

The Foundations of the Sabbath in the Word of God

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I AM TO SPEAK to you today, not of the usefulness or of the blessedness of the Sabbath, but of its obligation. And I am to speak to you of its obligation, not as that obligation naturally arises out of its usefulness or blessedness, but as it is immediately imposed by God in his Word. You naturally dwell on the joy of the Sabbath. This is the day of gladness and triumph, on which the Lord broke the bonds of the grave, abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light. As naturally you dwell on the value of the Sabbath. This is the day on which the tired body rests from its appointed labor; on which the worn spirit finds opportunity for recuperation; an oasis in the desert of earthly cares, when we can escape for a moment from the treadmill toil of daily life and, at leisure from ourselves, refresh our souls in God. I am to recall your minds – it may seem somewhat brusquely – to the contemplation of the duty of the Sabbath; and to ask you to let them rest for a moment on the bald notion of authority. I do not admit that, in so doing, I am asking you to lower your eyes. Rather, I conceive myself to be inviting you to raise them; to raise them to the very pinnacle of the pinnacle. After all is said, there is no greater word than “ought.” And there is no higher reason for keeping the Sabbath than that I ought to keep it; that I owe it to God the Lord to keep it in accordance with his command.

It may nevertheless require some little effort to withdraw our thoughts even for a moment from the utility of the Sabbath and fix them on its bare obligation. Since Proudhon taught the world the natural value of the Sabbath, its supernatural origin and sanction have, in wide circles, passed perhaps somewhat out of sight. In its abounding usefulness to man, it may seem so obviously man's day

that we may easily forget that it was for two thousand years before it was discovered to be man's day already the Lord's day; and, stretching back from that, from the creation of the world God's day. The Sabbath is undoubtedly rooted in nature; in our human nature and in the nature of the created universe. Unbroken toil is not good for us; the recurrence of a day of rest is of advantage to us, physically, mentally, spiritually. But had we been left to find this out for ourselves, we should probably have waited very long for it. Certainly Proudhon tardily learned it from observation, not of pure nature, but of the Sabbath rest ordained by God. We are told on the highest authority that "the Sabbath was made for man." Man needs it. It blesses his life. But man apparently would never have had it, had it not been "made" for him; made for him by him who from the beginning of the world has known all his works, and, knowing man, has made for him from the beginning of the world the day of rest which he needs. He who needed no rest, in the greatness of his condescension, rested from the work which he had creatively made, that by his example he might woo man to his needed rest.

The Sabbath, then, is not an invention of man's, but a creation of God's. "This is the day that Jehovah hath made" – a verse than which none in the Psalter has had a more glorious history – does not refer to the Sabbath; but it is not strange that it has been so frequently applied to it that it has ended by becoming on the lips of God's people one of its fixed designations. It is Jehovah who made the Sabbath; though for man, the Sabbath is not of man, but has come to man as a gift from God himself. And, as God has made it, so he has kept it, as he has kept all else that he has made, under his own hand. It is in the power of no man to unmake the Sabbath, or to remake it – diverting it from, or, as we might fondly hope, adjusting it better to, its divinely appointed function. What God has made it, that will he himself see that it shall remain. This in effect our Savior tells us in that very saying to which we have already alluded. For, immediately upon declaring that "the Sabbath was made for man" – with the open implication, of course, that it was by God that it was made for man – he proceeds to vindicate to himself the sole empire over it. "So that," he adds, "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

The little word “even” should not pass unobserved in this declaration. “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath,” or perhaps we might translate it “also” or “too” – “the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath,” “of the Sabbath too.” In the former case it is the loftiness of the lordship which is Lord even of the Sabbath which is suggested; in the latter, it is the wideness of the lordship which our Lord asserts for himself which is intimated. Both elements of significance are present, however, in either case. The emphasis in any event falls on the greatness of the authority claimed by our Lord when he declared his lordship over the Sabbath, and the term “Lord” is in the original thrust forward in the sentence, that it may receive the whole stress. This great dominion our Lord vindicates to himself as the Son of Man, that heavenly being, whom Daniel saw coming with the clouds of heaven to set up on earth the eternal kingdom of God. Because the Sabbath was made for man, he, the Son of Man, to whom has been given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him – who reigns by right over man and all things which concern man – is Lord also of the Sabbath. There are obviously two sides to the declaration. The Sabbath, on the one hand, is the Lord’s Day. It belongs to him. He is the Lord of it; master of it – for that is what “Lord” means. He may do with it what he will; abolish it if he chooses – though abolishing it as far as possible from the suggestion of the passage; regulate it, adapt it to the changing circumstances of human life for the benefit of which it was made. On the other hand, just because it is the Lord’s day, it is nobody else’s day. It is not man’s day; it is not in the power of man. To say that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath is to withdraw it from the control of men. It is to reserve to the Son of Man all authority over it. It is not man but the Son of Man who is Lord of the Sabbath.

When we wish to remind ourselves of the foundations of the Sabbath in the Word of God, it is naturally to the Decalogue that we go first. There we read the fundamental commandment which underlay the Sabbath of which our Lord asserted himself to be the Lord, and the divine authority and continued validity of which he recognized and reaffirmed when he announced himself Lord of the Sabbath established by it. The Ten Commandments were, of

course, given to Israel; and they are couched in language that could only be addressed to Israel. They are introduced by a preface adapted and doubtless designed to give them entrance into the hearts of precisely the Israelitish people, as the household ordinances of their own God, the God to whom they owed their liberation from slavery and their establishment as a free people; "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This intimacy of appeal specifically to Israel is never lost throughout the whole document. Everywhere it has just Israel in mind, and in every part of it it is closely adapted to the special circumstances of Israel's life. We may, therefore, read off from its texts many facts about Israel. We may learn from it, for example, that Israel was a people in which the institution of slavery existed; whose chief domestic animals were oxen and asses, not, say, horses and camels; whose religious practices included sacrificial rites; and which was about to enter into a promised land, given to it of the Lord for its possession. We may learn from it also that Israel was a people to whom the Sabbath was already known, and which needed not to be informed, but only to be reminded of it; 'Remember the Sabbath day . . .'" Nothing can be clearer, then, than that the Ten Commandments are definitely addressed to the Israelitish people and declare the duties peculiarly incumbent upon them.

Unless it be even clearer that these duties, declared thus to be peculiarly incumbent upon the Israelitish people, are not duties peculiar to that people. Samuel R. Driver describes the Ten Commandments as "a concise but comprehensive summary of the duties of the Israelite towards God and man . . .". It does not appear but that this is a very fair description of them. They are addressed to the Israelite. They give him a concise but comprehensive summary of his duties towards God and man. But the Israelite, too, is a man. And it ought not to surprise us to discover that the duties of the Israelite towards God and man, when summarily stated, are just the fundamental duties which are owed to God and man by every man, whether Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. Such, at all events is, in point of fact, the case. There is no duty imposed upon the Israelite in the Ten Commandments, which is not equally incumbent upon all

men, everywhere. These commandments are but the positive publication to Israel of the universal human duties, the common morality of mankind.

It was not merely natural but inevitable that in this positive proclamation of universal human duties to a particular people, a special form should be given their enunciation specifically adapting them to this particular people in its peculiar circumstances; and it was eminently desirable that they should be so phrased and so commended as to open a ready approach for them to this particular people's mind and to bring them to bear with special force upon its heart. This element of particularity embedded in the mode of their proclamation, however, has no tendency to void these commandments of their intrinsic and universal obligation. It only clothes them with an additional appeal to those to whom this particular proclamation of them is immediately addressed. It is not less the duty of all men to do no murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false witness, not to covet a neighbor's possession, that the Israelite too is commanded not to do these things, and is urged to withhold himself from them by the moving plea that he owes a peculiar obedience to a God who has dealt with him with distinguishing grace. And it is not less the duty of all men to worship none but the one true God, and him only with spiritual worship; not to profane his name nor to withhold from him the time necessary for his service, or refuse to reverence him in his representatives, that these duties are impressed especially on the heart of the Israelite by the great plea that this God has shown himself in a peculiar manner his God. The presence of the Sabbath commandment in the midst of this series of fundamental human duties, singled out to form the compact core of the positive morality divinely required of God's peculiar people, is rather its commendation to all peoples of all times as an essential element in primary human good conduct.

It is clearly this view of the matter which was taken by our Lord. How Jesus thought of the Ten Commandments we may easily learn from his dealing with the rich young ruler who came to him demanding; "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Thou knowest the commandments," our Lord replied; "if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." Nothing

new is suggested by our Lord; nothing but the same old commandments which Jehovah had given Israel in the Ten Words. "Thou knowest the commandments," says he; "the commandments." They are the well-known commandments which everyone in Israel knew well. "I have nothing else to say to you except what you already know . . ." so one of the most modern of modern commentators (Johannes Weiss) paraphrases our Lord's response; "He who would be worthy of the kingdom of God must keep the primeval commandments of God." And that no mistake might be made as to his meaning, our Lord goes on to enumerate a sufficient number of the Ten Commandments to make it clear even to persistent misunderstanding what commandments he had in mind. "Thou shalt not kill," he specifies, "thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother," and he adds, summing up as much of them as he had repeated, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." So little does Jesus imagine that the Ten Commandments were of local and temporary obligation that he treats them as the law of the universal and eternal kingdom which he came to establish.

Nor has he left us to infer this merely from his dealing with them in such instances as this of the rich young ruler. He tells us explicitly that his mission as regards the law was, not to abrogate it, but "to fulfill it," that is to say, "to fill it out," complete it, develop it into its full reach and power. The law, he declares, in the most solemn manner, is not susceptible of being done away with, but shall never cease to be authoritative and obligatory. "For verily I say unto you," he says, employing for the first time in the record of his sayings which have come down to us, this formula of solemn asseveration – "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." So long as time endures, the law shall endure in full validity, down to its smallest details. The concluding phrase of this declaration, rendered in our Revised Version "until all things be accomplished," and perhaps even more misleadingly in the Authorised Version, "till all be fulfilled," is not a mere repetition of "till heaven and earth pass away," but means, in brief, "until all which the law requires shall be done, until no item of the law shall remain unobserved." So long as the world

stands no iota of the law shall pass away – till all that it prescribes shall be performed. The law exists not to be broken or to be abrogated, but to be obeyed; not to be “undone,” to employ an old English phrase, but to be “done.” It is to be obeyed, and it shall be obeyed, down to the last detail; and, therefore, in no detail of it can it be set aside or safely neglected. “The thought is,” remarks H. A. W. Meyer justly, that “the law will not lose its binding obligation, which reaches on to the final realization of all its prescriptions, so long as heaven and earth remain.” Now, the law of which our Lord makes this strong assertion of its ever-abiding validity, includes, as one of its prominent constituent parts, just the Ten Commandments. For, as he proceeds to illustrate his statements from instances in point, showing how the law is filled out, completed by him, he begins by adducing instances from the Ten Commandments; “thou shalt not kill”; “thou shalt not commit adultery.” It is with the Ten Commandments clearly in his mind, therefore, that he declares that no jot or tittle of the law shall ever pass away, but it all must be fulfilled.

Like Master, like disciple, There is an illuminating passage in the Epistle of James, in which the law is so adverted to as to throw a strong emphasis on its unity and its binding character in every precept of it. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law,” we read, “and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.” “The law is a whole,” comments J. E. B. Mayor; “it is the revelation of God’s will; disregard to a single point is disregard to the Law-giver, it is disobedience to God, and a spirit of disobedience breaks the law as a whole.” If then, we keep the law, indeed, in general but fail in one precept, we have broken, not that precept only, but the whole law of which that precept is a portion. We might as well say, if we have broken the handle or the lip or the pedestal of some beautiful vase, that we have not broken the vase but only the handle or the lip or the pedestal of it, as to say that we have not broken the law when we have broken a single one of its precepts. Now, the matter of special interest to us is that James illustrates this doctrine from the Ten Commandments. It is the same God, he declares, who has said, thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not kill. If we do not commit adultery but kill, we are transgressors of the holy will of this God, expressed in all the

precepts and not merely in one. It is obvious that James might have taken any others of the precepts of the Decalogue to illustrate his point – the Fourth as well as the Sixth or Seventh. The Decalogue evidently lies in his mind as a convenient summary of fundamental duty; and he says in effect that it is binding on us all, in all its precepts alike, because they all alike are from God and publish his holy will.

An equally instructive allusion to the Decalogue meets us in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul is dwelling on one of his favorite themes – love as the fulfilment of the law. "He who loveth his neighbor," he says, "hath fulfilled the law." For, all the precepts of the law – he is thinking here only of our duties to our fellowmen – are summed up in the one commandment, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." To illustrate this proposition he enumerates some of the relevant precepts. They are taken from the second table of the Decalogue; "thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet." Clearly the Ten Commandments stand in Paul's mind as a summary of the fundamental principles of essential morality, and are, as such, of eternal validity. When he declares that love is the fulfilment of these precepts, he does not mean, of course, that love supersedes them, so that we may content ourselves with loving our neighbor and not concern ourselves at all with the details of our conduct toward him. What he means is the precise contrary of this; that he who loves his neighbor has within him a spring of right conduct towards his neighbor, which will make him solicitous to fulfil all his duties to him. Love does not abrogate but fulfils the law.

Paul was not the originator of this view of the relation of love to the law. Of his Master before him we read; "And he said., Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." That is to say, all the precepts of the law are but the development in detail, in the form of announced obligations, of the natural workings of love towards God and man. The two tables of the Decalogue are clearly in mind as respectively summed up in these two great commandments. And the meaning is, again, not

that love to God and man supersedes the duties enumerated in these two tables, but that it urges prevailingly to their punctual and complete fulfilment. As loving our fellowmen does not so fulfil all our duty towards them that, loving them, we are free to rob and murder them; so loving God does not so fulfil our whole duty to him that, loving him, we are free to insult his name or deny him the time necessary for his service. Love, again, means not the abrogation but the fulfilment of the law.

It cannot be necessary to multiply examples. Nothing could be clearer than that the Ten Commandments are treated by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament as the embodiment, in a form suited to commend them to Israel, of the fundamental elements of essential morality, authoritative for all time and valid in all the circumstances of life. All the references made to them have as their tendency, not to discredit them, but to cleanse them from the obscuring accretions of years of more or less uncomprehending and unspiritual tradition, and penetrating to their core, to throw up into high light their purest ethical content. Observe how our Lord deals with the two commandments, “thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, in the passage near the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, to which we have already had occasion to allude. Everything external and mechanical in the customary application of these commandments is at once swept away; the central moral principle is seized with firmness; and this central moral principle is developed without hesitation into its uttermost manifestations. Murder, for example, is discovered in principle already in anger; and not in anger only, but even in harsh language. Adultery, in the vagrant impulses of the mind and senses; and in every approach to levity in the treatment of the marriage tie. There is no question here of abrogating these commandments, or of limiting their application. One might say rather that their applications are immensely extended, though “extended” is not quite the right word; say rather, deepened. They seem somehow to be enriched and ennobled in our Lord’s hands, made more valuable and fecund, increased in beauty and splendor. Nothing really has happened to them. But our eyes have been opened to see them as they are, purely ethical precepts, declaring

fundamental duties, and declaring them with that clean absoluteness which covers all the ground.

We have no such formal commentary from our Lord's lips on the Fourth Commandment. But we have the commentary of his life; and that is quite as illuminating and to the same deepening and ennobling effect. There was no commandment which had been more overlaid in the later Jewish practice with mechanical incrustations. Our Lord was compelled, in the mere process of living, to break his way through these, and to uncover to the sight of man ever more and more clearly the real law of the Sabbath – that Sabbath which was ordained of God, and of which he, the Son of Man, is Lord. Thus we have from him a series of crisp declarations, called out as occasion arose, the effect of which in the mass is to give us a comment on this commandment altogether similar in character to the more formal expositions of the Sixth and Seventh Commandments. Among these such a one as this stands out with great emphasis: “It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.” And this will lead us naturally to this broad proclamation: “My Father worketh even until now, and I work.” Obviously, the Sabbath, in our Lord's view, was not a day of sheer idleness; inactivity was not its mark. Inactivity was not the mark of God's Sabbath, when he rested from the works which he creatively made. Up to this very moment he has been working continuously; and, imitating him, our Sabbath is also to be filled with work. God rested, not because he was weary, or needed an intermission in his labors; but because he had completed the task he had set for himself (we speak as a man) and had completed it well. “And God finished his work which he had made”; “and God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.” He was now ready to turn to other work. And we, like him, are to do our appointed work – “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work” – and then, laying it well aside, turn to another task. It is not work as such, but our own work, from which we are to cease on the Sabbath. “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work,” says the commandment; or, as Isaiah puts it; “If thou turn thy foot from the Sabbath” (that is, from trampling it down) “from doing thy pleasure on my holy day” (that is the way we trample it down); and “call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy (day) of the Lord honorable; and shalt honor

him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” In one word, the Sabbath is the Lord’s day, not ours; and on it is to be done the Lord’s work, not ours; and that is our “rest.” As Bishop Westcott, commenting on the saying of the Lord’s which is at the moment in our mind, put it, perhaps not with perfect exactness but with substantial truth; “man’s true rest is not a rest from human, earthly labor, but a rest for divine heavenly labor.” Rest is not the true essence of the Sabbath, nor the end of its institution; it is the means to a further end, which constitutes the real Sabbath “rest.” We are to rest from our own things that we may give ourselves to the things of God.

The Sabbath came out of Christ’s hands, we see then, not despoiled of any of its authority or robbed of any of its glory, but rather enhanced in both authority and glory. Like the other commandments it was cleansed of all that was local or temporary in the modes in which it had hitherto been commended to God’s people in their isolation as a nation, and stood forth in its universal ethical content. Among the changes in its external form which it thus underwent was a change in the day of its observance. No injury was thus done the Sabbath as it was commended to the Jews; rather a new greatness was brought to it. Our Lord, too, following the example of his Father, when he had finished the work which it had been given him to do, rested on the Sabbath – in the peace of his grave. But he had work yet to do, and, when the first day of the new week, which was the first day of a new era, the era of salvation, dawned, he rose from the Sabbath rest of the grave, and made all things new. As C. F. Keil beautifully puts it; “Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, and after the completion of his work, he also rested on the Sabbath. But he rose again on the Sabbath; and through his resurrection, which is the pledge to the world of the fruit of his redeeming work, he made this day the Lord’s Day for his Church, to be observed by it till the Captain of its salvation shall return, and having finished the judgment upon all his foes to the very last, shall lead it to the rest of that eternal Sabbath which God prepared for the whole creation through his

own resting after the completion of the heaven and the earth.” Christ took the Sabbath into the grave with him and brought the Lord’s Day out of the grave with him on the resurrection morn.

It is true enough that we have no record of a commandment of our Lord’s requiring a change in the day of the observance of the Sabbath. Neither has any of the apostles to whom he committed the task of founding his Church given us such a commandment. By their actions, nevertheless, both our Lord and his apostles appear to commend the first day of the week to us as the Christian Sabbath. It is not merely that our Lord rose from the dead on that day. A certain emphasis seems to be placed precisely upon the fact that it was on the first day of the week that he rose. This is true of all the accounts of his rising, Luke, for example, after telling us that Jesus rose “on the first day of the week,” on coming to add the account of his appearing to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, throws what almost seems to be superfluous stress on that also having happened “on that very day.” It is in John’s account, however, that this emphasis is most noticeable. “Now, on the first day of the week,” he tells us, “cometh Mary Magdalene early,” to find the empty tomb. And then, a little later: “When therefore it was evening on that day, the first day of the week,” Jesus showed himself to his assembled followers. The definition of the time here, the commentator naturally remarks, is “singularly full and emphatic.” Nor is this all. After thus pointedly indicating that it was on the evening of precisely the first day of the week that Jesus first showed himself to his assembled disciples, John proceeds equally sharply to define the time of his next showing himself to them as “after eight days”; that is to say it was on the next first day of the week that “his disciples were again within” and Jesus manifested himself to them. The appearance is strong that our Lord, having crowded the day of his rising with manifestations, disappeared for a whole week to appear again only on the next Sabbath. George Zabriskie Gray seems justified, therefore, in suggesting that the full effect of our Lord’s sanction of the first day of the week as the appointed day of his meeting with his disciples can be fitly appreciated only by considering with his manifestations also his disappearances. “For six whole days between the rising day and its octave he was absent.” “Is it

possible to exaggerate the effect of this blank space of time, in fixing and defining the impressions received through his visits?"

We know not what happened on subsequent Sabbaths: there were four of them before the Ascension. But there is an appearance at least that the first day of the week was becoming under this direct sanction of the risen Lord the appointed day of Christian assemblies. That the Christians were early driven to separate themselves from the Jews (observe Acts xix. 9) and had soon established regular times of "assembling themselves together," we know from an exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews. A hint of Paul's suggests that their ordinary day of assembly was on the first day of the week (1 Cor. xvi. 2). It is clear from a passage in Acts xx. 7 that the custom of "gathering together to break bread" "upon the first day of the week" was so fixed in the middle of the period of Paul's missionary activity that though in haste he felt constrained to tarry a whole week in Troas that he might meet with the brethren on that day. It is only the natural comment to make when Friedrich Blass remarks: "It would seem, then, that that day was already set apart for the assemblies of the Christians." We learn from a passing reference in the Apocalypse (i. 10) that the designation "the Lord's Day" had already established itself in Christian usage. "The celebration of the Lord's Day, the day of the Resurrection," comments Johannes Weiss, "is therefore already customary in the churches of Asia Minor." With such suggestions behind us, we cannot wonder that the Church emerges from the Apostolic Age with the first day of the week firmly established as its day of religious observance. Nor can we doubt that apostolic sanction of this establishment of it is involved in this fact.

In these circumstances it cannot be supposed that Paul has the religious observance of the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath in mind, when he exhorts the Colossians to keep themselves in indifference with respect to the usages which he describes as "the shadow of the things to come," and enumerates as meat and drink and such things as festivals and new moons and Sabbath days (Col. ii. 16). They have the substance in Christ; why should they disturb themselves with the shadow? He does indeed sweep away with these words the whole system of typical ordinances which he repeatedly speaks of as weak and beggarly elements of the world.

In a similar vein he exclaims to the Galatians (iv. 10); “Ye observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain.” In thus emancipating his readers from the shadow-ordinances of the Old Dispensation, Paul has no intention whatever, however, of impairing for them the obligations of the moral law, summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments. It is simply unimaginable that he could have allowed that any precept of this fundamental proclamation of essential morality could pass into desuetude.

He knew, to be sure, how to separate the eternal substance of these precepts from the particular form in which they were published to Israel. Turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, sister letter to that of the Colossians, written at the same time and sent by the hand of the same messengers, and read from the twenty-fifth verse of the fourth chapter on, a transcript from the second table of the Decalogue, in its depth and universalizing touch, conceived quite in the spirit of our Lord’s own comments on it. “Wherefore,” says Paul, “putting away falsehood, speak ye each one truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another.” That is the form which the Ninth Commandment takes in his hands. “Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil.” This is Paul’s version of the Sixth Commandment. “Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.” That is how he commends the Eighth Commandment. “Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.” Thus Paul subtilizes the requirements of the Seventh Commandment.

If we wish, however, fully to apprehend how Paul was accustomed to Christianize and universalize the Ten Commandments while preserving nevertheless intact their whole substance and formal authority, we should turn over the page and read this (Eph. vi. 2); “Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long in the earth.” Observe, first, how the Fifth

Commandment is introduced here as the appropriate proof that obedience to parents is right. Having asserted it to be right, Paul adduces the commandment which requires it. Thus the acknowledged authority of the Fifth Commandment as such in the Christian Church is simply taken for granted. Observe, secondly, how the authority of the Fifth Commandment thus assumed as unquestionable, is extended over the whole Decalogue. For this commandment is not adduced here as an isolated precept; it is brought forward as one of a series, in which it stands on equal ground with the others, differing from them only in being the first of them which has a promise attached to it; “which is the first commandment with promise.” Observe, thirdly, how everything in the manner in which the Fifth Commandment is enunciated in the Decalogue that gives it a form and coloring adapting it specifically to the Old Dispensation is quietly set aside and a universalizing mode of statement substituted for it; “that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” All allusion to Canaan, the land which Jehovah, Israel’s God, had promised to Israel, is eliminated, and with it all that gives the promise or the commandment to which it is annexed any appearance of exclusive application to Israel. In its place is set a broad declaration valid not merely for the Jew who worships the Father in Jerusalem, but for all those true worshippers everywhere who worship him in spirit and in truth. This may seem the more remarkable, because Paul, in adducing the commandment, calls special attention to this promise, and that in such a manner as to appeal to its divine origin. It is quite clear that he was thoroughly sure of his ground with his readers. And that means that the universalizing reading of the Ten Commandments was the established custom of the Apostolic Church.

Can we doubt that as Paul, and the whole Apostolic Church with him, dealt with the Fifth Commandment, so he dealt with the Fourth? That he preserved to it its whole substance and its complete authority, but eliminated from it too all that tended to give it a local and temporary reference? And why should this not have carried with it, as it certainly seems to have carried with it, the substitution for the day of the God of Israel, who brought his people out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, the

day of the Lord Jesus, who brought them out of worse bondage than that of Egypt by a greater deliverance, a deliverance of which that from Egypt was but a type? Paul would be dealing with the Fourth Commandment precisely as he deals with the Fifth, if he treated the shadow-Sabbath as a matter of indifference and brought the whole obligation of the commandment to bear upon keeping holy to the Lord the new Lord's Day, the monument of the second and better creation.

That this was precisely what he did, and with him the whole Apostolic Church, there seems no room to question. And the meaning of that is that the Lord's Day is placed in our hands, by the authority of the Apostles of Christ, under the undiminished sanction of the eternal law of God.