

AN APPEAL FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE BIBLE SABBATH:

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IN AN ADDRESS TO THE BAPTISTS, FROM THE SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE.

NEW YORK

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN SABBATH TRACT SOCIETY,

1852

THE ADDRESS, The Seventh-day Baptist General Conference, to the members of the Baptist Denomination throughout the United States, holding to the Observance of the First Day of the Week as a Divine Institution:

BELOVED BRETHREN:— When our Divine Redeemer dwelt on earth, he prayed that all his disciples might be "made perfect in one." As this prayer was in harmony with the sure word of prophecy, which instructs us to look for a time when "the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and sing with united voice," we are sure that it will ultimately be answered. We see nothing, however, to warrant us in looking for such a happy consummation, while we contemplate the multiplied divisions of the Christian world, perpetuated as they are by the selfishness of human nature. Here the prospect is dark indeed. But we have an unshaken confidence in the power of God to bring about his own purposes, notwithstanding all the devices of men. "The hearts of all are in his hands, and he turned them whithersoever he will." He that made "the multitude of one heart and of one soul," in the first age of the church, can again concentrate his scattered bands, break down every wall of separation, and enlighten every mind by the effusion of his Spirit. Then shall Zion move forth, "clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

We rejoice, brethren, that you, as well as ourselves, are looking for this day of glory. Moreover, we have knowledge of your firm persuasion, that this glorious union of the now scattered forces of Israel, can be effected only upon the basis of divine truth. With a single glance you see the fallacy of that reasoning, which calls upon you, for the sake of union, to sacrifice the least particle of God's Word. Taught by the Spirit of God, you have learned that the smallest atom of truth is more precious than fine gold. That meager piety which finds "non-essentials" in the appointments of Jehovah, you cannot abide. Your language is, "We esteem ALL thy precepts concerning ALL things to be right, and we hate EVERY false way."

We know, moreover, that it is the desire of your hearts, that all dissensions between Christians should be forever ended. For this object you are laboring and praying; and while you are doing so, you have the enlightened conviction, that your labors and prayers will be successful, in proportion to the amount of truth with which your own minds are imbued, and which you can bring to bear upon the minds of others. Lamenting as you do to expound to others the way of the Lord more perfectly, we cannot suppose that you are yourselves unwilling to learn. We therefore approach you with confidence, affectionately and earnestly requesting you to take into consideration the subject which is the only ground of difference between you and us. In our estimation, it is a subject of great importance; and though some of you have made it a matter of thought, we are persuaded that the great body of your denomination have dismissed it without any particular investigation. Indeed, we speak not unadvisedly when we say, that on this question the whole church of God have been lulled to sleep. In urging it upon your attention, we think you will not charge us with wishing to raise disturbance in Zion. We indulge the hope that you will impute to us the same disinterestedness of motive by which you yourselves are actuated when you boldly proclaim your denominational sentiments upon every high place, and scatter your publications in every direction. Your course springs not from any wish to foment disturbance, but from the pain which your hearts feel to see the institutions of Christ made void by the traditions of men. Our action in this matter springs from the same principle. We feel in regard to the Sabbath just as you do in regard to baptism. We declare before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are moved by a desire for your good and God's glory.

When we look over your large and influential denomination, we find that, in reference to the subject upon which we now address you, you are divided into about three classes. I. Those who, acknowledging the perpetuity of the Sabbath law, enforce the observance of the Sabbath by the fourth commandment, but change the day of its celebration from the seventh to the first day of the week. II. Those who see the impossibility of proving a change of the day, and therefore regard the commandment as abolished by the death of Christ. But, at the same time, they consider the first day of the week as an institution entirely new, to be regulated as to its observance wholly by the New Testament. III. Those who consider neither the Old nor the New Testament to impose any obligation upon them to observe a day of rest, and advocate one merely on the ground of expediency.

I. To those of you who acknowledge the obligation of a Sabbath, but change the day of its celebration from the seventh to the first day of the week, we would say, that while from the Law only you infer any obligation to sabbatize at all, yet make the particular time of sabbatizing to stand upon New Testament authority, we do not see how you can relieve yourselves from the charge of departing from the great principle contended for by Baptists, viz. That whatever is commanded by an institution, is to be learned from the law of the institution, and not from other sources. On this principle, you reject the logic of Pedobaptists, who, while they find the ordinance of

baptism in the New Testament, go back to the law of circumcision to determine the subjects. You tell them, and very justly too, that the law of the institution is the only rule of obedience. But do you not fall into the same error when the argument has respect to the Sabbath? We can see no more fitness in applying the law of the Sabbath to the first day of the week, than in applying the law of circumcision to the subjects of baptism. For the law of circumcision was not more expressly confined to the fleshly seed of Abraham, than was the law of the Sabbath to the seventh day of the week. The true principle is, that every institution is to be explained and regulated by its own law. Therefore, if the first day of the week is an institution binding upon us, the law to regulate its observance should be looked for where we find the institution. Be pleased, brethren, to review this argument, and see if you are not treading on Pedobaptism ground.

In justification of this change of the day, we often hear you plead the example of Christ and his apostles. But where do we find anything to this effect in their example? Did the apostles sabbatize on the first day of the week? Did the churches which were organized by them do so? Observe, the question between you and us is NOT, Did they meet together and hold worship on that day? BUT, Did they sabbatize? that is, Did they REST FROM THEIR LABOR on the first day of the week? Did they observe it AS a Sabbath? This is the true issue. We have often asked this question, but the only answer that we have received has been, that they assembled for worship. But this is not a candid way of meeting the point. It is in reality an answer to a very different question from the one we ask. Brethren, act out your own principles. Come up fairly to the question. When you ask a Pedobaptist, Did Christ baptize or authorize the baptism of little children? you expect him to make some other reply than, "He put his hands on them and prayed." When you ask, Did the apostles baptize unconscious babes? you are not well pleased with the reply, They baptized households. Your question was with regard to infants—the baptism of them. If, therefore, when we ask you, Did the apostles and primitive Christians sabbatize on the first day of the week? you merely reply as above, we do not see but you are guilty of the very same sophistry you are so ready to charge upon your Pedobaptist brethren. Your adroit evasion of the real question seems to place you much in the same predicament as were the Pharisees, when Christ asked them whence was the baptism of John. It appears as if you reasoned with yourselves, and said, "If we shall say they did sabbatize on the first day of the week, the evidence will be called for, and we cannot find it; but if we shall say they did not, we fear the day will lose its sacredness in the eyes of the people." We do not by any means wish to charge you with a Pharisaic lack of principle, but we put it to your sober judgment, whether your position is not an awkward one. Brethren, reconsider this point, and see if you are not on Pedobaptist ground.

If the apostles did not sabbatize on the first day of the week, then it follows, as a matter of course, that whatever notoriety or dignity belonged to that day, they did not regard it as a substitute for the Sabbath. Consequently, unless the Sabbath law was entirely abrogated by the death of Christ, the old Sabbath, as instituted in Paradise, and rehearsed from Sinai, continues yet binding, as "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

But more than this. Even if it could be proved, that the apostles and primitive Christians did actually regard the first day of the week as a Sabbath, it would not follow that the old Sabbath is no longer in force, unless it could be proved that they considered the new as a SUBSTITUTE for the old; or, that so far as the particular day was concerned, it was of a CEREMONIAL character. But where do we find proof for either of these points? In the whole record of the transactions and teachings of the apostles, where do we find this idea of substitution? Nowhere. Where do we find evidence that, so far as the particular day was concerned, it was ceremonial, and therefore to cease at the death of Christ? Nowhere. The argument that proves the Sabbath law not to be ceremonial, proves the same of the day. Did the Sabbath law originate in Paradise, when man was innocent, and had no need of a Redeemer? So did the day. It was then sanctified and blessed. Does the Sabbath law take cognizance of the relation on which all the precepts of the moral law are founded, viz. the relation we sustain to God as creatures to Creator? So does the day. It is a memorial of this relation, and of the rest entered into by God after he, by his work, had established the relation. It appears, then, that neither the Sabbath law, nor the day it enjoins, was of a ceremonial character. True, it is not moral, in the strictest sense, but rather positive. Nevertheless, by divine appointment it is in the same category with the moral law, and must be considered a part of it. If this reasoning is correct—and if it is not, we hope you will point it out—it would not follow that the old Sabbath is done away, because Christ and his apostles sabbatized on the first day of the week; but only that there are two Sabbaths instead of one.

But could Christ or his apostles consistently alter the law of the Sabbath? In all his ministry, Christ acted under the appointment of the Father, and according to such restrictions as were contained in the law and the prophets. By those restrictions, no laws were to be set aside at his coming, except such as were peculiar to the Jewish economy; such as "meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation." Heb. 9: 10: To set aside these, the law gave the Messiah an express grant. Heb. 10: 9. But the very moment he should attempt to go beyond the limits of that grant, he would destroy all evidence of his being the Messiah promised and appointed. For it was by his exact conformity to the law, that his claims were established. Hence, early in his ministry, he declared that he "came not to destroy the law or the prophets." Matt. 5: 17. Most cheerfully do we recognize him as God over all, and blessed forever; yet we are well satisfied that, even in virtue of his divinity, he could not consistently set aside any laws except those which were "a shadow of things to come." Otherwise we should have God denying him self—God contradicting himself! The New Testament records not a single instance of his claiming a right to do so. When he avowed himself Lord of the Sabbath, he only claimed to determine what was the proper method of keeping it—what were breaches of it, and what were not. The Sabbath was made for man, and consequently it was his prerogative to decide what acts and duties answered to the nature and design of the institution. Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Mark 2: 28.

In regard to the obligation resulting from apostolic example, it appears to us that you have fallen into some errors. We are not convinced that the example of the apostles can be justly pleaded for anything else than the order and arrangement of the church. However proper it may be to imitate them in other respects—in the duties of the moral law, for instance—yet, if it were not known to be proper, independent of their example, we cannot suppose their example would make it so. We must first ascertain, by some settled and infallible rule, whether their practice is worthy of imitation. In regard to the ordering of church affairs, there can be no doubt, for they were sent upon this very errand, with the promise of the Holy Spirit to qualify them for the work. But the Sabbath is not a church ordinance. It is not an institution for the church as such, but for all mankind. All reasoning with reference to it, from apostolic example, must therefore be very inconclusive. Even if we should admit that the church is bound by such example to regard the first day of the week, yet this is the utmost extent to which our admissions can go. We cannot see how the institution becomes binding upon the world at large. Consequently, we are compelled to maintain, that an institution which was originally given for all mankind, remains unaltered. We are willing that the example and practice of the apostles should regulate the church as to its ordinances and government, and herein we claim to follow them as strictly as you do; but when they are pleaded for anything more, we want first to know whether they conform to the express law of God. Otherwise we must consider them as no more binding than an apostle's quarrel with Barnabas. Acts 15: 39.

If this argument is well founded, we are led to a very satisfactory disposal of a question often proposed, viz., Why do we never read in the New Testament of Christian assemblies being convened as such on the Sabbath? For if the Sabbath be not a church, ordinance, but an institution for mankind at large, it can be of no importance for us to know what Christian assemblies as such did with regard to it. All that is of real importance for us to know, is the precise bearing of the institution upon man as man—upon man as a rational and accountable creature. On this point the information is clear and decisive.

The controversy between us and you appears to be brought down to a very narrow compass. Did the Apostles and primitive Christians sabbatize on the first day of the week? And, Is it the duty of all men to imitate their example, or only the CHURCH? If, upon a solemn and prayerful consideration of this subject, you are persuaded that there is no proof that the early Christians regarded the first day as a Sabbath, (substituted in place of the seventh,) and will honestly avow your conviction, we have no fear that the controversy will be prolonged. For, should you still be of opinion that some sort of notoriety was attached to the day, and that Christians met for worship, we shall not be very solicitous to dispute the point. The apostolic rule, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," will then govern us. See Rom. 14: 5, 6. Our concern is not that you keep the first day of the week, but that you keep it in place of the Sabbath, thus making void the commandment of God. If once you discover, that Sunday is not the Sabbath by divine appointment, and therefore cannot be enforced upon the conscience, we are persuaded that your deep sense of the necessity of such an institution, will soon bring you to the observance of the one originally appointed.

II. But we proceed to address those of you who regard the sabbatical law as having been nailed to the cross, and consider the first day of the week as an institution entirely new, regulated as to its observance wholly by the New Testament.

You, whom we now address, are exempt from some of the inconsistencies which we have exposed; but your theory labors under very serious difficulties, and is to be regarded, on the whole, as more obnoxious to the interests of religion, than the one we have been considering.

According to your position, the New Testament recognizes no Sabbath at all. Do not start at this charge. That it is repugnant to your feelings, we allow. You have never, thought of anything else than entire abstinence from labor on the first day of the week. It is your day of rest, as well as worship. But on what ground do you make it a day of rest? What example have you for doing so? What law of the New Testament requires you to lay aside all your secular business? As sin is the transgression of the law, and where no law is there is no transgression—1 John 3: 4, Rom. 4: 15—how do you make it appear to be sin to work on the day in question? It is by the commandment that sin becomes exceeding sinful. Rom. 7: 13. By what commandment do you make it appear sinful to work on Sunday? These are questions of the highest importance.

Now suppose one of your brethren attends public worship on the first day of the week, and—to make his conformity to what is supposed to be apostolic example as perfect as possible—participates in the breaking of bread. He then goes home, and labors diligently till the day is closed. By what law will you convince him of sin? Not the law of the Sabbath as contained in the Decalogue, for that you bold to be abolished. Not any law of the New Testament which says, " Keep the first day of the week holy; in it thou shalt not do any work," for there is no such law. Not the law of apostolic example, for there is no proof that the apostles ever gave such example. The very utmost that you can with any show of reason pretend of their example is, that they met together for worship and breaking of bread. To this example your brother has conformed to the very letter—who can say he has not in spirit also? What now will you do with him? " The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The Bible, therefore, is the Rule by which he is to be tried. Convict him of sin by this Rule, if you can.

But the case becomes still more difficult, when you come to apply it to those who are without the pale of the church. We have already seen, that apostolic example concerns merely the ordering and arrangement of the church. Attempt now to convince the unbeliever of

sin in working on the first day of the week. In order to do this, charge apostolic example upon him. What is his reply? "I know not," says he, "that I am bound to imitate them in this matter. How does it appear that I am? I will admit, for argument's sake, that they celebrated the resurrection on Sunday by religious worship; but they also broke bread and partook of it by way of celebrating his death. If their example binds me in one particular, why not in the other? Prove to me," says he, "that any but the church assembled on the first day for worship, and I will do so too. But in the absence of all such proof, I must conclude that their example has nothing to do with me; unless, indeed, you can make it appear, that their example and practice were in conformity to some law, which commanded them as rational creatures, independent of their relation to Christ and his church. When you can produce that law, then I shall feel bound to obey it, and imitate the apostles in their obedience to it; but not till then." Such is the reasoning by which an unbeliever may set aside all your attempts to charge sin upon him. Where, brethren, is your law which, like a barbed arrow, pierces the very soul, and fastens guilt upon the conscience? Where is that law which speaks out its thunders, saying, "Thus saith the Almighty God, the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, It is the Sabbath day; in it thou shalt not do any work?" To throw aside the law, which cuts and flames every way, reaching soul and spirit, joints and marrow, in order to deal with the ungodly by mere apostolic example, is like muffling the sword, lest it should give a deadly wound. Apostolic example is indeed powerful with those whose hearts have been made tender by the Spirit of God, but with others powerless.

We are persuaded, brethren, that your conscientious scruples about laboring on the first day of the week, never resulted from the mere contemplation of apostolic example. Such example, it is true, is all the law you acknowledge; but this is the theory you have adopted since you came to maturity, and began to think for yourselves. Your scruples have an earlier and different origin. They commenced with your childhood, when you were taught to consider the day as holy time. It was then carefully instilled into your mind, that God had, by express law, forbidden you to desecrate the day, and that you would incur his displeasure in case you should do so. The idea was then imbibed, that if you did not keep the day, you would violate the fourth commandment. This idea has grown with your growth, and strengthened with your strength. It has obtained such commanding influence over your feelings, that you cannot comfortably forbear keeping a day of rest, though your theory does not require it. Even to this day a strong impression rests upon your minds, that the fourth commandment contains much of moral excellence—too much to be thrown altogether away, notwithstanding your system of theology teaches its abrogation. Such is the true secret of your tenderness of conscience. Apostolic example has in reality nothing to do with it. Following the secret monitions of conscience, your prosperity is promoted in spite of your theological system. But sound reason discovers, that your experience and your theory are in opposition to each other. Some of the more thinking ones among you are aware of this, and are continually aiming at such a modification of their theory, that their experience will harmonize with it. But be assured, that there will be an everlasting conflict, till you are brought to acknowledge fully and heartily the claims of the sabbatical law.

We are aware of that system of theology which regards the New Testament as furnishing the only code of laws by which men are bound since the death of Christ. We have looked at this doctrine with attention; and so far as the order, government, and ordinances of the church are concerned, we admit its truth. As the laws and ordinances of the Jewish church were determined by the Old Testament, so the laws and ordinances of the Christian church are determined solely by the New Testament. Therefore, we should say at once, the argument is yours, if the Sabbath were a church ordinance. In such case, however, none but the church has a Sabbath. But the question is not concerning church ordinances. In these we follow the New Testament as closely as ourselves. The question is concerning an institution which has respect to mankind at large—to man as man; for the Savior teaches us that the Sabbath was made for man. Now, it will be a very hard matter to prove, that when men as rational creatures are concerned, the only code of laws by which they are bound is the New Testament. Let us put the matter to the test. How will you prove that it is unlawful for a man to marry his sister, his daughter, or any other of near kin? The New Testament utters not a word on the subject. It is not enough to say, It is implied in the law which forbids adultery; for it must first be proved to be a species of adultery to do so. Nor will it do to say, The common sense of mankind is a sufficient law on the subject; for the moment we suppose that its unlawfulness is to be determined in this way, we abandon the argument that the New Testament is the only code of laws, and resort to the common sense of mankind as furnishing a part of the code. But if the common sense of mankind shall furnish a part of the code by which we are bound, who shall undertake to say how large a part? Besides, on this principle, the book of divine revelation is not complete and perfect. It is a lamp to our feet only in part, and the common sense of mankind makes out the deficiency! You are, therefore, driven to take your stand again upon the New Testament. Finding you there again, we repeat the question, How do you prove by your code that a man may not marry his sister? It is impossible. You must, of necessity, look to that division of the Scriptures usually called the Old Testament; for the New says not one word about it.

Let us turn now to the 18th chapter of the book of Leviticus, and we shall find a collection of laws exactly to the point. "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him," etc. v. 6. The degrees of kindred are then expressly marked. Will it be objected, that these laws were given particularly to the Jews, and to no other people? We admit they were given to the Jews, as indeed was the whole system of revelation in that age; but we cannot admit that they concerned no other class of people. For it is expressly shown in that chapter, that the matters of which they took cognizance, were regarded as abominations in the Gentiles. Because of such things, the fierce wrath of Jehovah came down upon the Canaanites, and they were cast out from the land as loathsomeness. v. 24, 30. If these things were viewed as abominable in the Canaanites, they surely were not ceremonial pollutions. They were not mere Jewish laws. The fallacy of the doctrine is therefore sufficiently exposed.

We think you have fallen into error concerning the nature and design of that division of the Scriptures commonly called the New Testament. We regard it not as the *Law Book* of mankind, in the strict and proper sense; but rather as a *Treatise on Justification*, or an *Expose of the Way of Salvation*, in which are contained such references to the law, and such quotations from it, as are necessary to the complete elucidation of the subject. The preparation of this treatise was of necessity delayed until the great Sacrifice for sin had been offered, and our High Priest had entered into the holy place. For, as the sacrifice and intercession of our High Priest constitute the sole foundation of our justification, so "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing." Heb. 9:8. So much of the plan of salvation was illustrated to the people, as could be by means of the ritual service; and that, together with the prophecies, laid a foundation for them to *believe* that, *in some way or other*, they would be just before God. So that *by faith* the patriarchs were justified. Heb. 11. They knew it was to be *somehow* through the work of Him who was typified and promised as the great Redeemer. But they could not understand the plan until the Redeemer came and died for them.

*Because* this expose. of the way of salvation could not be made until after the death of the High Priest, *therefore* it was not proper to organize gospel churches. The only church that was suitable for that age was found in the Jewish nation, and from its very nature was unfit for the world at large. It was, therefore, confined to that people. Moreover, because it was not proper to organize gospel churches until the way of salvation was fully laid open, it was also not proper to lay down the laws and ordinances of the church until that time. This accounts for the laws of the church being found only in the New Testament.

Now, if the New Testament is to be regarded as an exhibition of the way of salvation, with such references to the Old as are necessary for the elucidation of the subject, rather than as the Law. Book for mankind at large, the idea that the Sabbath ought not to be looked for in the Old Testament falls to the ground. Nevertheless, to some minds it appears strange, that while the New Testament writers mention all the other duties of the Decalogue, this of Sabbath keeping is apparently omitted. In speaking of the sins of which Christians were guilty before their conversion, not one word is said about Sabbath breaking, though upon other sins they dwell with emphasis. But this admits of a very easy solution. Those writers addressed two classes of converts—those from among the Jews, and those from among the Gentiles. As to the former, they were already rigid to an extreme in keeping the Sabbath. All that was necessary to do in their case, was to vindicate the institution from Pharisaic austerities, and determine what was lawful to be done, and what was not lawful. This was done by Christ. But as for the Gentile converts, to charge them with having been guilty of the sin of Sabbath breaking in their state of heathenism, would have been manifest impropriety. For the Sabbath being for the most part a *positive* rather than a *moral* precept, it could not be known without a revelation. But as the Gentiles had no revelation, this is a good reason why the apostle dwelt not upon this sin to charge it upon them, but only upon those which were more obviously breaches of the Moral Law. Thus it appears, there was no necessity for any more particular mention of the Sabbath to be made in the New Testament than what is made.

But it is not our object in this Address to cover the whole field of argument. We design simply, by presenting some of the strong points, and exposing your inconsistencies, to stir up your attention to the subject. We are sure that the great majority of you have never given it a thorough investigation. For a complete discussion of the whole ground, we refer you to our publications. Will you read them? Will you anxiously inquire, What is truth? Will you pray over the matter, saying, " Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" Or, will you sleep over it, as if it were of no great practical importance?

III. But we must address that class of Baptists who consider neither the Old nor the New Testament to impose any obligation to observe a day of rest, and advocate one merely on the ground of expediency. In some sections of our country, Baptists would consider it almost a slander upon their denomination to intimate that there were persons among them of such anti-sabbath principles. But anyone who is conversant with the order at large, knows very well that it is true. There are those who boldly avow such doctrine, and many others who do not deny that it is their real sentiment, though they are not forward to proclaim it upon the house-tops. Whether this class embraces a very large proportion of the denomination, it is not necessary to inquire. It is our impression, that the proportion is sufficiently large to justify an effort for their conversion to right views of Divine Truth.

If there is no day of rest enjoined by divine authority, and the observance of one rests wholly upon expediency, we see no reason, except that the voice of the multitude is against it, why you cannot as well observe the *seventh* as the *first* day of the week. There would be no sacrifice of conscience in so doing, while it would be a tribute of respect to those who feel that the keeping of the seventh day is an indispensable part of duty. But it is not on this principle, particularly, that we desire you to change your ground. Feeling that it is not *our party* that must be honored, but rather *divine truth*, and our party only *for the sake of* the truth, we would much rather correct your doctrinal views.

Of course, you do not deny that a day of rest was once enjoined upon God's chosen people. It is only under the gospel that you suppose all distinction of days to be annihilated. If, then, it is *expedient* that a day of rest should be observed, it follows irresistibly, that the annihilation of all distinction in days, by the gospel, was very INEXPEDIENT! And thus, whatever blessings the gospel dispensation brings to the human race, a strict following out of its principles would be INEXPEDIENT! And, farther, that the *law*, which enjoined a day of rest, had more of an eye to expediency than the *gospel* has! Consequently, that the gospel, though declared to be *faultless*, and capable of *perfecting* those who believe, must nevertheless, FOR EXPEDIENCY'S SAKE, borrow a little help from the abrogated rites of the law! In other words, God, in setting aside a day of rest, committed an oversight, and left his work for man to mend! Brethren, we *see* not how it is possible for you to escape such monstrous conclusions. They are the legitimate result of your principles—principles which you must have adopted without considering where they would land you. For we are not disposed to believe you so

completely destitute of piety, as willingly to abide by the result of them. We entreat you to reconsider them, and adopt such as are more in accordance with the spirit of our holy religion.

When you advocate the observance of a day of rest on the ground of *expediency*, we are persuaded that you do so in view of the bearing you perceive it to have upon the well being of mankind. But still the question will arise, Has the gospel less regard to the well being of mankind than the law had? Look at the humanity of the sabbatical institution. How necessary that both man and beast should rest one day in seven. How evident that they cannot endure uninterrupted toil. How perfectly well established, that, if doomed to constant labor, they sink under the premature exhaustion of their powers. So well is this established, that we cannot put such a low estimate upon your judgment as to suppose it necessary to enter upon any proof of it. But the question returns, Does the gospel breathe less humanity than the law? Or, consider the bearing of the institution upon the interests of religion. It affords opportunity for men to be instructed in the great things which pertain to their salvation; and if there were no Sabbath to call them away from their labors, it would be impossible to bring religious instruction into contact with their minds. Does the gospel afford less advantage in this respect than the law did? Did the law provide a season for instructing the people in religion as it *then* stood? and does the gospel provide no season for instructing them in religion as it *now* stands? Must they be instructed in *types*, but not in the *substance*? —in *prophecy*, but not in the *fulfillment* of prophecy? No one will be responsible for the affirmative of these questions.

If the New Dispensation actually has abrogated the Sabbath, we do not believe that it is *expedient* to observe it. We cannot believe, however, that an institution so important to the civilization, refinement, and religious prosperity of mankind, has been abrogated. We refer you to our publications, and to the publications of those who have, in common with us, defended the perpetuity of the sabbatical law; and we entreat you to reconsider your ground. The doctrine of expediency! What a fruitful source of corruption has it been to the church of God! There is not an anti-Christian, popish abomination, but what pleads something of this kind. Do, dear brethren, let it be expunged from your creed

BRETHREN OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION: You are a great and growing people. Your influence is felt throughout the length and breadth of our land. We rejoice in your prosperity. " May the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and toward all men." In your prosperity we behold, in a measure, our own. Your baptism is our baptism. Your church government is our government. Your doctrinal principles are ours; and there is nothing which constitutes any real ground of separation, except the great and important subject we now urge upon your attention.

The popularity you have gained as a denomination, however, is not owing to your Sabbath principles. It is founded entirely on your views concerning the initiating ordinance of the gospel. These views are characterized by that perfect simplicity which marks every divine institution. Hence you have won the affections of the common people, while, if you had attempted to operate on them by a more complicated theory, failure would have been the result.

This induces us to urge upon your notice the *exceeding simplicity* of the Sabbatarian argument, compared with all those theories which stand in opposition to it. It is adapted to persons of weak capacities, of whom there are thousands in the kingdom of Christ. Any illiterate person can open the Bible, and point to chapter and verse, saying, " The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." This is plain; he can understand it. But tell him that redemption was a much greater work than creation; that redemption was finished by the resurrection of Christ; that an event so important ought to be commemorated; and that, in order to do this, the day of the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; for all which there is not a single "thus saith the Lord;" nothing but the uncertain deductions of human reason. Can he understand it? No. It requires an elevation of intellect which God has not given him. The inferences and deductions are beyond his capacities. How then is he to render an *intelligent* obedience? If he conform his practice to the theory thus set before him, it will not be because he understands it, but because he is willing to trust the guidance of his mind to those who, he thinks, know more than he does himself. This, therefore, is strong internal evidence that the keeping of the first day is not of God. For God's Book is adapted not only to those of elevated intellect, but to the ignorant and rude. Everything concerning our practice is plain even to wayfaring men. Were it otherwise, we should conclude that the Bible is not an inspired production. If it did not come down to the capacities of all, we should infer that it was not made by Him who made all minds. Indeed, it would not, in such case, be a *revelation* to all, but only to the more talented. But it is a revelation to *all*; and he that obeys God, must do it for himself; he that repents and believes, must do so for himself; and at the great day, every one of us shall give account for himself unto God. It is of the highest importance, therefore, that everyone know *for himself* the foundation of his faith and practice.

In thus urging the simplicity of the argument for the Sabbath, we are but doing what you do in regard to Baptism. Compare the cases. A man of considerable intellect can reason from the Abrahamic covenant, lay propositions together, and draw inferences and deductions, until, finally, he makes it pretty clear to his own mind, that the children of the flesh, these are the children of God; Paul to the contrary notwithstanding. But how is it with some good old Baptist sister, who can hardly join two ideas together, and draw a logical inference from them? Why, she cannot tell about this reasoning from the Abrahamic covenant. It is something she does not understand. But she can open her Bible, and point to chapter and verse for believer's baptism. She puts her finger upon something that is just adapted to her capacities. As she has a soul to save, an obedience to render, and an account to give, all for herself, her practice is accordingly.

Brethren, think this matter over, and see whether your reasoning on the Sabbath is not very much akin to that of

those who reason from the Abrahamic covenant to Baptism. Think seriously, whether it does not render *intelligent* obedience impossible to vast numbers of Christians. Think whether a course of reasoning which darkens a very simple subject, is not more specious than solid.

Again, your children are to be early instructed in this matter. How do you succeed in making them understand it? Is your little child capable of comprehending all this argument, which you found upon the finishing of redemption by the resurrection of Christ? Can you point him to any plain passage, where Christ authorizes a change of the Sabbath? How do you feel when the little creature says, in the simplicity of his heart, " Father, mother, does not the fourth commandment require the observance of the seventh day of the week? But do we not keep the first day? I should think this is not keeping the commandment." One would think you would be forcibly reminded of that scripture, " Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou shalt be ordained strength." Ps. 8:2.

The extensive operations in which you are engaged for the conversion of the world, render it in the highest degree important that you should not err on a question like this. If you are right, you ought to be very certain of it. Among the heathen, you are extending the observance of Sunday as a sacred day. If you are thus sowing the seeds of error instead of truth, the evils who can calculate? Hence you cannot too early begin to review your ground. Consider the difficulties your missionaries already have to encounter, because of unscriptural sentiments propagated among the heathen by those who nevertheless loved their souls. The poor, perishing idolaters are witnesses of the clashing of doctrine between Jesus Christ's men, and they ask, " *Why is this? You have come to give us a gospel which professes to make its followers 'perfect in one,' and yet you yourselves are divided.*" You cannot in conscience abandon your principles, however, nor dare you, in your translations, give to a sentence or a particle one single turn, which will not fully express the mind of the Holy Spirit. Dare you, then, without feeling the most entire certainty, teach them that God says, " Remember the first day of the week to keep it holy?" The responsibility of the missionary, in this respect, is not less than where his translation is concerned. Does he feel the same awful sense of responsibility?

From the heathen turn to the contemplation of the Jewish nation. The time cannot be far distant, when those who, " as touching the election, are beloved for the fathers' sakes," shall be called to behold the glory of God, in the face of Him they have so long rejected. But in order to this, a voice from the divine word cries, " Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people." Have Christians seriously considered what this stumbling-block is? For our own part, we are persuaded that nothing can be more justly called by this name, than the general abandonment, on the part of Christians, of the Sabbath of the Lord. The Jews, taking it for granted, without examination, that this abandonment is really taught by the Christian religion, suppose that its author cannot be the true Messiah. They have seen, through every period of their nation's history, that God has put signal honor upon this institution. They have seen its sacredness elevated high above that of the ceremonial institutions. They have heard their prophets dwell upon the profanation of it as the crying sin of the land, on account of which the sore judgments of Heaven came down upon it. It is true, some teach that the whole Mosaic system was clothed with as much sacredness as the Sabbath; and that it was not for the sin of Sabbath breaking, any more than for a disregard of the ritual service in general, that they suffered the wrath of Jehovah. But such persons must have paid only a superficial attention to the subject. The attentive reader cannot fail to be struck with the fact, that while in the prophets the Sabbath is exalted as of vast importance to the nation, and all its prosperity, and the favor of God, seemingly, suspended on the proper keeping of it, ceremonial usages are comparatively depreciated.

Since the Sabbath holds such a sacredness throughout the ancient oracles of God—since the Israelites have taken their lessons of obedience to it under " the rod of his wrath"—since no grant was given to the Messiah to set it aside, nor the least intimation ever made to the Jews that it would be set aside—can we wonder that they think that teacher to be an impostor who should break this commandment, and teach men so?

But there is a crisis approaching—the day is near, and it hastens greatly—when it will be indispensable that all those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, have their " loins girt about with truth." Popery is preparing for another desperate struggle. The great principle of the Reformation, that " the Scriptures are the only rule of faith," is to be discussed anew. In the Church of England, this discussion has already commenced. Rome has opened her sluices, and anti-Christian corruption again threatens to flood the church of God. As the water naturally seeks such channels as may be already prepared, so will it be with this doctrine. What branch of Zion will be next troubled? Probably that which makes the next widest departure from the great Protestant principle. Then that which is next in order; and so on. For it cannot reasonably be expected to stop, until it reach that order of people which is governed by the Bible alone.

Upon all others the desolation must be more or less extensive. For those who acknowledge the principle of departing from the Bible in ever so small a degree, may be expected to exemplify it to an indefinite extent, when the circumstances of the times are so modified as to give occasion for it. As for yourselves, you do not avow the *principle* of departing from the Scriptures, but profess to hold it in abhorrence. The language of your *creeds* is explicit on this point; and we know of no denomination so forward to plead a strict conformity to this principle as yourselves. Yet it is impossible for you to pretend, with any show of modesty, that the Scriptures expressly enjoin the keeping of Sunday as a Sabbath to the Lord. You cannot say, from Scripture authority, that the apostles observed it as such. Nevertheless, your creed declares that it ought to be so observed; and your practice accords with your creed. Wherefore, it is as evident as mathematical demonstration; that you

do depart from the great Protestant principle. Consequently, if our views be correct in regard to the crisis which is at hand, the time cannot be far distant, when your own denomination will in some modified form be affected with the deprecated evil, and you will be compelled to abandon every principle and practice which can give it the smallest advantage.

Do you think, brethren, that in your present position you are prepared for the great struggle? When the Puseyite, replying to those who contend for the Protestant maxim, refers to the observance of Sunday, and says, " Here we are absolutely compelled to resort to the aid of ancient usage, as recorded, not by the inspired, but by the uninspired writers," are you ready for the issue? Can you confute what he says? When another one says, " The *seventh* day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; we celebrate the *first*. Was this done by divine command? No. I do not recollect that the Savior, or the apostles, say we shall rest on the first day of the week instead of the seventh;" and then concludes, " The same reasons which urge you to dissent from the observance of the three grand festivals of the Church of England, ought to operate with you respecting the Sabbath;"—are you prepared to join issue with him? Can you justify yourselves on your own principles? If you can, we will confess our short-sightedness. But indeed we fear, we tremble, in view of the crisis which is approaching, when we look at the traditional usages prevailing among Christians, and consider with what a tenacious grasp they are held. O Lord God Almighty! thou who hast sworn that 'thy kindness shall not depart from thy church, nor, the covenant of thy peace be removed,' let not thy truth fall in the contest.

We mean not to goad your feelings, by charging upon you any of the abominations of Popery. We are sure you would not cherish one of them, if you were conscious of it. But we take it for granted, that those who are forward to take the mote out of their brother's eye, are willing to have the beam taken out of their own. You have charged pedobaptist denominations, over and over, with upholding popery's chief pillar. You have told them, that their zeal against the man of sin would avail them but little, until they first rid themselves of his traditions. You have talked feelingly of the sin of encumbering the ordinances of God with human inventions. You have read the church of Christ many a good lesson on the importance of holding the truth in its purity. In all this you have, doubtless, been sincere. We have no fault to find with you; for you have only followed the Bible direction, " Cry aloud, spare not, show my people their transgression." In conformity with this direction, we would endeavor to act our part as faithful reprovers. Yet our desire is, to do it with meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. It may be—we know not—that some of the abominations of the man of sin are cleaving to us. If so, " let the righteous smite us, it shall be a kindness; let them reprove us, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break our head."

Turn, brethren, to the seventh chapter of the prophecy of Daniel, and twenty-fifth verse. You there find one spoken of who " shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, *and think to change TIMES and LAWS* . " You have had no difficulty in finding in this prophecy a reference to the law of baptism, as one of the *laws* which this great power has changed; but you have not shown satisfactorily what are the *times*. You have usually referred them to the numerous festivals and holy-days, which have been multiplied by the church of Rome. But these were *times* ESTABLISHED; not *times* CHANGED. Will you please to expound this passage a little more clearly? Will you tell us whether, under the gospel, there is any sacred time except the Sabbath? We will not be unreasonably confident, but we are much mistaken, if you can give any clear and satisfactory construction to this prophecy; without finding that something of Rome still cleaves to you.

Suffer us here to declare our conviction, that you could take no more effectual step toward converting the Christian world to right views about baptism, than to embrace the Sabbath of the Bible. In your discussions with Pedobaptists, you are constantly referred to the change of the Sabbath, as proof that some things may be binding which the Scriptures do not expressly enjoin. You have never met this argument fairly and fully. To be sure, you always make an attempt to meet it. But how do you do it? By proving that Christ expressly enjoined his followers to *sabbatize* on the first day of the week? By showing from express Scripture testimony, that the apostles *did actually rest from their labors* on that day? No. Neither of these things have you ever shown; nor can you show them. The whole head and front of your proof—if proof it may be called—amount only to this; that the apostles and primitive Christians *met together for worship* on that day. It is true, by such a course you have generally talked your opponents into silence, because by exposing fully the defect of your reply, it would only render their own transgression the more glaring. But while you *silenced* them, you did not *convince* them. While they saw that for one of *your own* customs you could not plead a " thus saith the Lord," they felt comparatively easy under all your rebukes, and naturally enough thought it not *very* important, that *they* should have a " thus saith the Lord" for the apt inkling of babes.

But a most important consideration, in view of this subject, is the influence of your large and powerful denomination upon an unconverted world. Whatever your theory about the perpetuity of the sabbatical law—whatever your doubts and scruples about the use of the term *Sabbath* under the gospel—you cannot rid yourselves of a deep sense of the importance of a day of rest to the world at large. Hence the resolutions of your churches and conventional bodies, with regard to the profanation of what you call the Lord's Day. Hence your plain, out-spoken censures of running cars, stages, steamboats, and other public conveyances, on this day. Hence your griefs and lamentations over those who make it a day of recreation or mirth. Hence your readiness to cooperate with those bodies which are organized to suppress, if possible, the violation of what is called the Sabbath. We admire the *principle* which governs you in all this; but we lament that it is not regulated by a better understanding of the subject. If you would promote right principles, you must be careful that your proofs, and examples for illustration, are pertinent and free from all uncertainty. We are fully persuaded, that your *Recommendations* and *Pledges*, your *Resolutions* and *Associational Acts*, will always meet with defeat, until you can fortify them by a law of God, so clearly



expressed, that it will urge and goad the violator's conscience wherever he may go. The consciences of guilty men cannot be reached by the method you are pursuing. You behold them desecrating the Sunday, and, in order to make them lay it to heart as a sin, you bring down upon them—what? Apostolic example? New Testament intimations, and far-fetched inferences? No. None of these do you think of employing. But the *Law*, the all-searching, sin-rebuking *Law* of God, is the only means you think of in such a case. Nothing else suits your purpose, be your *theory* what it may. But hear their reply. "Is the law of the commandment upon us TO-DAY? That it was YESTERDAY, we allow; for it says, *the seventh day.*' That the law of the commandment lies against us *every* day, you will not pretend; but only *one day* in seven. If that one day was *yesterday*, you are yourselves as guilty as we; and we, therefore, feel comparatively comfortable. To be sure, some sense of the necessity of keeping the Sabbath holy, does at times rest upon our minds; and our consciences, for the moment, reproach us; but when we see you, and all the Christian world, living in the neglect of it, we feel quite easy again, and think our sin to be but a light one." Such may not be their precise language, but it is the exact expression of their hearts' feelings. Thus even the *Law* fails in your hands, because you attempt to make it speak *what it will not speak*.

If you ask *us*, "Do *you* meet with success in attempting to reach the consciences of guilty, unbelieving men?" We reply, that we have no difficulty, except so far as you, and the whole body of observers of the first day, stand in the way. We bring them to admit, openly and honestly, the claims of God's law, and a sense of guilt momentarily rests upon them. But immediately they turn to contemplate *your* practice, and their hearts become hardened. We do, therefore, affectionately, but earnestly, invite you to consider, how tremendous is your influence toward perpetuating Sabbath profanation in the land. Your numbers, your learning, your talents, your wealth, your general respectability, all combine to operate with overwhelming effect in this matter,

Our observations, if correct, go to show what a source of danger the Sunday heresy is to the Moral Law. The Sabbath is a most important precept of this law; "the golden *clasp*," as an old writer quaintly observes, "which joins the two tables together; the *sinew* in the body of laws, which were written with God's own finger; the intermediate precept, which participates of the sanctity of both tables, and the due observance of which is the fulfilling of the whole law." This important precept is either set aside entirely, or its edge and keenness so muffled by a transfer to another day, that the united efforts of the church can do little or nothing toward impressing it on the conscience. Here, then, is a relaxation of the standard of morality; and while the standard is relaxed with regard to this one precept, in vain do we look for the *Law*, as a whole, to appear glorious in the eyes of men.

This remark will be strengthened, if we consider to what inconsistencies the advocates of Sunday are driven. Some, in their zeal to defend it, even go so far as to deny the Moral Law to be a rule of conduct to Christians. Others, though they admit the Law to be a rule of conduct, cannot relieve themselves of at least *seeming* to undervalue it. When the Sabbath discussion is out of sight, they speak out clearly, and without equivocation, giving the fullest proof that they regard the Law as the unchangeable standard of obedience. But at other times they reason from the New Dispensation in a manner so vague and indefinite, that one is puzzled to tell whether they regard the Gospel as enforcing strict obedience to the Law or not. Now he that is established in the clear truth, is hampered with no such difficulties. There is, with him, not only the naked and abstract admission, that the Moral Law is unchangeably binding, but there appears such a beautiful and perfect conform\* between this admission and the principles he inculcates, that the most common minds are struck with it, and every doubt is scattered.

While you are fettered by such difficulties, is there no danger that the Law will lose its sacredness in the eyes of the people? Surely there is. There is danger, also, that your system of theology will be corrupted in other particulars. Error goes not alone. Could an opinion exist in the mind, circumscribed and isolated, without affecting any of our other principles, it would be comparatively harmless. But it is not more a truth, that a man who utters one falsehood is obliged to tell twenty more to hide it, than that he who supports one error is obliged to forge numberless others to give consistency to his creed. It is also a truth, which reflection and daily observation will confirm, that nearly if not quite all the heresies which ever infested the church of God, are traceable to some loose notions concerning the Moral Law. Nothing, therefore, can be more necessary, than that our creed give the greatest possible prominence to the Law as a standard of holiness; and that our customs be in perfect conformity with our creed.

Brethren, can we hope that the subject on which we have addressed you will receive your prayerful attention? Almost your entire denomination has slumbered over it; but may we not hope, that you will now awake? May we not hope, that it will be discussed in your private circles, and in your public assemblies; in your Bible classes, and in your Sunday schools; that it will be studied by your ministers, and by the people in general; and that everyone will, in the deep desire of his soul, pray, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may discern wondrous things out of thy Law."

Blot if, on the other hand, we see a disposition to pass it by with cold neglect—an unwillingness to look the question in the face—an attempt, on the part of your teachers and leaders, to hush it up as a matter of no importance—a studied effort to lead the people away from it, when they are disposed to examine—or teaching them that it is the spirit, rather than the letter of the law that God requires—we shall be constrained to apply the language of Him who spoke as never man spoke—"EVERY ONE THAT DOETH EVIL HATETH THE LIGHT, NEITHER COMETH TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE REPROVED." John 3: 20.