

that these have served their purpose, and passed away; but that the Sabbath law, engraved by the finger of God on the tables of stone, has not ceased to bind the Christian conscience.

In sketching the argument for the permanence of the Sabbath law, we begin with a point which, though not strictly essential to the argument, adds greatly to its force, viz. :

(1) The Sabbath was established long prior to the Mosaic economy, and has an independent origin. Although incorporated in the Mosaic system, it comes down to us, like the law of marriage, from Eden. It was given originally, not to Israel, but to the representatives of the whole human race. In Gen. ii. 2, 3, we read that God "rested the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Paley, F. W. Robertson, and others, following earlier continental authors, tell us that the record here is made in anticipation of what was afterwards done in the wilderness. They suppose that "the order of connection, and not of time, introduces the mention of the Sabbath in the history of the subject it was ordained to commemorate." Robertson informs us: "It is not said that God at creation gave the Sabbath to man, but that God rested at the close of the six days of creation; whereupon He had blessed and sanctified the seventh day to the Israelites." It must be obvious to almost every reader that there is nothing in the context to suggest this view; and it is difficult to understand how any one who had not a preconceived hypothesis to support could have thought of this mode of handling what seems a plain historical record. Moreover, if the reason alleged was valid for establishing the Sabbath at Sinai, it was equally valid from the beginning; and there is really no reason why we should give this passage such a severe wrench in order to make it appear that God had denied this beneficent institution for three thousand years to the human race.

It has been urged that the entire silence of scripture respecting the Sabbath, in the period intervening between Adam and Moses, is inconsistent with its early date. When the fragmentary and brief character of the history in Genesis is taken into account, no great weight can be attached to this objection. There are, moreover, traces all down through the history in Genesis of the division of time into weeks, of which the primeval institution of the Sabbath is the natural explanation. Passing