

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY AND PERMANENT OBLIGATION

OF

THE SABBATH.

I. THE SABBATH is co-eval with creation. What saith the Scripture? (Gen. ii. 2, 3.) "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

The Revised Version uses "finished" for "ended," and "hallowed" for "sanctified," but it is in every other respect precisely the same. It is irrelevant here and now, and would be unprofitable and vain, to discuss the nature of the days, for, whether Dispensations or Literal days, the fact remains that the Creator of the world first worked and then rested, and designed His newly-formed creatures in this to copy His example. We believe that this first week of the world's history was designed to be a model one, to which the succeeding ones were to be conformed. It was "blessed" and "hallowed," or "sanctified," by Him for their benefit in all time coming. The sixth primordial day closes with the creation of man, and man's first day on earth was the Sabbath. We find the seventh day what Hesiod calls the "Hieron Hēmar"—the sacred day—reverenced by Phœnicians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Chinese, Arabs, the Brahmins of India, and Druids of Britain; in short, all the leading nations of the world. The famous LaPlâce, in his "Exposition of the System of the World," speaking of the weekly division of time, remarks "that it circulates through the ages, mixing itself with the calendars of different races. The week is perhaps the most ancient and incontestable monument of human knowledge. It appears to point out a common source whence that knowledge proceeded." What that "common source" is, the Bible reveals. This division of time into weeks, and the universality of it, is singular. It is not a natural division. Astronomy does not teach it. It is not suggested, as with the day, the month, the year, by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, yet, from the world's dawn, we have glimpses of it. Thus, at the gate of Eden, (Gen. iv. 3) we read of the two brothers bringing their respective offerings to the Lord. We are first told that they worked, then, that they worshipped. WHEN did they worship? It is written, "in process of time," or, as it is in the margin, which has generally the preferable reading, "AT THE END OF THE DAYS," i. e., "the last of the days." It seems natural, after telling us what the young shepherd and farmer did on the days of labor, to tell us what they did on the "LAST of the days," which was the day of Rest. Passing down the stream of Time to the era of the Deluge, we find yet clearer allusions to this hebdomadal division which no solar, or lunar, or sidereal revolutions can explain.

"For yet SEVEN days and I will cause it to rain on the earth," saith God to Noah, with reference to the coming storm. "And it came to pass after