day of Adam's life, and so the first day from whence he began to reckon time, was the first day of his week; and so, that the first day of the week was the day that God sanctified to be kept by all nations and ages, excepting the change that was made of the day of the Sabbath for the Israelitish nation after the coming out of Egypt, till the resurrection of Christ; and also that the 'deep sleep' that was fallen on Adam in which God took from him one of his ribs and made Eve of it, was on the night before."

In his sermon on the "Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath," Pres. E. argues that the essence of the Divine command was to rest from labor and keep holy one day after six. "But the words no way determine where those six days begin, and so where the rest or Sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, i. e., where to begin and end it." "The Christian Sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day as the Jewish Sabbath, because it is kept every seventh day, after six days of labor, as well as that." He argues that the Israelites had lost the true reckoning of time in Egypt, "reckoning from the first day of the creation, if it had been kept up till that time," because the Egyptians would not suffer their slaves to rest from their work one seventh of the time. So in Exod. xvi: 23, 25, 26, a new command determined the particular day. Nehemiah and Ezekiel therefore say that God then "gave" them, "made known" unto them his holy Sabbath. And why *that* day was determined upon then, was, that it was the day after they left Egypt.—Deut. v: 15. But it was not intended to commemorate the Exodus forever.—Jer. xvi: 14, 15. The resurrection of Christ is a greater event, and to be commemorated by Christians. That was a type of this, and the Sabbath commemorating the Exodus was abolished by Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath lying buried on that day, &c.

It will occur to any one that if the present first day is the original seventh of creation week, the Exodus or Manna Sabbath must have been appointed on the sixth day reckoning from creation week, i. e., that "the seventh" ("sixteenth of the second month,"—Exod. xvi.) fell on that day. But this implies, either that the reckoning was *not* lost in Egypt, at least that Moses, the writer, kept it, or was informed of it anew by inspiration, or else that when the Lord said, (Exod. xvi: 23,): "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord," he was informing them of the true reckoning, and, in either case, the Lord did not reckon from his own creation week, but from man's first week upon the earth. And this is, of course, the first point to be proved, and of which Edwards says nothing, nor Bedford, so far as he informs us. The case might be put in this way: that man always reckoned from his own first day on the earth, *not* from God's creation week, and when God re-informed Israel through Moses, on what day the seventh-day Sabbath would fall, he spoke *more humano*, giving man's reckoning, not his own. But this implies, that man after the creation did not keep the same day with God as a Sabbath, but the seventh from the day before God's Sabbath. Which is to be proved. G. F. M.

But in the interests of exact conformity with every hint of God's Will, and to satisfy the most scrupulous conscience, let us briefly inquire why the primitive church substituted the first day for the seventh. The fact is beyond a question and the modification of a custom so ancient and rigid, implies instruction and example from Christ and his apostles. In no other way can you account for such a change. Consider how strict were Jewish notions as to forms even the most trivial - and is it conceivable that such a thing as Sabbath observance could be changed, except by adequate authority - & so suddenly &c



The Word translated Sabbath occurs in New Testament Greek sixty nine times, and it may aid us to classify the instances of its use with reference to their bearing upon the doctrine of Sabbath observance.

The great Representative passage is Mark 2:27. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. Christ here seems to have made the first modification of the Sabbath law, or the superstitions and traditions that encumbered its observance. The fourth Commandment had been construed as though enacted for its own sake, and as though su-

terior even to human nature and needs. Even the hungry disciples were not to pluck ears of grain as they passed through the field because it violated rabbinical traditions. But Jesus proounds a new canon of criticism a new law of interpretation: the Sabbath is not an inflexible iron enactment to which even human necessity and extremity are to bend; but contrariwise the good of man is the invariable standard to which even the Sabbath law accommodates itself. God made the Sabbath for man - designed and fitted it to promote his temporal and eternal good and all that is not essential and vital to the princi-

ple may undergo variation in order to serve man's interest and welfare. What among its ceremonial features might have been promotive of human good under a former dispensation might not be conducive to his best interests under a new era of things. The ceremonial peculiarities of the Mosaic Sabbath would be incongruous with the simpler and freer worship of the Christian centuries. Works of necessity & mercy were not forbidden even by the strict law which literally enjoined no manner of work, since this would make the good of man inferior and subordinate to the observance of a law given expressly to promote man's good.



So far Christ is not announcing any new law of the Sabbath but rather removing the rubbish of literalism and formalism and revealing the true intent of that law. But there is here propounded a new law of interpretation which has ever since given the day of Rest a new complexion. The Sabbath is made for Man; for the advancement of the complex interests of his compound being, body mind & heart. What is essentially hostile to his true interest, his spiritual welfare, his intellectual vigor, or even his bodily health cannot be any part of the essential law of the Sabbath. To an extreme in religious dissipation &c

As to the employments of the day the command is "no manner of work." But our Lord expressly teaches that it was never a violation of the true intent of the command, that one should do any work of mercy, in supplying any necessary want - performing any religious service or relieving any want or woe in others. These things may have conflicted with the Rabbinical traditions, but never did they antagonize the original spirit & purpose of the Jewish Law of the Sabbath.

Two qualifications: 1. Works of mercy may become a mere pretext: 2. May be carried to an extreme in religious dissipation &c

A "SWIVEL MORAL."—A Syrian Christian, as the story goes, was by his employer to work on Sunday, but declined.

"But," said the master, "does not your Bible say that if a man has an ox or an ass that falls into a pit on the Sabbath day, he may pull him out?"

"Yes," answered Hayoh; "but if the ass has a habit of falling in the same pit every Sabbath day, then the man should fill up the pit or sell that ass."

The story has a sort of a swivel "moral," which will fit a great many disputed points in these days.



As to the mode or manner of Sabbath observance, in addition to what has already been said, - we cannot believe the Lord's day properly kept unless devoted to the duties of private & public worship. It was so with the Jews - so from the time of Christ's Resurrection as to the Lord's Day, and wherever the idea of worship has been dropped out, the day has been desecrated, and Christianity has become merely nominal - a holy day becomes a holiday, the door opens to all manner of abuses and whole nations drift toward <sup>the</sup> refined Paganism of Infidelity & Irreligion. *They seem more remote, more idle and less imperative in demand*

The principle of Sabbath consecration is simple. God concedes to man six days out of seven for temporal & worldly employments such as have to do with what we shall eat, drink, wear - body & mind, personal domestic social & political interests. Of the seventh he draws about it a line of separation & sanctification and says that is my time: in it no work save of necessity or of mercy. Why? Because he needs it? No but because we need it. Time & temporal things are immediate visible pressing - they crowd thick and fast upon us - We lose sight of Eternity and everlasting things because they seem more remote, invisible and less imperative in demand.



Now God sees that in the natural course of things that which is of most consequence gets but an occasional thought in course of the days of labor - and so He sets apart one day in which Eternity comes in for exclusive attention - as far as is possible or practicable all else is to be crowded out pushed back; and Eternity to be lifted up before the soul till Time shall seem to be the insignificant thing. Now even when the Lord's day is wholly devoted to spiritual economy thought & worship, it is but one seventh of our working time. Is that disproportionate to the magnitude of issues & interests that have no limit save in the infinity of Gods.



But in fact the whole day is not spent in holy  
employments even by the most devout wor-  
shipper. Many worldly cares & needs invade  
the domain of holy time - the questions of our  
food & raiment largely demand considera-  
tion so that in fact but a part of that twelve<sup>15</sup>  
hours which form the waking portion of God's  
day gets purely spiritual occupation. Now  
consider whether it be not a flagrant inva-  
sion of God's Law of Sabbath rest to allow even  
the fragment that remains consecrated to  
holy meditation worship & work to be divert-  
ed like the oblation at the altar to worldly  
& common ends. 'from doing thy pleasure on

We ought to guard jealously & zealously every hour of the Lords day from the needless intrusion of outside cares & work. What is the fact? If an indulgence tempts us, we say is there any thing wrong in this. But does that settle the question of Sabbath propriety. God surrounds the day with an enclosure - and says invade not these limits even with innocent pleasure. I trespass not on my time with what may on other days be lawful & right, for this is peculiarly sacred. It is yours only for my exclusive & immediate service. And hence Isaiah is explicit: if thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath from doing thy pleasure on



my holy day, and shalt honor Him not doing thine  
own own ways nor finding thine own pleasure  
nor speaking thine own words - All these terms  
shew us that the law of Sabbath keeping is this:  
regard not the day as thine own in any sense  
but as the Lords - turn away thy foot from the  
Sabbath as the Jews avoided treading on  
a fragment of parchment or papyrus lest  
it might contain the name of God. It is not  
enough to ask is this thing sinful: we are  
to ask is it positively accordant with the  
Sabbath spirit object & uses. A book may  
be even a profitable book and yet be un-  
fit for Sabbath reading, because it diverts



the mind to literary or scientific themes. An amusement may be rational and recreative in the best sense and yet be unfavorable to spiritual meditation &c. I am disposed to think that the nearer we can come to keeping the Lords day with the strictness of a Jew but the conscious liberty of a son of God who observes the Sabbath not as a matter of ceremonialism or blind & burdensome bondage to a yoke but voluntarily intelligently cheerfully as confiding in the wisdom of Him who ordained the day the nearer we come to an ideal keeping of the Sabbath.

But I cannot but think that the weekly festival  
of the finished work of Redemption & of Christ's  
Resurrection ought to be a joyous day. It is a mis-  
take to invest it with gloom. Macaulay 1: 63.

It was a mistake of primitive Puritanism  
that it sought its examples & precedents in the  
Hebrew rather than Christian Church. <sup>Disengagement</sup> The syn-  
agogue rather than the chn. church seemed to  
be the model for their morals & manners. Dress  
Department, language studies, amusements re-  
sembled rather the code of pharisaic propriety  
than the decorum of the lord freeman. To garland  
a maypole, engage in common games and  
sports, starch a ruff, read the Fairy Queen



were heinous sins. As Macaulay says, the <sup>joyous</sup> free spirit  
of a Luther, the serene & philosophical mind  
of a Spinoza would have revolted from such mo-  
nastic gloom. I think the great historian does  
both the Puritans & the Quakers cruel injustice.  
Yet it must be confessed that the Puritan Sabbath  
at one time seemed to wear an aspect of sour  
solemnity. And while we need not relax the re-  
strictions which determine Sabbath proprieties  
neither need we keep the Lords day in the spirit  
of a Slave. We have left Egypt behind and are  
traveling toward a rich & royal land of promise  
God is the companion of our journey a pilgrim  
stranger & sojourner with us. we are not un-



cruel taskmasters & tyrants - it behooves us to  
yield a loving & cheerful obedience. Let us look  
up to the calm skies of the Lords Day and  
remember that in the private devotion & public  
worship of the day we are offering prayer &  
praise to our risen Lord and enter into his  
temple with thanksgiving & into his courts  
with joy. Then we shall find our season of rest  
while we cease from our own works & to be  
a season also of growth 1626:111. Among the  
beneficial purposes of the Sabbath we shall  
experimentally discover that not least impor-  
tant is this; it gives mind & heart & soul time  
to grow. The suspension of common cares &

works will mark successive stages of onward  
progress & upward ascent. Not one of these  
periods of weekly rest will leave us where it  
finds us. Our sabbaths will be stations on our  
journey marking approach to the glorious goal - ha-  
vens, whose quiet & rest approximate the peace  
of the very home where all rough winds & waves  
are forever stayed. The sabbath enclosure shall  
be not merely a barren spot walled round  
by a fenced garden - an effort to regain parad-  
ise, whose buds are promises of fragrant flowers  
1436 - to 1689. Comp Vaughan's Poem 1434: 1431

The cool of the day

The creature's jubilee: God's smile with dust

Sabbaths what are they?  
Bright shadows of true rest. some shoots of bliss,  
Heaven once a week -  
The next world's gladness prepossessed in this;  
A day to seek,  
Eternity in time: the steps by which  
We climb above all ages; lamps that light  
Man through his heap of dark days - & the rich  
And full redemption of the whole week's flight:  
The fullips unto headlong man: time's bower,  
The narrow way the out-come of glory  
Transplanted Paradise - God's walking hour  
The cool of the day  
The creature's jubilee: God's paule with dust



Heaven here; man on those hills of myrrh - of flowers.

Angels descending - the returns of trust

A gleam of glory after six days showers -

The church's love feast - time's prerogative

And interest.

Seducted from the whole - the comb & hive

And home of Rest

The milky way chalked out with suns - a clue

That guides through herring bones & in full story

A taste of heaven on earth - the pledge & cue

Of a full feast and the out courts of glory.

Vaughan 1695.