

# Charles Krauth

## The Lutheran Church and the Divine Obligation of the Lord's Day



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# The Lutheran Church and the Divine Obligation of the Lord's Day

By Charles Porterfield Krauth

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# The Lutheran Church And The Divine Obligation Of The Lord's Day.

By Rev. C. Porterfield Krauth, Pittsburg, Pa.

IN EXHIBITING the earliest and purest views of our church on the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath, we propose to present first of all, the views of Luther and Melancthon.

## Luther's Views of the Sabbath.

### I. The Sabbath Original and Natural.

[1] "God blessed the Sabbath and sanctified it. This he did to no other creature; neither heaven nor earth nor any other creature did he sanctify to himself, only the seventh day did he sanctify to himself. This pertains particularly to this point, that we may therefore learn to understand that the seventh day specially is due to the service of God, and should be appropriated to it." — *Commentary on Genesis*, ch. 2, 3.

[2] "It follows therefore from this text (Gen. 2, 3), that even if Adam had remained steadfast in his innocence, he yet would have kept holy the seventh day, that is, he would therein have taught his posterity of God's will and God's service, would have praised God, made thanksgiving, etc... On other days he would have cultivated the earth, attended to the cattle, etc." — *Do.*

[3] "Had man remained in innocence, he would not on that account have been idle in Paradise, but on the Sabbath he would have instructed his children, would in a public manner have blessed and praised God, and by medi-

tation on God's works, and by contemplation of them, have aroused himself and others to thanksgiving." — *Do*.

[4] "Yea after the fall Adam kept this seventh day holy, that is, on that day he taught his children, as is testified by the sacrifices of his sons, Cain and Abel. Therefore is the Sabbath from the beginning of the world ordained for the service of God." — *Do*.

[5] "'Exod. 16:23: This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.' From this thou seest that the Sabbath existed before the law of Moses came, and had indeed been from the beginning of the world, especially that on this day the pious, who had the true service of God, came together and called upon God." — *Commentary on Exodus*.

[6] "Where the law of Moses and the law of nature are one thing, there the law remains. Nature gives and teaches that there must sometimes be a day of rest, that men and cattle may be refreshed: which natural cause also Moses sets in the Sabbath, in order that he, as Christ also does (Matt. 12, and Mark 3), may set the Sabbath among men." — *Against the "Heavenly Prophets,"* 1525.

## **II. The Jewish Sabbath.**

[1] "The Jews in our day reproach us Christians that we preach on the ten commandments and on the Sabbath, but do not keep them after their way. But we know by God's grace how the Sabbath is to be kept, for we have learned it from the Son of God. With the Jewish people it was so that they kept a certain special distinct day (as also a special tribe, special persons and place) until Christ, whereby they, through this outward mode, ordained and enjoined by God himself, were separated from the Gentiles, and had also outward testimony, that they were the people of God, among whom God's Son was to be born." — *Sermon on the Gospel for 17th Sunday after Trinity*.

## **III. The Sabbath designed for all Men.**

[1] "Since now God on these days (the six) creates and works, and on the seventh ceases to work, he has caused this to be written (Gen. 2:1-3), that we should do as He does... Therefore has he appointed that we also should

labor six days and on the seventh rest. And this has been done that the world may be governed in gentleness... Therefore they should, when they have labored the six days in the week, stand still on the seventh from labor, for themselves and for their cattle, specially also hereto, that men may have time to hear God's word." — *Sermons on Genesis*, 1527.

[2] "The Sabbath... has been appointed for man's sake, that in it the knowledge of God may be exercised and increased. And although man by sin has lost the knowledge of God, yet it has been the will of God to let the command of keeping holy the Sabbath remain, and he has willed that men on the seventh day should train themselves in and pursue his word, and the service appointed by him, that we men first of all be reminded what is pre-eminently our calling and position, that our nature was created that we might know and praise God." — *Commentary on Genesis, first part* — written 1536.

[3] "With Christians every day should be a Sabbath. For every day we all should hear God's word, and direct our life by it. Nevertheless Sunday is appointed for the people, that every man on that day specially may hear and learn God's word, and live according to it. For the other six days must the mass of men labor, and earn a support. God is pleased that this should be so, for he has commanded labor. But the seventh day he will have sanctified, that men shall not labor thereon, in order that every one may be unhindered to exercise himself in God's word and works, and to do them: not what pertains to the temporal; but what God in his word demands and will have." — *Haus Postille*, 1532.

[4] "Thus has God appointed it; six days has he fixed for labor, that the people on these six days in the week should labor for their support. But the seventh day he has fixed that they should sanctify it." — *Haus Postille*, 1532.

#### **IV. One day in seven for the service of God, moral and perpetual.**

[1] "Though now the Sabbath is abrogated, and the conscience free therefrom, yet is it good, and also necessary, that a special day of the week should be kept, that thereon the word of God may be handled, heard and taught. For not every man can attend to it all the days. It is also the demand

of nature that men should rest one day in the week, and that both man and beast should refrain from labor.” — *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*.

[2] “The third command of the Sabbath... is in itself a command of all the world... For the proper idea of the third command is that we shall teach and hear the word on God’s day, in order that we may sanctify both the day and ourselves.” — *Against the Sabbatarians*, 1588.

[3] “The Sabbath is ordained from the beginning of the world for the service of God.” — *On Grenesis*.

See the preceding section.

## **V. Not now the seventh day or Saturday.**

“The mention by Moses of the seventh day, and how God created the world in six days, as the reason wherefore they should not labor, this is the attire with which Moses robes this command for his people in particular.” — *Against the Sabbatarians*.

## **VI. But Sunday, “The day of the Lord.”**

[1] “I believe that the Apostles transferred the Sabbath to Sunday, otherwise no man would have been so audacious as to dare to do it. And I believe that they did it especially that they might tear from the hearts of the people the imagination that they were justified and holy through the law, and in order that men might be surely and steadfastly persuaded that the law is not necessary to salvation. But the Apostles were moved thereto by the Resurrection of Christ our Lord, and the sending of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost .” — *Tischreden*, ch. 33:10.

[2] “Here it is to be observed that Sabbath in Hebrew means cessation from labor, or rest, because God ‘rested on the seventh day from all his work which he created and made.’ — Gen. 2:3. Therefore he commanded that the seventh day should be kept, and that we should cease from our works which we work during the six days. And that same Sabbath is now changed for us into Sunday, and the other days are work days, Sunday is the day of rest, or holy day or sacred day. And would to God that in Christendom there were no holy day except Sunday, and that all the festivals (of the church) were put upon Sunday.” — *Sermon on Good Works*, 1520.

[3] “Christians have always kept Sunday, not Saturday, because Christ rose on Sunday.” — *Exposition of the 19th. and 20th. ch. of Exodus.*

## **VII. — Obligation of the Lord’s day, and sin of violating it.**

[1] “Why then is Sunday kept among Christians? Though all days are free, and one like the other, yet is it useful and good, yea highly necessary that one day should be kept... For God would gently lead, and peacefully govern the world; therefore has he given six days for labor, but on the seventh day, servants, day-laborers and workers of every kind, yea, also, horses, oxen, and other animals that are worked, should have rest, as this Commandment runs, in order that they may be revived by rest. And especially that those who at other times have not leisure, may on the holy day hear preaching, and thereby learn to know God. And for such reasons, viz, for love’s sake and for necessity’s sake, Sunday has remained, not on account of the commandment of Moses, but on account of our need, that ice may rest and learn God’s word.” — *Exposition of the 19th and 20th ch. of Exodus.*

[2] “Every Christian man should ask himself: ‘Why dost thou keep this day?’ — and thus make for himself a remembrance and memorial, by which he may be reminded that he should be free from occupation on this day, that he may hear God... The second class who break the Sabbath day are those who do manual labor, though it be of a sort which at other times is permitted... The first case in which a man is excusable for doing work on the sacred day, is that of necessity... Yet thou must understand that thou art not to devise for thyself a work of necessity, but the necessity must be thrust on thee by accident... Physicians, messengers, etc... these are all excusable in case of necessity. But here will be asked whether our Wittenbergers are excusable in shooting at the popinjay with the cross-bow on the sacred day, for that could be done on another day, and there is no necessity, nor love, nor moderation, to excuse such a thing, and the half day of the afternoon should be holy to God, as well as the half day of the forenoon. In the same way is to be regarded the practice of inspecting arms and accouterments on Sunday, as if that, too, could not be done on a week day. This is a matter to which the magistrates should direct their attention .” — *Erklaerung der Zehn Geb Gottes.*

[3] "Violation of the third commandment. They violate it who indulge in surfeiting, drunkenness, dancing, loitering about, wantonness — they who indulge in sloth, lose the blessings of the sacred office by sleeping, are negligent of the ordinances, take pleasure walks, engage in idle talk — they who without special necessity labor and deal — they who do not pray, do not meditate on Christ's sufferings, do not mourn over their sins and long for grace — they consequently who keep it outwardly only, by their clothes, by feasting, and by external fashion." — *The Ten Commandments, with a brief Exposition.*

[4] "Observe that the force and might of this command lie not in the resting, but in the sanctifying, that this day consequently have a special, sacred exercise... God will have this commandment strictly kept, and will punish all those who despise his word, and will not hear nor learn it, especially at the time appointed therefor." — *Larger Catechism, 1529.*

[5] "We will now contrast the ten commandments of God and of the Pope, that we may see how under the name of the law of God, he has done nothing but change and pervert the law:

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

<b>GOD'S.</b>	<b>THE POPE'S.</b>
<p><b>I.</b> Thou shalt have no other God, &amp;c.</p>	<p><b>I.</b> Say: Thou shalt have no other, &amp;c., but have them nevertheless.</p>
<p><b>II.</b> Thou shalt not take the name, &amp;c.</p>	<p><b>II.</b> Say: Thou shalt not, &amp;c., but do it nevertheless.</p>
<p><b>III.</b> Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.</p>	<p><b>III.</b> Say: Remember, &amp;c., but don't keep it holy nevertheless."</p>
<p><b>VOL. VIII, No. 31. 46</b></p>	<p><b>[Leipzig Edit., xviii. 179.]</b></p>

These extracts are amply sufficient to show how profoundly and accurately Luther judged of this question, on which churches and theologians within the same churches have differed and yet differ. The passages quoted

from him to sustain a laxer view, are torn from their proper place in his system, or that is interpreted absolutely which is meant relatively. His free, bold, unqualified style specially subjects him, in common with all authors in whom the affections are powerful, to this species of misunderstanding. Let no man judge of Luther till he has heard all he has to say. No man who compares Luther with himself, who qualifies by one part of his writings what he says in another, can legitimately extract from them one word calculated to diminish his love or abate his reverence for the day of the Lord, the Sabbath of the Christian. If Germany has not enjoyed a Christian Sabbath, it is because she has refused what the principles of Luther would have given her. The Sunday of Luther is an entire day, not a half day — not a morning for the church and an afternoon for the beer saloon or the dance, or idle saunter; but a day for holy works, and holy thoughts, a holy day, not a holiday. When in his own matchless manner he has overthrown the idea of intrinsic or ceremonial or meritorious sacredness in days or places or outward things under the New Dispensation, he regards no language as too strong to mark how blessed and how necessary is the day of the Lord, nor how great is the guilt and peril of those who profane or neglect it.

## **Melanchthon's Views of the Sabbath.**

### **I. From the "*Catechism for Youth.*" — (1536.)**

“What does the third command teach? The observance of the Sabbath — that is, the preservation of the services which are delivered to us of God. Therefore the law expressly says: Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day, that is, shalt employ it in holy things, to wit, in celebrating public service, and in hearing God's word. These are true Sabbath works.”

[2] “Is not the command in regard to the Sabbath abrogated? I answer: The genus which is embraced in the command is not abrogated, which genus indeed is the principal purpose of this command, and embraces the ultimate reason for the institution of the species. The genus which is embraced in this command is moral, and as regards this genus, Christians are bound by this command. The third command as regards the genus is moral and perpetual, but as regards the species, that is, the observation of the seventh day, it is a ceremonial.”

[3] “Sins against this commandment,... to spend sacred days in feasting and sports, not in pious meditation — to lead others by our example from public worship, and give occasion for their thinking lightly of it — contumaciously to engage on the sacred day in works which hinder the ministry of the word and of worship.”

[4] “Works enjoined by the precept,... to employ sacred days for the celebration of the public service — likewise in pious meditation, and in setting an example which will win others to piety. A Christian, therefore, does not violate the Sabbath by taking care of the sick, for those works do not hinder the service; nay, they are testimonies by which the gospel is shown in its beauty and is confirmed. They are, therefore, proper and true Sabbath works.”

[5] “The necessary duties of love are to be set before ceremonies — and such a duty has a dispensation of the law, not an abrogation of it... The decision is now more easy to us, since we know from the gospel that some liberty is conceded to us in regard to the day. For Christ excuses his disciples when they plucked the ears of corn, for they did a work of love, and yet such an one, that the ministry of the word was not hindered thereby.”

[6] “The law not only enjoins rest, but gives the command to keep holy the day thus left free, that is, commands certain works necessary to show forth and extend the glory of God. In this life there is need for this outward Sabbath.”

## **II. From *The Augsburg Confession, (The Variata)* of 1540.**

“The same articles more copiously and explicitly set forth on account of the slanderous interpretations and sophistical elusions of the adversaries, hut with the meaning unchanged.”

[1] “There is no need of a long refutation — one thunderbolt of Paul is enough for us: ‘Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.’ This sentence sufficiently teaches, that men do not merit remission of sins by their own works, either of the divine law, or of human traditions.”

[2] “Many in the church are deceived by a false zeal for Levitical ceremonies, and suppose that in the New Testament there ought to be similar rites, and that these are the service of God... This Pharisaic error Christ and his apostles reprove, who teach that the service in the New Testament ought



to be repentance, the fear of God, faith and the works of the ten commandments.”

[3] “They (the papists) allege that the Sabbath was changed into the Lord’s day, contrary as it seems to the Decalogue. Nor is there any example of which they boast more than of the change of the Sabbath. They maintain that the power of the church must be great, which has dispensed with a command of the Decalogue.”

[4] “Nor has the church dispensed with the Decalogue, but the authority of God has abrogated the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and yet it is necessary that the people should know when they were to come together to the gospel and the ceremonies instituted by Christ. And the genus in the Decalogue that at certain times we should come together to these holy exercises remains. But the species which was a ceremony, is free, therefore the apostles did not retain the seventh day, but preferred to use the first, that they might remind the pious, both of their liberty and of the resurrection of Christ.”

### **III. From the *Loci Communes*, edition of 1545.**

[1] “The law of nature... coincides with that part of the law of God which is called the Moral Law. The chief features of the moral laws have by the admirable counsel of God been brought together in one small table, which is called the Decalogue. When we wish to speak of the moral law, therefore, it is usual to style it the Decalogue... As these are the eternal rules of the divine mind, they sounded at all times in the church even before Moses, and will always remain, and pertain to all nations.”

[2] “Of the third commandment. The text does not speak of rest only, but explicitly of sanctification. It means that on that day holy works are to be done, that is, works specially devoted to God, that is, the people are to be taught, and services divinely instituted are to be attended to. For this end a day is to be established. This leading idea, pertains to all men and all times, for it is a law of nature.”

[3] “As regards the observation of the seventh day, it is evident that the Levitical ceremonies being abrogated, the ceremony also was changed, as is clearly stated, Col. 2:16. It is rightly said, therefore, that in the third command there are two parts, the one natural or moral, or the genus, the other part or species in regard to the seventh day is a ceremony peculiar to the

people of Israel. Of the former it is said, the natural or genus is perpetual, and cannot be abrogated, to wit, the command in regard to the conservation of the public ministry, so that on a certain day the people are taught and services of divine institution engaged in: but the species which speaks expressly of the seventh day is abrogated.”

[4] “Sins against this commandment are... never or rarely to be present at public worship... to turn others either by our example, or in other ways, from public worship... to engage in servile works, that is, such as hinder the service on the day appointed for public worship, to spend those days in sports and feastings.”

[5] “That the words of this commandment may be done, it is needful that we should know the Son of God, that we may in faith in God, and in calling upon him, obey this commandment.”

#### **IV. — From the “*Earlier Exposition of the Nicene Creed.*” (1550)**

[1] “Moral laws are plainly immovable, for they are the wisdom of God, or immutable rule of righteousness in the divine mind... Though some make a distinction between natural laws and divine laws, yet we say truly and rightly that natural laws are embraced in the divine, for natural laws are a ray of the divine wisdom transfused into human minds... The laws of nature, therefore, are divine and immovable... The laws of nature, all the moral laws are comprehended in the Decalogue. Moreover, many kinds of ceremonial laws are natural laws, as for example, it is necessary that some fixed times should be devoted to the public ministry of the heavenly doctrine and of the Sacraments, that the voice of God should sound publicly in the human race, and congregations should be associated together testifying of the doctrine of God.”

[3] “The most perspicuous description of the moral law, is to say that the moral law is the precepts of the Decalogue. But this saying is to be rightly understood. For as regards the Sabbath, it is true, that the command in regard to the seventh day is ceremonial, and was altered. But the genus is natural and moral, that is, that certain fixed times should be devoted to the public ministry of the heavenly doctrine, the species, that is, the command in regard to the seventh day, is ceremonial.

[3] “In the third commandment God has placed as it were, the guards of the commandments that precede it. The Sabbath, since it is a day appointed for these offices, that the voice of doctrine may be publicly uttered, and we may be admonished by public services, and the people may come together to learn, and to the common invocation of God, is the chief ceremony, and nerve of the entire ministry... The sins conflicting with this third commandment are all the offenses of all persons which impede the evangelical ministry.”

## **V. — From the *Later Exposition of the Nicene Creed.* (1557.)**

[1] “I will make some remarks on the argument, familiar even to children: ‘The Levitical ceremonies are abrogated — the observation of the Sabbath is a Levitical ceremony — therefore it is abrogated.’ I reply to the minor, the observation of the Sabbath as to the species, that is, as to the seventh day, and the Levitical sacrifices, and the Levitical observation is abrogated, but not as to the genus, which is the leading idea of this command... The third commandment is partly moral and perpetual, partly ceremonial, that is, the Levitical observation of the seventh day and of the sacrifices.”

[2] “When it is asked, What is the law of nature? it is most right to reply, the law of man’s nature is the Decalogue itself, rightly understood, for the Decalogue is the eternal and unchangeable wisdom of God, which is the rule of righteousness.”

[3] “It behooves us on that day not to do works which hinder the service of the gospel, or lead away others from that service. These are called servile works. The genus is moral... It is in accordance with this, however, that the apostles changed the day for this very reason that they might show an example of the abrogation of the ceremonial laws of the Mosaic polity in the seventh day.”

[4] “There is, therefore, need of the third commandment. Sins against the third commandment are — not to come together to the public assemblies in the churches, etc. In regard to the penalties of these most glaring offenses, it is expressly said, Jer. 17:37, ‘If ye will not hallow the Sabbath day... then will I kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem... and it shall not be quenched.’”

## **VI. From the *Annotations on the Gospels for the Year.***

[1] “The Gospel for 17th. Sunday after Trinity. Luke 14. A certain day has been constituted for this end, that there might be public assemblies, in which the congregations shall be taught by the preaching of the Gospel... For that public ministry there is need for some fixed time, the observation of the Sabbath, therefore, is not idleness on that day, but as the text says, keeping it holy, that is, spending it in holy works... He who is absent from contempt, or by his example strengthens the negligence of others, grievously sins... They sin also, who neglecting the meditations of the teachings of the Gospel, spend the Sabbaths in secular occupation’ or sports, or other things which lead off the mind from holy meditation. Let any one reflect how widespread is the violation of the Sabbath, nor let us regard the contempt of the public ministry as a light sin. For these are the proper works, in keeping with the Sabbath, the preaching of the gospel, meditation on the gospel, pious examples, things properly aiding the ministry.”

The points to which Melanchthon gives most prominence in the citations we have presented, are these:

[1] "The Sabbath as to its generic character is primitive in its institution, a requirement of natural or moral law, its obligation is binding on all men, and extends immutably through all time. (III. 1, 2; IV. 1,2; V. 2.)

[2] The Sabbath, as to its ceremonial Jewish species, has been abrogated, as to its genus it is perpetual. (II. 4, IV. 4.)

[3] The generic idea of the third commandment is, that all that pertains to the service or worship of God, shall be strictly kept. (I. 1.)

[4] The use of a fixed day pertains of necessity to that service, and is, therefore, embraced in the generic idea of the law, is moral and incapable of abrogation. (I. 1; III. 2, 3; VI. 1.)

[5] That day of the week which is fixed for this purpose under the New Dispensation, is the first day. (II. 4; V. 3.)

[6] The change from the seventh day to the first, was not made by church authority but by the apostles. (II. 3, 4; V. 3.)

[7] The apostles changed from the seventh day to show the liberty of the Christian Church from the yoke of the law of Moses — they changed to the first in memory of the resurrection of our Lord. (II. 4, V. 3.)

[8] While, therefore, it was part of the freedom of the New Testament Church to change what was specified and ceremonial in the third command-

ment, that is, to change from one day to another, and to determine what day she would change to, it was no part of her freedom to reject all days — she could choose between day and day, but not between a day and no day — she was free as to the determination of the day, but not as to whether a day should be determined. (II. 4; V. 3.)

[9] The third commandment is binding on Christians as to its moral features, and whosoever neglects or desecrates the day of the Lord is guilty of a sin against this commandment. (1.2, 3,4; V. 3.)

[10] The works of necessity and love which may be done on the Lord's day, are done not by an abrogation of the generic law of the Sabbath, but by a dispensation of it. (I. 4, 5.)

[11] The Sabbath is the great conservative institution — the commandment without which the others would be neglected. (IV. 3.)

[12] To the Sabbath, as Christians are bound to keep it, belong rest from labor, abstinence from secular occupation, from feasting and sports, hearing the word, attending divine service, occupation in holy things, the setting of an holy example. (I. 3; III. 4; V. 3, 4; VI. 1.)

## **The Augsburg Confession and the Lord's Day.**

### **I. The relation to this point of the General Synod's Doctrinal Basis.**

The Formula of Subscription proposed by our General Synod does not embrace that part of the Augsburg Confession which touches on the Sabbath. The qualified assent which that Formula demands, is to the “doctrinal articles;” that is, the first twenty-one articles of the Confession, and makes no reference whatever to the articles on abuses, in the seventh of which occurs what is said in regard to the Lord's day. If the views of the Augsburg Confession on this topic be erroneous, we have bound ourselves in no way, as a part of the General Synod, to their adoption or defense, nor is any disclaimer necessary on our part. We have never given even a qualified subscription to the articles on abuses. We need no new basis to renounce what the old basis has never confessed.

## II. — The relation of those to it who subscribe the Augsburg Confession without qualification.

Nor would it be easy to show that even those who have given an unqualified subscription to the entire Augsburg Confession have bound themselves thereby to what it says on the Lord's day. That subject is introduced incidentally, is briefly handled, and simply as illustrative of another. To the doctrine of the seventh article "on church power," no Protestant could object. The unqualified subscription to the article would obligate no man to the reception as a matter of course of all the arguments used in it, or of the illustrations employed in its defense. We may consider a doctrine impregnable, and yet allow that a particular defense of it is very weak and illogical — we may adopt a man's views, and reject his reasons for those views, and it is possible for us to be more deeply wounded by the way in which views we cherish are defended, than we could be by the fiercest assaults on them.

Every word in the article on "church power," which alludes to the Lord's day might be erased, and yet its arguments remain impregnable. If the syllogism on the Lord's day be really this: "The Lord's day is an ecclesiastical tradition; ecclesiastical traditions are not obligatory; therefore the Lord's day is not obligatory," — it might with perfect truth be replied by one who maintains the obligation of the Lord's day, that if the major proposition be true, the conclusion is certainly true. If, therefore, for the sake of argument, it be conceded to Romanists that the Lord's day is an ecclesiastical tradition, then the Lord's day is not obligatory — but such a person would add: the Lord's day is not an ecclesiastical tradition, therefore it is obligatory — or the Lord's day is obligatory, therefore it is not an ecclesiastical tradition. In a word, either view of the Lord's day equally meets the sophism of the Romanists. Prove that it is an ecclesiastical tradition, and their argument for its necessity is overthrown, for this supposition proves it is not necessary. Prove, on the other hand, that it is not an ecclesiastical tradition, and their use of it to illustrate ecclesiastical authority is annihilated. The most rigid or the most lax views of the Lord's day would equally meet the wants of the argument, presenting opposite yet equally effectual answers to the Papists. But we shall see that the point of the Romish argument was very different from the one here supposed, and that the question raised by the Confessors was one which a decision in regard to the divine obligation of the Lord's day could not in itself settle.

### III. — The Words in Dispute.

Briefly and cursorily, and only so far as its relation to the question of church authority is concerned, did the Confessors touch the subject of the Lord's day. The Papistical adversaries had maintained a certain view of the Sabbath, and of the Lord's day, in order to uphold false views of church authority. To meet this falsity, and only so far as it was necessary to meet it, the Confessors touch on the subject. The words in which they speak of the Lord's day separately, are these:

[1] In the Latin Confession.

“For they who judge that by the authority of the Church the observation of the Lord's day was instituted in place of the Sabbath as necessary, greatly err. The Scripture which teaches that all Mosaic ceremonies, after the gospel is revealed, may be omitted, has abrogated the Sabbath. And yet because there was need to ordain a certain day when the people might know it was their duty to come together, it is clear that the Church determined (*destinasse*) for that purpose the Lord's day, which seems to have pleased the more for this reason also, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observation neither of the Sabbath nor of another day is necessary.”

[2] In the German of the ordinary edition.

“For they who think that the ordinance of Sunday for the Sabbath was established as necessary, (*nöthig*,) err much, for the Holy Scripture has put away the Sabbath, and teaches that all ceremonies of the old law, after the revelation of the gospel, may be discontinued, and yet because it was of necessity (*von nothen*) to ordain a certain day in order that the people might know when they should come together, the Christian Church has thereto ordained Sunday, and to this change had the more pleasure and will, that therewith the people might have an example of the Christian freedom, and that it might be known that neither the observation of the Sabbath, nor of another day, is of necessity, (*von nothen*.)”

These translations we have tried to make as strictly literal as the idioms of the languages would allow.

### IV. — General Position of the Lutheran Church on the Sabbath Question.

With the range thus circumscribed by certain assertions of their adversaries, and touching the subject only cursorily, it is not surprising that the language of the Confession on this point has not always been interpreted in the same way. Those nearest their time and reared in the most thorough acquaintance with their views interpreted their language in such a manner as to find in it no contradiction to the idea of a moral and perpetual obligation to keep a day sacred to the Lord — an obligation whose generic force they regarded as natural and primitive, and confirmed by the fourth (or according to the division then most current, the third,) commandment, and the determination of which with reference to the particular day observed under the new dispensation, they regarded as apostolic. We think we have demonstrated in previous articles that the declarations of Luther and Melancthon not only involve, but explicitly set forth all this, and a protracted, conscientious and prayerful examination of such works of our greatest divines, as bear on this point, has led us to the conviction that not only do they teach all that is needful to the maintenance of true and evangelical views as to the obligation of the Lord's day, but that they may claim the glory of erecting the safest and most impregnable wall of defense that has ever been reared around that sacred and apostolic institution of Christianity by the hands of men. He who will search the works of Luther and Melancthon, and examine with care what has been said by Flacius, Chemnitz, Lyser, John Gerhard, Franzius, Calovius, Quenstedt, Spener, Carpzov, Buddeus, Mosheim, the Walchs and Baumgarten, not to mention other theologians of our church less renowned, and who, on the other side, weighs all that has been said to weaken what they declare or imply to be the views of our church as to the Lord's day, and the teachings of the Augsburg Confession on it, will feel how immovable is the basis on which is maintained the thesis: Neither the Augsburg Confession, nor the greatest theologians of the church of the Augsburg Confession, denies the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath.

## **V. — Great importance of the point discussed.**

Regarding the Lord's day as we do, with an inexpressible fondness, reverencing it as the conservative institution of Christianity, "the very nerve," as Melancthon well styles it, "of the service of God," and marking the assaults which are made upon it, and that difficult questions connected with it have brought some of the purest and greatest men in the Christian Church,



who love it, into an apparent association with its enemies, on the general question of its divine obligation, we confess that we should be sorry to see the weight of the sentiment of our great Reformers and theologians thrown into the scale of the laxer view of the Lord's day, to strengthen the difficulties of doubters, and to give new plausibility to the sophisms of foes.

If the confessors denied the divine obligation of the Lord's day, it is impossible for those who hold to that divine obligation to regard without deep sorrow a fact which may be used so plausibly and forcibly by its enemies, to invest with the associations of the most revered names of modern Christianity an assault on a vital institution of Christianity itself. They will urge that those great heroes in the Christian world, the men who translated the Bible and devoted their lives to the search of it, who lived by it and died by it, did not find in it an institution expressly enjoined of God, an institution whose observance was of all public ones most frequently to recur, that in that New Testament where they could find scores of proofs of the institution of baptism, which is administered but once in a man's life, and of the Lord's Supper, which is but occasional, they missed sight of the divine obligation of that institution whose demands come fifty-two times in every year, and the strict observance of which is essential to a vital Christianity, and whose neglect is followed by the most disastrous consequences, and that the equivocal observance of it, which they allowed was based upon the figment of its being an innocent, ecclesiastical tradition, which it might be well enough for the poor and ignorant to observe, but which was not obligatory. They will draw the inference that these men did not find the divine obligation of the Lord's day in the New Testament, because it was not there, or they will excuse themselves, unpretending men, for not finding what these great men could not discern.

Where now is your principle of private judgment? it may be asked, and if you reply that though the divine obligation is there, those men could not find it, with what face, it may be urged, can you say that all things necessary for man's spiritual good are sufficiently and clearly revealed in God's word. Here is no abstruse doctrine; it is a question of a positive divine institution, and not captious, heretical or ignorant men, but your great Reformers themselves with their Bibles and their eyes wide open failed to see it. Has it been by some process of modern philosophy, by the growth of human science, the researches of the learned, the advances of the seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth centuries in commerce and manufactures, or has it

been by getting on the shoulders of the giants, that a specific divine obligation of a certain institution has in late times been found where they could not find it?

## **VI. — The horns of a dilemma.**

And here a convenient refuge, in which safety has so often been found from such difficulties, utterly fails. Poor Rome, the universal solvent of all the difficulties of some Protestant theologians, will furnish no solution here. The church of Rome, from which the Confessors went out, teaches in the most decided manner the divine obligation of the Lord's day. A distinguished writer of the Presbyterian Church, (Princeton Essays, 1st Series, Essay xix,) truly says that the doctrine of the Romish Church is as decided on this point as that of the strictest Protestantism in America. She holds to a specific obligation of the Lord's day in no sense less divine than that by which the Jew was bound to the seventh. The causes of the practical laxity in Romish countries as to the mode of its observance, we cannot now stop to examine, for that has no connection with the question as to what is the doctrine. Loose however, as are the people, the Romish saint keeps the Lord's day with a Pharisaic rigor, and the church books of Casuistry are filled with questions, which have arisen from a strict construction of the Jewish law of the Sabbath and its application to the Lord's day.

The favorite explanation of all the deviations of the Reformers from the current view of any denomination or of any body, is that these peculiar views are the still adhering fragments of the Romish shell out of which they had so recently been hatched. But on this point a new refuge must be found. As to this specific point the position must be taken, that Rome was right and they were wrong. Their private misjudgment had led them into an error on a point on which Rome was in the light and they were in the dark, and in which American Protestantism agrees with Rome and takes side against the Reformers. Is this true? Shall Rome point to such assertions as a foretokening of the time when the Protestant world will again take ground with her, on all the other points on which the benighted Reformers arrayed them against her?

Are we, after being trained to think that the sole danger of the Reformers was that they would be naturally inclined to keep too near Rome, now to be told that at the Diet of Augsburg they not only hazarded, hut actually ran

into the fault of being too far from Rome? That in overthrowing her errors they struck a fatal blow at the heart of the truth which those errors encrusted, that they were so radical and so eager to consume the “wood, hay and stubble,” that they destroyed “the gold, silver, precious stones,” and by converting a divine institution into a merely human one, endangered the foundation itself. And all this too. in that mild confession, which we are to believe the timid Melancthon composed, under the constant dread that if he said a hard word, or came out decidedly against Romish errors, the emperor would put the Reformation in his pocket, and cut Martin Luther’s head off. Now he is a swaggering fellow, so blind with rage that he cannot see that a truth is a truth simply because Rome holds it, and renounces a divine obligation because Rome acknowledges it. This point needs no labored illustration. The disputed words of the Augsburg Confession, the words in which it is pretended that the divine obligation of the Lord’s day is denied, furnish all the evidence that is required. It is evident that in these words the Confessors deny something which their adversaries affirm. Now the necessity of “the Sabbath or any other day,” which is there denied, really is identical with divine obligation, or it is not. If it is identical, then since the Confessors are denying what Rome affirms, and since the supposition is that the divine obligation of the Lord’s day is denied by them, the supposition also is that the divine obligation was affirmed by Rome. Then Rome was right in affirming the necessity, and the Confessors were wrong. The charge against them here then is, that they were not Romish enough.

But if, on the other hand, the “necessity” there denied is not identical with divine obligation, then in denying that necessity of the Sabbath or of any other day, the Confessors by no means deny the divine obligation of the Sabbath or some other day. The dilemma is perfect. They who take the former horn of it, and say the words do deny the divine obligation of the Lord’s day, are forced to grant that here Rome was right in her affirmation, and the Confessors wrong in their denial — that here they erred by being too far from Rome. We take the other horn of the dilemma, and say that Rome affirmed a sort of necessity for the Lord’s day, by no means identical with that of divine obligation — a sort of necessity with which the divine obligation was so far from standing or falling, that in fact to make it identical with that divine obligation, would have overthrown both — the species of necessity which they claimed being in fact, as the Confessors demon-

strate, such as to overthrow the whole doctrine of grace, the whole New Testament plan of salvation.

It does not in the smallest degree relieve the difficulty, to say that though Rome was right as to the position of divine obligation, she was wrong as to the grounds on which she rested it — for this is still to suppose that her position was right, though her arguments were wrong — hut the Confessors not only repel her false arguments for the “necessity” in question, but they deny that necessity itself, and moreover if the false argument alone of the Romanists is covered by the “necessity,” then the Confessors deny not a divine obligation of the Lord’s day, but a false Romish argument merely. He, then, who will not accept one horn of the dilemma, must accept the other. Either our Confessors went too far against Rome, or the words in dispute do not deny the divine obligation of the Lord’s day. Our affirmation is that the Confessors held that though such distinctions of days as the Levitical dispensation enjoined, were no longer allowable, yet that such a distinction as the physical and religious wants of man demanded, is not Levitical, but original, moral, and incapable of abrogation, of the same force under the New Dispensation as under the Old, that whatever is moral in the command remains in force, and that all is moral in that command as it stands in the Decalogue, except the specific determination of the particular day of the week; that the keeping, therefore, of one day in seven holy is not a matter in which the freedom of the New Testament Church has any play whatever; but that in the determination of the day she is free, that exercising that freedom through her inspired leaders, the Apostles, she chose the first day in honor of her Lord’s resurrection, that though that day is not thereby sun-dered by a Levitical distinction from others, and though there is not thereby constituted in regard to it a prescription in its own nature unchangeable, so that a transfer to another day by the whole Church, under the guidance of God, is morally impossible, yet that the morality of a common keeping one day in seven requiring absolutely the determination of a day, that determination being actually made by the Apostles to the first day, no change having taken place, and none being conceivable, and that determination by universal consent being in force, that man sins against God, sins against the fourth command, and is guilty of a violation of the law of the Sabbath, who disregards or does not rightly use the Lord’s day, who does not consecrate it to the service of God, who does upon it servile works, or engages in

worldly occupations or amusements, or in anything which interferes with its religious character, except it be a work of necessity or of mercy.

And as regards the Augsburg Confession in its relation to the matter, we affirm that though from the brief notice it takes of the Lord's day, it does not develop in so many words all of this view, yet it not only does not contradict it, but implies it — the only key to its meaning is the theory we have stated.

## **VII. — Compressed statement of the points of difference between Rome and the Confessors.**

If we were compelled to state very briefly the points in dispute between the Romish and the Evangelical theologians, as regards the Lord's day, we should say — Rome maintained a Levitical necessity, the Confessors a moral necessity; Rome a Mosaic distinction, the Confessors a Christian distinction; Rome a prescriptive determination, the Confessors a free one; Rome a canonical observance, the Confessors an evangelical one. Rome rested the divine obligation on the necessity of the Sabbath, the Confessors on the necessity for the Sabbath; the one laid the foundation of the law in the day, the other in man; the one declared that man was made for the Sabbath, the other that “the Sabbath was made for man.” Just fifteen centuries before, in the “corn-fields” of Judea, “on the Sabbath day,” the adorable Redeemer had laid the foundation of the Evangelical view.

## **VIII. Proofs of the Position taken.**

Let us now look at some of the particular proofs of the general assertions we have made:

[1] The Confession does not deny that the sanctification of one day in seven for the service of God is a primitive original institution of God. The birth of the generic Sabbath is dated by the authors of the Confession in their writings, in which they discuss the subject more fully, from the completion of the Creation, and prior to the fall. Luther on Gen. 2:3, says, “God blessed the Sabbath,... the seventh day did he sanctify to himself... We may therefore learn to understand that the seventh day specially is due to the service of God, and should be appropriated to it. Even if Adam had remained steadfast in his innocence, he yet would have kept holy the seventh

day... On the Sabbath he would have instructed his children, would in a public manner have blessed and praised God... Yea, after the fall Adam kept this seventh day holy... Therefore is the Sabbath from the beginning of the world, ordained for the service of God.”

On Exodus 16:23: “The Sabbath existed before the law of Moses came, and had been indeed from the beginning of the world.” In common with Luther and Melancthon, the entire body of Lutheran theologians for two centuries, without a single exception of which we are aware, held to the primitive sanctification of the Sabbath. While among the Jewish, the Romish and the Reformed interpreters, there were some who maintained the opposite view, we cannot for two centuries after the Reformation find a solitary theologian, rigid as was their adherence to the Confession, who did not reject the idea that the words in Genesis 2:3, were put there by anticipation. All of them contend for the primitive sanctification of the Sabbath.

The inference, therefore, is resistless, that the Confessors did not teach nor imply that the devotion of one day in seven to God, is of Mosaic origin. The seventh day Sabbath of the Jew they declare abrogated — the Sabbath of one day in seven, the Sabbath of the race, they retain.

[2] The Confession declares in common with St. Paul (Col. 2:16), the tenor of the whole New Testament, the assent and actual practice of all Christendom, ancient and modern, Greek, Romish and Protestant, that the Jewish Sabbath or Saturday, and with it the Levitical necessity of the distinction of days, has been abrogated. “The Scripture which teaches that all Mosaic ceremonies, after the gospel has been revealed, may be omitted, has abrogated the Sabbath,” (Aug. Conf. p. 43.) It would be an insult to the reader to think it needful to say that the Sabbath “abrogated,” because “Mosaic ceremonies... may be omitted,” is not the generic, original Sabbath which the Confessors teach was not Mosaic, but “was appointed,” as Luther on Gen. 2:3, expressly says, “for mans sake,” ... “and God has caused this to be written, that we should do as he does, that we should labor six days, and on the seventh rest,” — “it has been the will of God to let the command of keeping holy the Sabbath remain,” — “the seventh day he will have sanctified,” — “the seventh day he has fixed that they should sanctify it.” The remark ought hardly to be necessary that when Luther and other writers of our church speak of the “seventh” day as ceremonial, they use the “seventh” as an ordinal number, to designate the definite seventh day of the week, or Saturday — while they declare that the “seventh” day, using the word “seventh”

cardinally and indefinitely, to mark one day in seven, is moral, not ceremonial.

[3] The Romish propositions in regard to the relation of the Lord's day, to the question of ecclesiastical authority, may be thus stated:

- a. The Jewish Sabbath was ordained under the Old Dispensation as a necessary means of justifying and saving men — or as necessary. Therefore the observance of days, and not faith alone, justifies — or is necessary.
- b. The Apostles have changed the Jewish Sabbath and substituted in its place the Lord's day, or first day of the Week, with the ceremonial character, otherwise unchanged, and have bound it on men in the same way as the Jewish Sabbath was bound on the Jew, and therefore it equally with that in the Article of justification, is necessary. Therefore the Apostles have renewed the principles of the Levitical distinction of days, and have made it of equal necessity under the New Dispensation.
- c. But the Church of Rome is the Church of the Apostles, swaying the same authority. Their right to change days implies her right. Their right to impose the Lord's day as necessary to justification, implies her right to command the observance of that day, and to impose others as necessary to salvation. The principle of ceremonial prescription remains in force — on that principle the Church of Rome enjoins by her Apostolic authority the Lord's day and other days — and they therefore are necessary to salvation — and in view of that necessity were ordained.

[4] We have seen that as to her general position, that the Lord's day is of divine obligation, the Church of Rome is as sound as any part of the Protestant world. On that point our Confessors had no dispute with her, but as to some of her most illegitimate ways of establishing it, and her most pernicious inferences from it, they had something to say.

Comparing their views elsewhere expressed, with the doctrine they were combating, it is not difficult to ascertain what would be the counter proposition of the Reformers. — Admitting the moral or divine obligation of the Lord's day as the one in seven, actually chosen or "now fixed," — they wished to show that no such argument as was urged by the Romanists could legitimately be based on that fact. They make some remarks in regard to the difference between the old dispensation and the new, as to the basis on

which the distinction in general, of days, rests; and they then speak specifically as to the Lord's day. Their thesis is: The obligation of the Lord's day rest not on ceremonial or Levitical grounds, such as the Church of Rome pretends, but on the basis of moral, religious and physical necessity, and the consequent unchangeable prescription of the moral law, that one day in seven shall be kept for rest and for God, but the moral law fixes this ratio of a day in seven not as a ceremonial thing, still less as necessary to justification. One day in seven is the necessary moral means to a necessary moral end, and is therefore fixed by the fourth commandment. But this necessity does not determine which day should be set apart. One day of the week would meet the moral necessity as well as another. A necessity however arises from the nature of things, that there should be a determination of the day. The day thus determined does not however become obligatory, on the ground that it is thereby separated by the Levitical principle from other days, but on the ground that in the very nature of things, the moral obligation of a conjoint keeping of one day in seven, requires that there should be a determination of which day. This day the Church embracing the Apostles, and directed by them, chose. The Apostles chose the first day of the week, but they chose it not in view of such a ceremonial or Levitical necessity, as the Church of Rome pretended, but because obedience to the fourth command required the choice of a day, and though between day and day as such, there could be no choice — one answering the moral demands of the law as well as another — they selected under guidance of the Holy Ghost, and in view of the glorious moral fitness of its association, the first day, the day of the resurrection and of the re-appearing of Christ, the day of the outpouring of his Spirit, "the Lord's day." Brief as it is on this point, the Confession affirms distinctly the generic necessity of a Sabbath or fixed day, holy to God. "It was necessary," it says, "to determine a fixed day, that the people might know when they were UNDER OBLIGATION *Deberet*, To be bound to, under obligation to, in duty bound.' Freund's Lat. Lex., trans. by Andrews) to come together," "that men might thereon hear and learn God's word. — Aug. Conf. p. 43, Latin and German.

In these words is expressed first, that the necessity of a time for God's service is a generic one, and consequently that the observance of such a time is not ceremonial or Mosaic, and consequently either on the one side of temporary obligation expiring with the New Dispensation, as on that supposition on evangelical principles would have been the case; nor on the



other of ceremonial obligation holding good under the new dispensation, as on the Romish principle would have been the case, but neither expiring by limitation on the one side, nor living on Levitical principles on the other, but resting on the broad principle that there are wants and duties of man requiring now, as under the Old Dispensation, a day for God. They declare in the second place that this time is “of necessity,” “a day,” and that day a “fixed” one, and its fixing not to be done by the individual, but from another source, which is to “determine” a day to be kept in common by all, a day whose observation is a duty, and to the keeping of which men are under obligation.

The Confession then argues here against the Romish Levitical idea, that the obligation of the sacred day is one that arises from the idea of the necessary sacredness of particular times, or from ecclesiastical prescription. It removes the obligation to keep the Lord’s day holy, from a false foundation to its true one. It overthrows the Romish principle of necessity, and brings in an evangelical principle of necessity, and rests the observation of the Lord’s day on the generic character of the law of the Lord, that law which is natural, moral, primitive, universal, and incapable of abrogation. — “Where the law of Moses,” says Luther, “and the law of nature are one thing, there the law remains. Nature gives and teaches that there must sometimes be a day of rest, which nature also, Moses sets in the Sabbath, in order that he, as Christ also does, (Matt. 12 and Mark 3) may set the Sabbath among men.” Let the reader mark in the quotation from Luther, first, that when a natural necessity is claimed for the Sabbath, the object is not to weaken its character as of divine obligation, but on the contrary to strengthen the obligation of that command by showing its natural necessity and fitness; secondly, that he speaks of this law as placed by Moses among men, in such features as are natural, and therefore moral; and thirdly, that this generic Sabbath he represents Christ as placing among men. “It is good and also necessary,” says Luther elsewhere, “that a special day of the week should be kept... It is also the demand of nature, that men should rest one day in the week, and that both man and beast should refrain from labor.” Mark in this quotation that it is said not only to be good, but “also necessary” that a “special day of each week” should be kept, it is a “demand of nature that there should be rest one day in the week.” Compare this with his principle, “where the law of Moses and the law of nature are one thing, there the law remains,” and the inference would be irresistible, even if he had not so often

and so clearly expressed it that the law of Moses enjoining one day in the week, of necessity, for rest and worship remains, and that there is, therefore, a divine obligation to keep such a day. "The command of the Sabbath is in itself a command of all the world. The proper idea of the third command is that we shall teach and hear the word on God's day, in order that we may sanctify both the day and ourselves." These words distinctly assert that the Sabbath generically considered, is not commanded to the Jews as such, but to all the world. And in the "proper," that is the essential, universal and immutable part of it, is embraced not merely the idea of some time for God, but of "God's day," and that day is to be sanctified. "It is useful and good, yea, highly necessary that one day should be kept, therefore God has given six days for labor, but on the seventh day, servants etc., should have rest, as this commandment runs. For love's sake and necessity's sake, Sunday has remained, on account of our need, that we may rest and learn God's word."

These passages will serve to illustrate the meaning of the Confession, when it says, a "certain day" is "necessary," and that it means not that God has enjoined no particular ratio of time under the New Dispensation, but that, as 'Luther well says in the last quotation we have given, "it is useful and good, yea highly necessary, therefore God has given the"seventh day" that we may rest and learn God's word." — This then is the necessity affirmed by the Confessors, and we shall see hereafter how they overthrew the false necessity of the Papists with this true one. They have swept away the sand which Rome had drifted about the base of the pyramid, and on which they pretended it stood, and have left the pyramid itself with its base of rock no longer hidden. Calvin was accustomed to say to Beza: "I retain my baptism, but I renounce the chrism." So did the Confessors retain the pyramid and renounce the sand.

## **The Augsburg Confession and The Apostolic Institution of the Lord's Day.**

If the Augsburg Confession denies the Apostolic Institution of the Lord's day, it arrays itself against the belief of the earliest church, and the sentiment of all Christendom up to its date, and takes a false position where the Church of Rome takes a true one. We need not quote the theologians of that Church, to demonstrate what her doctrine has been on this point. A single

sentence from the Catechism of the Council of Trent (chap. 4, quest. 7), will decide it: “The Apostles, therefore, resolved to consecrate the first day of the seven to divine worship, and called it the Lord’s day.”

Is there in the Augsburg Confession a solitary hint of the denial of the Apostolic origin of the Lord’s day? Not one. On the contrary, it implies the very reverse, as any one who will read the argument with care, will perceive. But it is wholly unnecessary to go into a vein of inductive evidence of this kind, on a point on which the direct testimony is so explicit and overwhelming.

The entire evidence on which the charge rests is, that the Augsburg says, “the Christian Church ordained the Lord’s day,” the implication, therein, it is alleged, being that the Apostles did not ordain it. We hope to show that the implication really designed, was the reverse — the Christian church ordained it, therefore the Apostles, without resting on whom no church is Christian, did ordain it.

When the Confessors say “the Christian Church has ordained Sunday,” they do not mean to make an antithesis between the Church and the Apostles, as much as to say the Church, not the Apostles, ordained it. It is between the Christian church, the body of Christ in its primitive purity, including the Apostles, and guided by their infallible direction, and the Romish church, they design to make the antithesis, as much as to say, the Lord’s day was not ordained by the Romish church, or by any particular church, but by the pure Christian church in its Apostolic time, through its infallible representatives and guides, the Apostles. And this intimation they make, not that Rome claimed to have instituted the Lord’s day, for this she never did claim, and would expressly disavow, but because she, claiming a power coordinate with that of the Apostles, sustained by their example her pretended right to establish festival days, and other outward things as of necessity, to the justification of men.

The Confessors design to remind her that though she claimed such powers, they denied them, and that they drew a distinction between an ordinance of the Christian and Apostolic church, and an ordinance of the Romish church, if she did not. You argue in this matter, they would say to their opponents, as if the conclusion from acts of the Christian church to your acts, was valid, hut the Christian church is one thing, and the Romish church is another, no inference from what the Christian church has done under the direction of the Apostles, to what the Romish church may do under

the direction of the Bishops, will stand. But moreover, if it could stand, your inference as to the power of the Romish church to ordain days as necessary to salvation, would not be valid, for although the Apostles ordained the Lord's day, they ordained it conformably to the law of the Sabbath, as the necessary moral means to a necessary moral end. Our Confessors would not, in a word, allow such a view of the Lord's day as would obscure the merit and sacrifice of that Lord himself; having rejected the *opus operatum* of sacraments, they were not going to allow the *opus operatum* of days.

We affirm, therefore, most distinctly as the thesis of this article, that the Confessors held and meant to teach that the Lord's day is an institution of the Apostolic church, that is, of the Apostles themselves, with the concurrence of the whole body of Christ on earth.

## **Luther on the Apostolic Institution of the Lord's Day.**

[1] That Luther held to the Apostolic institution of the Lord's day, is easily demonstrable. In his exposition of Gen. 19 and 20., he says: "Christians have always kept Sunday, not Saturday, because Christ rose on Sunday." "I believe," he says, (Tischreden. ch. 33:10) "that the Apostles transferred the Sabbath to Sunday, otherwise no man would have been so audacious as to dare to do it. And I believe they did it specially that they might tear from the hearts of the people the imagination that they were justified and holy through the law, and in order that men might be surely and steadfastly persuaded that the law is not necessary to salvation. But the Apostles were moved thereto by the resurrection of Christ our Lord and the sending of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost." If Luther had uttered the words just quoted, for the express purpose of illustrating the part of our Confession now in dispute, he could hardly have said anything more to the purpose. It shows that his view was that the abrogation of the Mosaic Sabbath, did not destroy the generic Sabbath, but only "transferred it to Sunday." that the change was made by the Apostles, the inspired representatives of "the Christian Church," of which they were a part, and that the "necessity" denied in the Confession is such a one as would imply that justification and sanctification are not through faith, but through the law.

## **2. Melancthon on the Apostolic Institution of the Lord's Day.**

Melanchthon is no less explicit. In the Augsburg Confession of 1540 (the *Variata*) in regard to which he always solemnly protested that no change of meaning had been introduced, he says in the part corresponding with that under discussion: “The genus in the Decalogue... remains. But the species, which was a ceremony, is free; therefore the Apostles did not retain the seventh day, but preferred to use the first, that they might remind the pious both of their liberty and the resurrection of Christ.”

How luminous this extract makes the whole passage we are considering, need hardly be pointed out. It lays the basis of the Lord’s day in the fourth commandment — it explains how far the freedom of the Church extended, that it pertained not to the morality of the law, but simply to the determinative part of it, that the reason of changing from the seventh day, was to show the church her absolute freedom from all in the law delivered by Moses which is not moral, so that the very parts of the Decalogue which were simply circumstantial, were not obligatory on Christians, that the reason of the change to the first day was, the resurrection of Christ, and that the change was made not by uninspired authority, or at a later period, but by the Apostles themselves. And this Melanchthon solemnly affirms to be the meaning of what ten years before had been expressed less fully at Augsburg. No one will doubt Melanchthon’s veracity; the plea that he had unconsciously changed in the ten years intervening, would be ridiculous, but if it should be offered, a fact will be brought out before the close of this article, by which such a plea will be annihilated.

A few more words of Melanchthon on this point will suffice. “The moral laws are the eternal rules of the divine mind, they sounded at all times in the church, even before Moses, and will always remain, and pertain to all nations.” (Loc. Com.) “For this end (rest, sanctification, holy works, teaching the people and divine services) a day is to be established. The leading idea pertains to all men and all times.” (*Do.*) “The command in regard to the seventh day is ceremonial and was altered. But the generic is natural and moral.” (Earlier Expos. Nic. Creed.) “The observation of the Sabbath as to the species, that is, as to the seventh day, and the Levitical sacrifices and the Levitical observation is abrogated, but not as to the genus. The genus is moral... It is in accordance with this that the Apostles changed the day,” (Later Exp. N. C.) In these extracts Melanchthon represents the generic command of an established day for rest, sanctification, etc., as unchangeable and of universal obligation. He lays the basis of the obligation of the

Lord's day in the fourth commandment, and declares it to have been instituted by the Apostles. The Lord's day is a day instituted by the Apostles in place of the Jewish Sabbath, in accordance with that part of the fourth commandment which is generic, moral and immutable. Such is Melancthon's view. Does it involve a denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath? Does he who makes the obligation of a fixed day for God's service, rest on the changeless morality of the Decalogue, and who teaches that the determination of what day in the seven it shall be, was made by the Apostles in accordance with that law, does he deny its divine obligation, or does he rest it on immutable foundation?

### **3. Views of the Lutheran Theologians.**

The views of Luther and Melancthon on this point, were maintained through all the purest period of Lutheranism, without one dissenting voice, of which we are aware.

FLACIUS ILLYRICUS, (Clav. S. S.) — "It is clear that at the very beginning, the Jewish Sabbath was changed by the Christians into the Lord's day. For Paul (1 Cor. 16:1, 2) says that he had ordained, etc., that on the first day of the week, etc. So Acts 20:7." Let the reader mark in this passage that the change is said to have been made by the Christians, and both the proofs are taken from Apostolic acts.

CHEMNITZ, on Revelation 1:10: "When the false Apostles urged the free observations of the Mosaic Sabbath, and of other festivals as of the law, with an opinion of their necessity, so urged them as to judge the consciences of those who did not observe them the Apostles determined that those days, months and years were not to be observed... The Apostles were unwilling simply to retain the Sabbath; but on the first day of the week they convened to break bread, etc. Acts 20; 1 Cor. 16. But the Apostles are not said to have imposed, either by some law or precept, the observation of this day on consciences with an opinion of necessity in the New Testament." This passage illustrates the sense in which the Confession declares that the observation of days under the New Testament is not "of necessity." The Apostles changed from the seventh day, to overthrow a false idea as to the nature of the necessity of God's day, and adopted the first, to show that the true idea of necessity was left unimpaired.

LYSER, (Harmony): “We (Lutherans) deny that the change of the Sabbath into the Lord’s day originated from the church. The Apostles, whom Christ constituted in his own place as teachers of the world, and especially of the Gentiles, and whom we justly follow, introduced this change.”

While no Romish writers have denied the Apostolic institution of the Lord’s day, some of them, in their inordinate anxiety to establish the necessity of some other rule than Holy Scripture, have maintained that we gather our knowledge of the fact from tradition. William Bail, in his catechism of Controversies, presses the Lutheran theologians with the question: “Where are we taught that the Lord’s day is to be celebrated in place of the Sabbath, in the face of an express command of Scripture, which sets before us the sanctification of the Sabbath?” The immortal Gerhard answers the question in the chapter of his “Confessio Catholica,” on the “Perfection of the Holy Scriptures.” Bail’s very question implies that the Lutheran Theologians maintained that the Lord’s day is to be celebrated in place of the Sabbath. Gerhard shows that this, their position on this point, does rest on Holy Scripture. His general answer would not be in place here. Quoting a sentence from a great Romish commentator, which speaks of the Lord’s day as “instituted by the right of the church,” he says: — On this point we will not move a strife with any one, if that right and institution are referred to the Apostles, in whose time this day was solemnly observed, and consecrated to the assemblies of Christians, as is clear from Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.” “The Apostles,” says the same great writer, in his Harmony, “set apart this day.” In his Loci, (Cotta’s ed. v. 319) he says again: “The Apostles observed the first day of the week,” and discusses in his own exquisite manner, the question, “Why the first day of the week was determined by the Apostles?”

FRANZIUS (De Interpretat.): “What Christ did on the first Pentecost as on the first Lords day, this he still does... On the Pentecostal Lord’s Day he poured forth the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles... The Lord in Creation and in the law sanctified the seventh day: so now also he has sanctified the Lord’s day.”

CALOVIVS (Bibl. Illustrat. in Apoc. 1:10): “From which title, ‘Lord’s day,’ it is clear that the day of our Lords resurrection, which we call Sunday, was in the time of the Apostles, and therefore by the Apostles themselves, sanctified for divine worship in place of the Sabbath.”

QUENSTEDT (System. Theolog. ii. 97): “The Apostles, by their divine authority, established and instituted as the Sabbath of Christians, this first day

of the week.”

It is needless to quote Buddeus, Spener, Mosheim, Walch, Baumgarten and the later theologians, who not only held, but invincibly maintained the Apostolic origin of the Lord’s day.

We might continue to quote our great theologians, and sustain, by citation after citation, the fact of their perfect unanimity on this point. Those we have quoted are not only of the first rank as theologians, but several of them highly distinguished by special works on the Augsburg Confession. Chemnitz, for instance, is not only distinguished as the greatest theologian of the sixteenth century, after Luther, but specially for a master work on “the Controversies agitated about certain articles of the Augsburg Confession,” (1594.) He too was one of the great authors of that Form. of Concord, in whose Preface the Confessors declare "that they depart not one finger’s breadth from the things themselves, nor from the phrases of the Augsburg Confession. The work of Franzius on the Augsburg Confession (1609) still remains a Classic, and Calovius was the author of three works on the Confession, all characterized by immense learning, dialectic skill, and intense devotion to the doctrines of the Lutheran church. From the authors of the Confession, then, and from its greatest theologians and commentators, we have an unbroken chain of demonstration, that the Augsburg Confession does not deny the Apostolic institution of the Lord’s day.

But we might have spared ourselves all this labor, and would have done so, if we had not supposed that it would not be profitless to hear our Confessors and theologians at some length upon this subject. We have made our citations for their independent value, as their necessity simply to sustain our position in regard to our Confession on this point, is obviated by a single fact, which makes the soundness of the Augsburg Confession on the Apostolic institution of the Lord’s day no longer a matter of argument, but a fact of history.

#### **4. The Original Edition of the Confession.**

By the Confession itself, in the authorized form in which it first came before the world, the form in which, in the judgment of scholars it presents itself with the highest critical authority, by the Confession itself we are willing to let our thesis stand or fall.



To enable the reader, whose attention has not been called to the critical history of the Augsburg Confession, to appreciate the demonstrative and unanswerable character of the testimony we are about to adduce, it will be necessary briefly to recapitulate certain facts.

On Saturday, June 25th, 1530, the Augsburg Confession in the German language, was read before the Emperor and the Diet, by Baier, the Chancellor of the Elector of Saxony. A copy of the Confession, both in Latin and German, was then given by Pontanus to Charles.

The German copy was deposited in the imperial archives at Mayence. The Emperor had forbidden the Confession to be printed without his permission; nevertheless it appeared surreptitiously several times in the year, printed in no case from a copy of the original, but from copies of the Confession made before it had reached the perfect form in which it was actually presented to the Diet. These editions of the Confession not only being unauthorized, but not presenting it in the shape in which it had actually been delivered, Melancthon issued the Confession both in German and Latin. The German was printed from his own manuscript, from which the copy had been taken to lay before the Diet. It reached Augsburg and was read and circulated there, while the Diet was still in session. Melancthon issued it expressly in view of the fact that the unauthorized editions were not accurate.

The first authorized edition, the editio princeps, coming from the hand of its composer, and presenting not only in the nature of the case the highest guarantee for strict accuracy, but surrounded by jealous and watchful enemies, in the Yery Diet yet sitting, before which it was read, surrounded by men eager to mark and to exaggerate the slightest appearance of discrepancy, this edition was received by Luther and the whole Lutheran Church. Luther knew\* no other Augsburg Confession in the German than this. It was received into the Bodies of Doctrine of the whole church. It appears in the Jena edition of Luther's works, an edition which originated in the purpose of having his writings in a perfectly unchanged form, and was there given as the authentic Confession in antithesis to all the editions of it in which there were variations large or small.

In the convention of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Princes at Naumberg in 1561, among whom were two of the original signers, this edition was declared to be authentic, and was again solemnly subscribed, and the seals of the signers appended. Nothing could seem to be more certainly fixed than

that this original edition of Melanchthon presented the Confession in its most perfect form, just as it was actually delivered in the Diet.

But unhappy causes, which it would not be in place to detail here, led to a most groundless suspicion, that even in the original edition there might be variations from the very letter of the Confession as actually delivered. That there were any changes in meaning was not even in those times of morbid jealousy pretended, but a strong anxiety was felt to secure a copy of the Confession perfectly corresponding in words, in letters, and in points with the original. The original of the Latin had been taken by Charles with him, but the German original, as we have said, had been placed in the archives at Mayence. Joachim II, in 1566, directed Coclestinus and Zochius to make a copy from the Mayence original. Their copy was inserted in the Brandenburg Body of Doctrine in 1572. In 1576, Augustus of Saxony obtained from the Elector of Mayence, a copy of the same document, and from this the Augsburg Confession as it appears in the Book of Concord was printed. Wherever the Book of Concord was received, Melanchthon's original edition of the German was displaced, though the same edition of the Latin has been retained. Thus half a century after its universal recognition, the first edition of the Augsburg Confession gave way to what was believed to be the original.

Two hundred years after the delivery of the Confession, a discovery was communicated to the theological world by Pfaff, which has reinstated Melanchthon's original edition. Pfaff discovered that the document in the archives at Mayence was not the original, but a copy merely, and the labors of Weber have demonstrated that this copy has no claim to be regarded as made from the original, but is a transcript from one of the less finished copies of the Confession, made before it had assumed, under Melanchthon's hand, the shape in which it was actually presented. While therefore the ordinary edition of the Augsburg Confession, the one found in the Book of Concord, and from which the current translations of the Confession have been made, does not differ in meaning at all from the original edition of Melanchthon, it is, nevertheless, not so perfect in style, and where they differ, not so clear. The highest critical authority is that of Melanchthon's own original edition.<sup>1</sup> That edition is explicit as to the Apostolic institution of the Lord's day, and renders it certain that the Augsburg Confession as actually presented, did not by mere implication, but by positive affirmation, set

forth the fact that the Lord's day was ordained not by fallible men, but by the Apostles themselves.

We need but quote the words of the edition, to settle this question forever.

## **The words of the Augsburg Confession in its original form.**

“For the church has not removed or disannulled the Sabbath, but God himself has taught that we, in the New Testament, should not be bound to the law of Moses. Therefore have the Apostles let the Sabbath fall, therewith to remind us that we are not bound to the law of Moses. And yet because it is necessary in order that the people may know when they should come together to determine a certain day, they (the Apostles) have ordained Sunday, that men should therein hear and learn God's word.”

These words are decisive, and demonstrate that a denial of the Apostolic origin of the Lord's day, involves a deviation from the authentic letter of our great Confession. Only the want of a minute acquaintance with the Confession, can account for the fact that some who hold the Apostolic institution of the Lord's day, imagine they are in conflict with the Confession, and that others who deny it, suppose themselves in harmony with the Confession. Neither the assertions of friends or of foes can absolve the seeker of truth from going to its fountains the original authorities.

He who can find in the New Testament a warrant for the divine obligation of the Lord's day, need only apply the same critical process to the writings of our Confessors, and he will find it there. The critical manipulation by which you explain it out of the latter, will explain it out of the former.

They who attempt to meet the mass of evidence we have presented, with the difficulty that some who profess to receive the Augsburg Confession implicitly, do not find the divine obligation of the Lord's day recognized in it, must first meet the difficulty that some who receive the New Testament implicitly, do not find the divine obligation of the Lord's day recognized in it. If our argument as to what the Confessors teach, is to be nullified by the first fact, theirs and ours as to what the New Testament teaches, would be equally nullified by the second, if difference of opinion argues want of explicitness in the one document, it may be urged to show want of explicitness in the other. If there is danger of our reading unconsciously into the Confes-

sion what we would like to find in it, there is no less danger of our trying to read into that Holy Book from which there is no appeal, what we would like to find there.

When the dead who are charged with error or crime, are among the common ranks of our race, the reproach may be unanswered till the judgment day; but when the dead are among the mighty who live on in their works, they can still plead for themselves. If the result of these charges against our Confessors shall be that their works shall be more searched, we shall be thankful that they have been made.

## **Views of the greatest Writers on the Confession as to its meaning.**

The view we have attempted to maintain, is the one in which the greatest writers on our Confession concur.

### **Carpzov.**

Carpzov, whose "Introduction to the Symbolical Books," is a classic, still without a rival in its kind, makes the following remarks in commenting on the Augsburg Confession:

"1. The observation of a day in a week is one thing; the observation of this or that particular day in a week is another thing. About the former the Old and the New Testament are agreed as about a moral precept which exacts and commands the observation and celebration of a day in each week. About the latter, however, there is a difference between the Old and the New Testament. For in the Old Testament that day was determined by a certain positive law, not moral but ceremonial, so that it could be no other than the seventh day of the week: but in the New Testament the determination of this day was left to the liberty of the church, which in memory of the resurrection chose the first day in the week for public and solemn worship. The Apostles did it from liberty, and not alone, but with the church... Hence the Lord's day has a certain accordance with the "order of public worship" and with "other sacred days" only with respect to its determination, which is indifferent and free in the church: but by no means as to the observation itself

of a day in each week, which is not ceremonial, and is not committed to the liberty of the Church ." — Isagoge, p. 320.

The same great author in speaking of the part of the Augsburg Confession which we have been endeavoring to vindicate, makes the following observations:

"1. The Lord's day may be considered in a two-fold way, either formally according as it is the first day in the week, a period of time extending from morning to night; or materially, according as it is a certain fixed day in the week solemnly set apart for divine worship and the public exercises of religion, and the Augsburg Confession in this place considers it in the former way... Otherwise when it is regarded according as it is one day from the circle of the week, it rests upon the divine institution, by which, it has been ordained that a certain day in the week shall be set apart to public worship.

[2] But the Lord's day regarded materially, may also be considered in a twofold way. First, as it was instituted before the fall, and pertains to public worship in itself regarded. Secondly, as when after the fall a certain typical signification was added to it, and which had a certain reference to the rest which Christ was to restore. And in this latter respect, it became a ceremonial rite, to which point also the Apostle (Col. 2:16; "Let no man therefore judge you... in respect of... the Sabbath days") has reference." — *Do.* p. 751.

These remarks of Carpzov are not only valuable, as showing the sense in which our Confession has been understood, but as stating with great clearness that distinction which renders luminous the apparently conflicting expressions in the writings of our Reformers. The key that unlocks the whole difficulty is just this — that we are not to apply to what they considered moral in the law, the remarks which they designed for what is merely determinative.

## Walch

No less explicit is the language of Walch, whose "Introduction" is the classic work of the eighteenth century on the Lutheran Confessions, as that of Carpzov is of the seventeenth. First quoting the words of the Confession on the Lord's day in full, he says: "If these words are so understood as if the Lord's day was regarded by our fathers as a human institution, we confess that they are by no means to be approved. For it is established beyond a

doubt, that the celebration of the Lord's day is not a human but a divine institution... The Apostles did it not as men, but moved by the divine will, and instructed by the Holy Ghost... We have thought fit to preface with these remarks, the examination of the question, what is the true meaning of the Confessors in regard to the Lord's day? They teach nothing injurious to the divine origin of this day... The error of the Papists was, that the Apostles and bishops had received power from Christ to prescribe rites which should be necessary and meritorious. This position the Romanists attempted to prove by the mutation of the Sabbath made by church authority, and thus furnished the occasion to the Confessors for touching on the Lord's day. What therefore they say in regard to it, was specially directed against the Papists, and was designed to show that this day was set apart for holy purposes, not to the end that we might attain a certain justifying merit by its observance; nor in order that by it a yoke might be imposed upon Christians which would take away all evangelical liberty." — Introduction pp. 389, 392, 393.

### **Chemnitz.**

"In the Old Testament on the sacred days, the people came together; on the Sabbath Moses and the prophets were read — common prayers were offered — psalms, hymns, and thanksgivings were employed. In brief, those holy days were sanctified, that is, that time was spent in the holy duties of religion, all impediments and avocations of an earthly nature being laid aside. Certainly, this genus has not been abrogated in the New Testament. And this is the meaning of that common and correct expression, that in the commandment in regard to keeping holy the Sabbath, the New Testament has abrogated, not the genus which is moral, but the species which is ceremonial." — Chemnitz: "*Examen of the Council of Trent.*"

### **Lyser.**

"The question is raised, 'As our Lord Jesus Christ himself observed the Jewish Sabbath, how is it that we Christians have changed it into the Lord's day, which we keep in place of the Sabbath?' The Jesuits reply that this change was introduced by mother church, to whom we owe obedience. And hence they argue: if the church has so great authority that she can change

what God instituted, and what was observed from the beginning of the world, although she has no word of God to authorize the change, why is not that same authority valid in other articles? And why do not you Lutherans observe the other festivals instituted by the Church? We reply to the Jesuit accusation with the plea of not guilty, and deny that the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's day originated from the Church. The Apostles, whom Christ constituted in his own place as teachers of the world, and especially of the Gentiles, and whom we justly follow, introduced this change." — Polycarp Lyser: *Harmony of the Evangelists*.

## **Gerhard.**

"On the very day of the Resurrection, which is the Lord's day, or as we call it, Sunday, Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the women returning from the sepulchre, to Simon Peter, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and to the rest of the disciples. In this place (John 20:28) he again appears to his disciples on the Lord's day, and this he does to mark with honor the Lord's day, which Christ in this way wished to consecrate and set apart for the worship of God, whence beyond doubt it came to pass that the Apostles set apart this day for divine services." — Gerhard: *Harmony of the Evangelists*.

## **Calovius.**

[1] — The Sabbath primitive.

"The consecration of the seventh day to divine worship, was made from the time of the divine Sabbath of Creation. This has never been doubted among our (Lutheran) theologians, who here agree"with one consent. "— *Bibl. Illustrt.* I. 56.

On Gen. 2:3. "The Sabbath was consecrated from the beginning, and was not first instituted when Israel was led forth from Egypt; and therefore, even in a state of innocence, the seventh day would have been sacred. From the very beginning of the world, God has sanctified and instituted the seventh day for his service." — *Do.*, 232.

[2] — The law of rest on the Sabbath pertains to Christians.

"First, it is an error (of Grotius) that rest on the Sabbath refers to the Hebrews alone. It is moral, that on the Sabbath it is our duty to rest from ordi-

nary and servile labors, but so that works of necessity, piety and charity are not regarded as thereby excluded... This is perpetual, and refers to all men, that one day in the seven should be sacred, on which both domestic animals and men should have some rest from toil. This is not only prescribed to the Hebrews, but to all men. For God wishes the Sabbath to be observed by all men... ‘Remember,’ says Jehovah, The Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.’ This is by no means restricted to the Jews, nor is it abrogated in the New Testament. It was in force before the Israelites were chosen as the people of God, nay from the beginning of the world. Gen. 2:1. Moreover, the reason is a general one, looking to all men. ‘For it is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.’ Therefore Christians also are under obligation to rest, themselves to cease from servile works, as well as to permit all that belong to them to rest. Christ says the Sabbath was made for man, not for the Jew only. Mark 2:22... The divine sanctification of the Sabbath, then, is first segregative from common use, and then consecrative to sacred uses. Both sorts of sanctification are prescribed to us also; for the second cannot exist without the first.” — *Do.* p. 412.

[3] — The Lord’s Day substituted for the Sabbath.

“In the third place, Grotius cannot be acquitted of error, in denying that the Lord’s day was substituted for the Sabbath, which he does, doubtless, to gratify the Anabaptists, who regard the command of the Sabbath as entirely abolished, so that in virtue of Christian Liberty, they think any sort of work lawful on all days, which seems also to be the position of the Socinians, who are near of kin to Grotius. In the New Testament one day of the week has been retained, by virtue of the divine commandment, only the Lord’s day has been substituted for the Sabbath.” — *Do.* 414, 415.

[4] — The Divine Authority and Obligation of the Lord’s Day.

“It is disputed whether Christ himself, or the Apostles, substituted the Lord’s day for the Sabbath, but all agree easily in this, that the observation of the Lord’s day derives its validity, not from custom alone, or human constitution, but has been sanctioned by some divine constitution, since those things which the Apostles sanctioned by Apostolic authority, are to be esteemed as divine institutions.” — *Do.* p. 415.

[5] — The Lord’s Day instituted by Christ and his Apostles.



“The two opinions (one that Christ, the other that the Apostles instituted the Lord’s day) are not difficult to be harmonized, if we say that Christ by his resurrection on this day, and by his example, has consecrated it, etc., but the Apostles by that divine authority which they possessed... sanctioned and instituted the first day of the week as the ordinary Sabbath of Christians.” — *Do.* p. 415.

[6] — Coloss. 2; 16, does not remove the moral part of the fourth commandment.

“What is said in Coloss. 2:16, ‘Let no man therefore judge you in respect of a holy day... or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come,’ does not take away the moral part of the commandment in regard to the sanctification of the Sabbath, but only that which was ceremonial in it, and belonged to the shadow of things to come of which sort is not exemption from the ordinary labors, and divine worship, and a certain day of the week consecrated to them.” — *Do.* p. 416.

## **Quenstedt.**

“By virtue of that in the third command which is moral, there is established for divine worship under the New Testament also, one day in seven; not indeed the seventh counting from the Creation, but the seventh in a weekly circle, or one fixed day in seven. To the moral essence of the Sabbath pertains not only that some fixed time should be left for the worship of God, but that a certain day of the week should be consecrated to that purpose, because God has consecrated a day entire and as his own, and has blessed it. But that this one day in seven should be the seventh day (or Saturday) is not a part of the moral essence of the Sabbath. The seventh as the cardinal number of the day, is moral, as the ordinal, it is ceremonial. Only the ceremonial part of the precept is abrogated under the New Testament, the moral still is in force; to wit, in place of the Jewish Sabbath, the day which we call the Lord’s day has been substituted, one day in seven, however, being retained by the authority of the command of God. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Confession itself, speak of the Lord’s day as ordained by the church, but ‘when the authority of the church is mentioned, the Church of the Apostles is included, on which the church depends.’ The resurrection of Christ occurred on this day, and by his example he consecrated it. He appeared on this day of the week to his disciples, and again to

Thomas. On the same day he poured forth his spirit on the assembled Apostles, and by the confession of all 'the Lord's day' (Rev. 1:10) is the name of the first day of the week, as that day which, if not enjoined by express words by our Lord, was consecrated by his example. The antithesis to this view is first that of those who contend that the whole of the command is moral, and that the Jewish Sabbath is therefore to be kept; secondly, of the Socinians, who deny that any part of it is moral, and assert that all has been set aside by Christ, and that no part is obligatory on Christians. With the Socinians the Anabaptists agree on this as on many other points, so as to give rise to the proverb: "The Anabaptist is an ignorant Socinian, and the Socinian is an intelligent Anabaptist." Quenstedt: '*Systema Theologicum*.'

## **Spener.**

"I find that the opinion is not well grounded, of those who from Rom. 14:5, Gal. 4:10, Col. 2:16, would maintain that in the New Testament no particular Sabbath is any longer enjoined, but that all days are to be made Sabbaths or holy days of rest by Christians. There is indeed much truth in the sentiment that a Christian should keep a perpetual Sabbath in the soul... But this is not the only Sabbath enjoined in the third commandment, nor can it be asserted that this third commandment, as a part of the moral law, is entirely abrogated; but as a particular Sabbath was already instituted of God in Paradise, (Gen. 2:2) where also man might have kept that constant spiritual Sabbath, for the same reason also it is still retained in the New Testament. The cardinal feature in the third commandment must certainly remain in the New Testament. There must be one certain time for spiritual works... The divine wisdom has appointed for this time the seventh day.

An earnest sanctification of the Sabbath is obligatory upon us Christians. This sanctification is not a part of the ceremonial features. I feel assured that he who will habitually keep the Sabbath rightly, will discover by experience, and by its uses to his own soul, that this commandment is a benefaction rather than a burden, that God gives us a day of freedom from the toil to which we are condemned, that on it we may secure blessings to our souls." — Spener. *Bedenken*.

A systematic statement of the doctrines of the Sabbath involved in the views of these great writers of our church, may be presented in the following propositions:

[1] The law that one day in seven shall be set apart for the service of God, has existed by divine command, from the foundation of the world, and its obligation is a part of the original law of nature.

[2] The command was repeated in the decalogue and in the Mosaic law, with specific ceremonial characteristics adapting it to the Jewish nation.

[3] The law itself, generically considered, is of perpetual and universal obligation; its specific ceremonial characteristics pertain only to the Jews.

[4] The law itself has never been abrogated; the specific ceremonial characteristics have been.

[5] To keep one day in seven holy to God, to abstain from all that may conflict with its sanctification, is generic, not specific; moral, not ceremonial.

[6] The obligation to keep holy the seventh day, or Saturday, is ceremonial and not binding on Christians.

[7] The resurrection of Christ, his successive appearances, the Pentecostal effusion of his spirit, on the first day of the week, together with the example of the Apostles, and of the Apostolic Church, have shown to the church what day in the seven may, under the New Dispensation, most fitly be kept holy, and have led to the substitution of the first day of the week for the seventh, as the Christian Sabbath.

[8] To keep holy the first day of the week, to consecrate it to God, and to this end to abstain upon it from all works except those of necessity, mercy and the service of God, is obligatory on all men.

No church can show a purer record than the Lutheran Church, on this very question of sound doctrine in regard to the moral and divine obligation to consecrate one day in every seven to God, and to repose from toil. The greatest leaders of theology in our church, considered a denial of the divine obligation to keep one day in seven as Socinian. The Sabbatarians, harmonizing with the Jews, considered even the determinative part of the fourth command as perpetual, and contended that Saturday should be kept. Our fathers rejected this error. The Anabaptists and Socinians contended that no part of the fourth command is of divine obligation — that all is ceremonial. Our fathers rejected this error, and rested on this point as in others, on the truth removed from each extreme — that the generic Sabbath is primitive and has never been abrogated — that only what is ceremonial in the Jewish Sabbath is abrogated — that the Christian Sabbath is a glorious bond of the sovereignty of God in the law, and of the freedom of the church under the

Gospel; divine in its generic origin and obligation, and apostolic in its specific determination.

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1. For the facts here presented, compare Weber Knt. Geschichle. Hase. Lib. Symb., Francke do. Kollner Symb.. Luther. Kirch.. 342.↩

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Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

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## Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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“I want you to understand that I have never preached opinions from this pulpit; it is not a question of opinion; I have absolutely no right to stand here and give you my opinion, for it is not worth any more than yours; we do not come to church to get opinions; I claim that I can back up every sermon I have preached, with the Word of God, and it is not my opinion nor yours, it is the eternal Word of God, and you will find it so on the Judgment day. I have nothing to take back, and I never will; God does not want me to.”

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