Of the le*g*al passa*g*es that speak of the Sabbath all those which show affinity with the doctrine of the Scribes— regarding the Sabbath as an arbitrary sign between Jehovah and Israel, entering into details as to particular acts that are forbidden, and enforcing the observance by severe penalties, so that it no longer has any religious value, but appears as a mere legal constraint—are post-exilic (Exod. xvi. 23-30, xxxi. 12-17, xxxv. 1-3; Num. xv. 32-36); while the older laws only demand such cessation from daily toil, and especially from agricultural labour, as among all ancient peoples naturally accompanied a day set apart as a religious festival, and in particular lay weight on the fact that the Sabbath is a humane institution, a holiday for the labouring classes (Exod. xxiii. 12 ; Deut. v. 13-15). As it stands in these ancient laws, the Sabbath is not at all the unique thing which it was made to be by the Scribes. “The Greeks and the barbarians,” says Strabo (x. 3, 9), “ have this in common, that they accompany their sacred rites by a festal remission of labour.” So it was in old Israel: the Sabbath was one of the stated religious feasts, like the new moon and the three great agricultural sacri­ficial celebrations (Hosea ii. 11); the new moons and the Sab­baths alike called men to the sanctuary to do sacrifice (Isa. i. 14); the remission of ordinary business belonged to both alike (Amos viii. 5), and for precisely the same reason. Hosea even takes it for granted that in captivity the Sab­bath will be suspended, like all the other feasts, because in his day a feast implied a sanctuary.

This conception of the Sabbath, however, necessarily underwent an important modification in the 7th century b.c., when the local sanctuaries were abolished, and those sacrificial rites and feasts which in Hosea’s time formed the essence of every act of religion were limited to the central altar, which most men could visit only at rare intervals. From this time forward the new moons, which till then had been at least as important as the Sabbath and were celebrated by sacrificial feasts as occasions of religious gladness, fall into insignificance, except in the conservative temple ritual. The Sabbath did not share the same fate, but with the abolition of local sacrifices it became for most Israelites an institution of humanity divorced from ritual. So it appears in the Deuteronomic decalogue, and presumably also in Jer. xvii. 19 *sq.* In this form the institution was able to survive the fall of the state and the temple, and the seventh day’s rest was clung to in exile as one of the few outward ordinances by which the Israelite could still show his fidelity to Jehovah and mark his separation from the heathen. Hence we understand the importance attached to it in the exilic literature (Isa. lvi. 2 *sq.,* lviii. 13), and the character of a sign between Jehovah and Israel ascribed to it in the post-exilic law. This attachment to the Sabbath, beautiful and touching so long as it was a spontaneous expression of continual devotion to Jehovah, acquired a less pleasing character when, after the exile, it came to be enforced by the civil arm (Nell, xiii.), and when the later law even declared Sabbath-breaking a capital offence. But it is just to remember that without the stern discipline of the law the community of the second temple could hardly have escaped dissolution, and that Judaism alone preserved for Chris­tianity the hard-won achievements of the prophets.

The Sabbath exercised a twofold influence on the early Christian church. On the one hand, the weekly celebration of the resurrection on the Lord’s day could not have arisen except in a circle that already knew the week as a sacred division of time; and, moreover, the manner in which the Lord’s day was observed was directly influenced by the synagogue service. On the other hand, the Jewish Chris­tians continued to keep the Sabbath, like other points of the old law. Eusebius *(H.E.,* iii. 27) remarks that the

Ebionites observed both the Sabbath and the Lord’s day; and this practice obtained to some extent in much wider circles, for the *Apostolical Constitutions* recommend that the Sabbath shall be kept as a memorial feast of the crea­tion as well as the Lord’s day as a memorial of the resur­rection. The festal character of the Sabbath was long recognized in a modified form in the Eastern Church by a prohibition of fasting on that day, which was also a point in the Jewish Sabbath law (comp. Judith viii. 6).

On the other hand, Paul had quite distinctly laid down from the first days of Gentile Christianity that the Jewish Sabbath was not binding on Christians (Rom. xiv. 5 *sq.;* Gal. iv. 10; Col. ii. 16), and controversy with Judaizers led in process of time to direct condemnation of those who still kept the Jewish day *(e.g.,* Co. of Laodicea, 363 a.d.). Nay, in the Roman Church a practice of fasting on Satur­day as well as on Friday was current before the time of Tertullian. The steps by "which the practice of resting from labour on the Lord’s day instead of on the Sabbath was established in Christendom and received civil as "well as ecclesiastical sanction will be spoken of in Sunday; it is enough to observe here that this practice is naturally and even necessarily connected with the religious observance of the Lord’s day as a day of worship and religious glad­ness, and is in full accordance with the principles laid down by Jesus in His criticism of the Sabbath of the Scribes. But of course the complete observance of Sunday rest was not generally possible to the early Christians before Christendom obtained civil recognition. For the theological discussions whether and in what sense the fourth commandment is binding on Christians, see Deca­logue, vol. vii. p. 17.

2. *Origin of the Sabbath.—*As the Sabbath was origin­ally a religious feast, the question of the origin of the Sabbath resolves itself into an inquiry why and in what circle a festal cycle of seven days was first established. In Gen. ii. 1-3 and in Exod. xx. 11 the Sabbath is declared to be a memorial of the completion of the work of creation in six days. But it appears certain that the decalogue as it lay before the Deuteronomist did not contain any allusion to the creation (see Decalogue, vol. vii. p. 16), and it is generally believed that this reference was added by the same post-exilic hand that wrote Gen. i. 1-ii. 4a. The older account of the creation in Gen. ii. 4b *sq.* does not recognize the hexaemeron, and it is even doubtful whether the original sketch of Gen i. distributed creation over six days. The connexion, therefore, between the seven days’ week and the work of creation is now generally recognized as secondary. The week and the Sabbath were already known to the writer of Gen. i., and he used them to give the framework for his picture of the creation, which in the nature of things could not be literal and required some framework. At the same time, there was a peculiar ap­propriateness in associating the Sabbath with the doctrine that Jehovah is the Creator of all things ; for we see from Isa. xl.-lxvi. that this doctrine was a mainstay of Jewish faith in those very days of exile which gave the Sabbath a new importance for the faithful.

But, if the week as a religious cycle is older than the idea of the week of creation, we cannot hope to find more than probable evidence of the origin of the Sabbath. At the time of the exile the Sabbath was already an institution peculiarly Jewish, otherwise it could not have served as a mark of distinction from heathenism. This, however, does not necessarily imply that in its origin it was specifically Hebrew, but only that it had acquired distinguishing features of a marked kind. What is cer­tain is that the origin of the Sabbath must be sought within a circle that used the week as a division of time. Here again we must distinguish between the week as