

The old institution had become unspiritual and legal, associated with a thousand senseless rules in the Jewish mind as to the mode of observance. In fact, it had come to be a sort of fetish, worshipped for its own sake. It would have been impossible to shake it free from these associations if the old day had been continued. It was necessary to start afresh with a new day which had other associations, in order that it might be developed along Christian lines. The change was made with as little friction as possible. The two institutions existed side by side among Jewish converts for at least a generation. But as the one gathered strength and sacredness, the other faded away. The Apostle Paul probably meant to help the change by asserting the right to disregard the Jewish Sabbath on the part of all those who saw fit to do so, without reproach or condemnation from their brethren.

Another change of a similar but less important character took place when the Lord's Day was made to begin at midnight instead of at sunset, as had been the earlier practice, in order to make it harmonize with the prevailing civil mode of reckoning days. The obvious convenience of the change formed its justification.

So in like manner the State, as representing the whole community, has frequently exercised its right to legislate regarding the institution, not simply to enforce rest in a general way, but even to define from time to time, as the circumstances of society changed, the things that must be regarded as works of necessity, and so lawful to be done. From the days of Constantine down, every Christian nation has legislated more or less regarding the matter, and their duty to do so is urged in the strongest way by those who most firmly believe in the divine origin of the institution. If Christ therefore claimed the right to exercise similar authority as the representative man, it would be only what has been done by many a government, ecclesiastical and civil, in man's name.

With all due deference, however, to the large number of very respectable commentators who have held this view, it does not seem wholly to meet the requirements of the passage. There is nothing in the context to suggest that His claim of lordship over the Sabbath had any reference to new legislation. So far from laying down any new principle regarding it, the whole drift of His argument is to show that His view of it is really the old view which the Pharisees had perverted and misunderstood. His only object was to bring the institution back to the original intention. Then, too, the title "Son of Man," which He here assumes to Himself, while an assertion of His humanity, is at the same time something more. If that had been all that was involved in it, His constant use of it would have been something of an affectation. The natural use of it could arise only from His consciousness that He was something more than man. That certainly was the im-