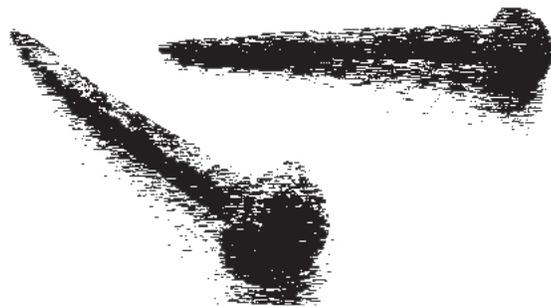


WHAT WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS?

AN EXPOSITION OF COLOSSIANS 2:14-17

URIAH SMITH

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”—Colossians 2:14-17



There was a law consisting of just ten commandments, spoken by the voice of God from the summit of Sinai. This law, and no more, God wrote with His own finger upon the tables of stone. This He caused to be deposited by itself in the ark prepared expressly for its reception. This code of ten commandments, He himself calls “a law.” He said to Moses (Ex. 24:12): “Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, *and a law*, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.”

God wrote nothing but the ten commandments. These alone were written upon the tables; to these the terms *law* and *commandments* are both applied. By these circumstances and peculiarities they are sharply distinguished and set apart from all other injunctions and obligations. By these they are shown to belong, in a degree, and a sense not common to any other requirements, to the Most High. They are pre-eminently “the law of God,” and “the commandments of God.” These constitute that New Testament law by which is “the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20), without which “there is no transgression” nor imputation of sin (Rom. 4:15; 5:13), and the transgression of which *is* sin. 1John 3:4. These constitute “His [God’s] commandments,” the keeping of which is “the whole duty of man,” and by which every work shall be tested in the judgment (Eccl. 12:13,14); and they compose the “royal law” and the “law of liberty” by which James declares we shall be judged at last. James 2:8,12. They are the “commandments of God,” to which the third message of Revelation 14 brings us, in connection with “the faith of Jesus,” which includes all the teaching and precepts of Christ and His apostles in the New Testament. Rev. 14:12. They constitute that law which God declared that His Son would “magnify” and make “honorable” (Isa. 42:21), which he speaks of as “My law,” and declared that He would write it under the new covenant in the hearts of His people (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10)—the “His [God’s] commandments” which those will be found keeping who will be summoned at last to enter through the gates into the city of the New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:14.

There was another law communicated privately to Moses, and written by him in a book, called “the *book*

of the law,” which consisted of instructions in regard to meats, drink, feast-days, divers washings, and carnal ordinances, and which was deposited, not in the ark, but by its side. The difference between them in this respect was this: The ten commandments lay in unapproachable majesty *inside* the golden ark, deep graven by the finger of Deity Himself in the imperishable agate of the mountains; the law of types and ceremonies lay *outside* the ark, written with ink, by human hands, on the perishable parchment.

We call the one “the moral law,” because it related to moral duties alone; the other we call “the ceremonial law,” because it related wholly to ceremonial observances. It is not claimed that the terms moral law and ceremonial law are found in the Scriptures; but they are convenient terms to express distinctions which the Scriptures clearly teach. The Scriptures do not use the words probation, prophetic, millennial, moral, mental, physical, and a host of other terms which are exceedingly convenient to express distinctions recognized in the Bible, and to which no one objects.

We say that Col. 2:14-17 refers exclusively to the ceremonial law, having to the moral law not the remotest allusion whatever. And he who endeavors to hide behind this Scripture as his defense for the neglect or violation of any moral duties, will stand at last in the judgment ashamed of his folly and speechless in his condemnation.

In studying Col. 2:14-17, we ought to pay some regard to the consistency of the figures which the apostle uses, lest we represent him as a simpleton in spite of his inspiration. It is first to be noticed that the subject of the apostle’s remark is the “*handwriting* of ordinances.” This expression will not apply in any sense to the ten commandments; for no abuse of language can be carried far enough to allow us to call them a “handwriting;” and they contained not a single “ordinance,” or ceremony. The “handwriting of ordinances” is not the ten commandments.

The apostle further says that this “handwriting” was “blotted out.” That only can be blotted out with the ink and pen of the scribe, which has been written by the hand of the scribe. That which is engraved in stone might be brushed over and discolored with ink; but the engraving would be there in all its distinctness still; it could not in any sense be “blotted out,” and it would be utterly inconsistent to apply that term to it.

The apostle continues that this handwriting was “nailed to the cross.” If we attempt to apply this to the ten commandments, we involve the astute and logical Paul in the absurdity of talking about nailing up tables of stone. Against such an idea there are two objections: (1) That which was designed ever to be annulled by being nailed up after the ancient manner of parchment laws, would not have been put upon such material as stone, in the first place; and, (2) having been engraved on stone, the proper way to annul them, if they had to be annulled, would be to break the stone tablets, not to try the absurd and impossible feat of nailing them up.

The figure of blotting out and nailing up the laws written by men upon parchment, as applied to what Christ accomplished by His death upon the cross, is at once consistent and forcible. Christ was nailed to the cross. In Him all offerings met their antitype, all shadows their substance. They were there nailed in Him to the cross. Men could look upon Him and say, Here is the great sacrifice which supersedes all typical offerings. The laws for these are now no longer in force; they are nailed with Him to the cross.

But suppose we try to consider that the tables of stone were also there, in Him, nailed to the cross; in what respect was He the antitype of them? In what respect were they the shadows and He the substance? Could men look upon him and say, Now, tonight I will plunge a dagger into the heart of my enemy; for the law, “Thou shalt not kill,” is there in Christ nailed to the cross, and is no longer binding?

But, says the objector, if the book of the law was nailed to the cross, then the ten commandments were nailed to the cross; for they were all in that book, word for word; and the doing away of the book did them away also. Whoever makes such an assertion, has certainly been very heedless in his reading of the book. It is not true. The ten commandments nowhere appear in the books of Moses in legislative form; that is, in a form to drive their authority in any degree from the book. They are but once recorded in set form, as God spoke them, and that is in Ex. 20:3-17. And this is historical and not legislative; it is simply a narrative that God did come down and give that law from Sinai with his own voice; but the law derived no authority from this narrative. Its authority rested upon the fact that it had been spoken by God, and written with His finger upon the tables of stone, and deposited in the holiest spot of the most holy place of the sanctuary. And though every copy of the book containing this narrative had been destroyed and put out of existence, it would not have affected in the least the fact of the promulgation of that law, nor have touched the tables containing the legislative transcript of the same. What is here stated will apply also

to Moses’ rehearsal and paraphrase of the law forty years later, as recorded in Deut. 5:6-21.

With the law of Moses it was not so. That was promulgated through the book, and its authority was derived from that record. It had no position elsewhere, and when that handwriting was nailed to the cross, nothing of it longer remained.

Having thus noticed some of the general principles involved in the question treated of in Col. 2:14-17, we come now to be “against” us, “contrary to” us, “blotted out,” and “nailed to the cross.” These are meats, drinks, holy-days, new moons, and sabbath days, or sabbaths; for in consequence of the “blotting out” previously mentioned, no one is to judge us with reference to these things.

Respecting the meats, drinks, holy-days (feast-days,) and new moons, there is no difference of opinion—all agree that they belonged to the Jewish system, and with that passed away. The sabbaths there mentioned is the point around which the opposing forces rally, and on which the controversy centers. The object of the no-Sabbath and Sunday people being to include the weekly Sabbath in the catalogue of the things done away, various claims are at once set up. One says that “there was but one system before Christ; it was an inseparable whole; it was all Jewish, and therefore all done away.” Another says, “No, this does not embrace all that existed before Christ; there were some things which did not belong to the ‘handwriting of ordinances,’ and which are not therefore done away; and the Jews had yearly sabbaths distinct from the weekly Sabbath; but then, the term sabbaths must include all sabbaths, of whatever kind; hence the weekly Sabbath is embraced in the term, and has been done away with the others.” Another asserts that “the term cannot refer to any ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews, because they had no annual festivals which could properly be called ‘sabbaths;’ that the word sabbaton used in Col. 2:16, is the one always used to designate the weekly Sabbath; and therefore the word there must refer to the weekly Sabbath, and that alone, all the Jewish festivals being included in the word holy-day (or feast-day) used just before.”

Thus the fourth commandment seems to be a source of perplexity to many people. It is so, however, only to those who wish to avoid its obligations. Such, we are happy to say, will always find it a thorn in their side and a prick in their eyes. To all others, it is a “delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable.” Isaiah 58:13.

This latter class, with whom we rejoice to stand, have no annual festivals, connected with which there were seven annual sabbaths. These sabbaths owed their existence to that system, and were an inseparable part of the same. They were properly included in the “handwriting of ordinances;” and no sabbaths except those of this nature could be included in this term. There is, therefore, no necessity of going outside of the limits prescribed by the apostle’s language, and invading the realm of the moral law, and bringing in the weekly Sabbath of the Lord, which is just as distinct from these other sabbaths in its origin, nature, office, and destiny, as can possibly be.

Moreover, Paul is careful to guard still further against any misunderstanding in this matter, by immediately adding (verse 17) this restrictive clause: “Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Thus he points out in just as plain language as could be used, just what sabbaths he refers to; it is only to those which belong to the system of types and shadows, and which are a part and parcel of that system. But this was never true of the weekly Sabbath, which originated, as the record in Genesis shows, before any type or shadow had, or could have had, a place in the economy of God’s grace in behalf of men.

But some at this point seem to have committed the singular blunder of supposing that this sentence—“which are a shadow of things to come”—is a declarative instead of a restrictive one, not limiting the idea to certain sabbaths which are shadows, but asserting that all sabbaths are shadows, the weekly Sabbath as well as others. So we have the assertion, “The seventh-day Sabbath is a shadow, say what they will; for Paul says so in Col. 2:17.” Very profound! Let us illustrate: Farmer A has a piece of land in which he pastures horses, sheep, and cows. His cows are of two kinds—a very poor, ordinary kind, which he calls the “common” kind, and others which are of a very rare and valuable breed. For several days he has his hired man, B, to drive them all up to the barn at night, for safe keeping. But at length he determines to sell off his horses, sheep and all his cows, except the rare and valuable ones. So he says to his hired man, “Go down to the pasture and drive up the horses, the sheep, and the cows which are common; for I have decided to sell them.” B goes down and drives them all up, good, bad, and indifferent. A says, “Why do you drive them all up? I told you to drive up only the cows which are common.” “But, replies B, “you said they were all common. Didn’t you say ‘the cows which are common?’ and that means all cows; and they are all common; for you said so.” Then says A to B, “I have no use for a man who doesn’t know enough to drive cattle! You may go.” And he sends his fine breeds back to the pasture by the hand of a better man, and sells the remainder.

“Sabbaths which are a shadow,” as Paul expresses it, is a declaration that there are sabbaths which are *not* a shadow, and these last are excluded from the things of which he is speaking. There are many considerations which show that the weekly Sabbath cannot by any possibility be included in the sabbaths of which the apostle speaks in Col. 2:16:

1. The weekly Sabbath did not have its origin with meats, drinks, festivals, new moons, and ceremonial, or annual, sabbaths. It originated during man’s independent, innocent condition before the fall (Gen. 2:2,3,) and was thus placed among the original, primary laws which would always have governed him though he had never sinned; while the latter originated with the ceremonial system introduced at Horeb.

2. It did not rest on the same authority with them. Its authority rested upon the voice of God, and the writing of God upon the tables of stone; the ceremonial system was found only in the book written by Moses.

3. It was not typical or shadowy in its nature, any more than the command, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

4. It was not “against us,” as were the things of which Paul is speaking; for “the Sabbath was made for man.” Mark 2:27.

5. It was not “contrary to us,” for there is no commandment or institution anywhere singled out to which so great blessings are attached as are promised to the keeping of the Sabbath, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also. See Isa. 56:6,7; Jer. 17:24,25; Isa. 58:13,14.

6. There is no necessity for including the weekly Sabbath in the expression, “sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come,” inasmuch as there were other sabbaths, of the same nature as the feast-day and new moons mentioned, in number amply sufficient to meet the demands of the apostle’s language.

Right here the retreating no-Sabbath forces, and a portion of their Sunday allies, face about and endeavor to make a stand. They say that there was but one Jewish festival that is ever called a sabbath; that the others were not sabbaths; and hence Paul could not properly use the term sabbaths (plural) as applied to Jewish ceremonial sabbaths, inasmuch as there was only one such. Moreover, they claim that the term *sabbaton* used in Col. 2:16, is the term always used to designate the weekly Sabbath, and never a ceremonial one, and as the ceremonial festivals are all included in the term holy-day (*heorte*, feast-day,) the word *sabbaton* must refer to the weekly Sabbath alone; and further, that in the Hebrew there is only one instance in which the word used to designate the weekly Sabbath, *shabbath*, is applied to a Jewish festival; the other Jewish feasts being designated by another word, *shabbathon*, which signifies merely “rest,” and not a “sabbath.” Therefore *sabbaton* in Col. 2:16, must mean the weekly Sabbath exclusively, or at least must include that.

It becomes us, now that the “original” is pointed at us, to move along with awe and trepidation. Approaching cautiously to reconnoiter this formidable intrenchment, let us see what we find:

1. As to the meaning of the term *sabbaton*, it does not invariably mean the weekly Sabbath. It is certainly used in one other sense in the New Testament. The Pharisee mentioned in Luke 18:12, fasted twice in the *sabbaton*, necessarily there rendered “week.” Now, although whenever the weekly Sabbath is mentioned, it is from this word *sabbaton*, the fact that this word does not invariably refer to the week-

ly Sabbath, but means “week” in the text referred to, as it does also in the eight texts which refer to the first day of the week, reveals the possibility that it may be used also to designate the annual sabbaths of the Jews. No argument can therefore be drawn from the mere use of the word sabbaton in Col. 2:16, to show that the weekly Sabbath is there intended.

2. The facts connected with the use of the Hebrew term are still more decisive. The term shabbath, by which the seventh-day Sabbath is always designated, is once, at least, applied to one of the Jewish annual festivals, and that, too, in an intensified form, “a sabbath of sabbatism.” By such terms is the annual sabbath of the tenth day of the seventh month designated in Lev. 23:32. This the bitterest opponents of the Sabbath are compelled to admit. And this is a fatal weakness in their position. They might just as well abandon their claims at once; for no argument which they can build can stand the damaging force of this fact. Mark the situation: the term shabbath, by which the weekly Sabbath is always designated, is once, at least, definitely applied to one of the annual sabbaths of the Jews. It does not therefore invariably designate the seventh-day Sabbath; and if the Scriptures thus apply it to one of the annual sabbaths, it is just as appropriate to others, and we may properly apply it to them.

But, it may be replied, the Scriptures do not apply it to a ceremonial sabbath, except in that one instance; and that makes a difference, and settles the matter. We will see about this by and by. But first, let us inquire what other annual sabbaths there were, besides the Day of Atonement, and what their nature was.

The Jews had two feasts, each covering a series of days. These were the Feast of the Passover, from the 15th to the 22nd of the first month, and the Feast of Tabernacles, from the 15th to the 23rd of the seventh month. On the first and seventh days of the Passover, there was to be a holy convocation, and no servile work, to be done. Lev. 23:7,8. On the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles, there were to be likewise holy convocations, and an entire cessation from servile labor. Verses 35, 36. Respecting the two last named, the record (verse 39) says: “Ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.” In the common version these are called “sabbaths.” Our new critics say the translators of the Bible were not as intelligent as they should have been, and ought not to have translated the words “sabbath,” but “rest.” With this, however, we are not just now particularly concerned. We are inquiring simply into the nature of these days.

In addition to these four days of rest and convocation, we find three others of a like nature: the first one, fifty days after the offering of the wave sheaf, the pentecost. Of this we read (verse 21), “And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, that it may be a holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein.” The next was on

the first day of the seventh month, a memorial of blowing of trumpets. Verses 24, 25: “In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein.” This also is called a “sabbath.” Again on the tenth day of the seventh month, we have another, of which we read (verses 27, 28), “It shall be a holy convocation unto you; ... and ye shall do no work in that same day.” To this day the term shabbath, the same term by which the seventh-day Sabbath is designated, is applied, and that, too, in the very strongest manner. Verse 32: “It shall be unto you, (shabbath shabbathon) a sabbath of sabbatism. The Day of Atonement was, beyond question, the chief of the annual sabbaths. It was the sabbath of that class of sabbaths. Twice more in the same verse the word shabbath is virtually applied to this day. “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath;” literally, “shall ye sabbath your sabbath.”

Now, here are seven days, four of them connected with two great feasts, the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, and three of them standing independent and alone, all of the same nature, all devoted to the same purpose, all to be used in the same manner; that is, there was to be on each of them a holy convocation, and on all of them alike an entire suspension of all servile work. Now, can any one tell us what the difference was between these days? Would not any term which was applicable to one be equally applicable to all the others? To one the term sabbath (Heb. shabbath) is specifically applied. Were these other days which were exactly like that,—days of rest and convocation,—were these days also sabbaths, or were they not? The word sabbath means “rest.” That is the one sole idea it conveys, first, last, and all the way between—“cessation from labor, rest.” Here were seven annual days on which there was to be an entire suspension of labor. Were these days sabbaths, or were they not? If they were not, can any one tell us why they were not? And if they were, would it not be proper to say that the Jews had seven annual sabbaths? We would be willing to abide by the answer of any man of average candor and intelligence, to these questions.

A word now with respect to the assertion that the Hebrew term Shabbath is applied to only one of these annual sabbaths. All that need be said of this is that it is not true! Any one who suffers himself to be persuaded that it is, is being misled by false teachers. The Hebrew shabbath, like the Greek sabbaton, has a variety of definitions. Sabbaton means sometimes the weekly Sabbath, sometimes the whole week, sometimes the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jewish system. So shabbath means sometimes the weekly Sabbath, sometimes the whole week, sometimes the ceremonial sabbaths, sometimes the seventh year sabbath, covering the whole year, as in Lev. 25:2, 6, 8, where this very term is used.

It means “week” in the last clause of Lev. 23:15: “Seven sabbaths shall be complete.” This is spoken to measure off the time from the offering of the wave sheaf to the Pentecost. “Seven sabbaths” means a period of forty-nine days; one “sabbath” would be a period of seven days, or a week.

As the Sabbath marked off time into weeks, the word came to be used for the whole time from one Sabbath to another. Thus the Jews reckoned the days of the week as the "first of the Sabbath, second of the sabbath, third of the sabbath," and so on, meaning the first, second, third, days of the week. See quotation from Dr. Lightfoot, in Robinson's Greek Lexicon of the New Testament.

But the reader is doubtless waiting for an instance where the word shabbath is applied to some other annual festival besides the tenth day of the seventh month. It is twice so applied in Lev. 23:11,15. The day spoken of here is the first sabbath of the Passover feast, as will be apparent from the following considerations: The paschal lamb was slain on the 14th day of the month; the 15th was the first day of the paschal feast, a day of rest and holy convocation; on the 16th the wave sheaf was offered, and from this offering of the wave sheaf fifty days were to be counted to the Pentecost; but the day on which the wave sheaf was offered, was called "the morrow after the sabbath." What sabbath?—The day before, that is, the 15th day of the month, the first day of the Passover, the day of rest and holy convocation. This could not be the weekly Sabbath; for it was to fall on the 15th day of the first month each year; but the weekly Sabbath did not fall on the 15th day of the first month each year. The 15th day of the first month would come on different days of the week in different years, the same as our 4th of July, 25th of December, etc. In proof that "the morrow after the sabbath" was the 16th day of the month, and that the day preceding it, that is, the 15th, the first day of the Passover, is the day which is called the sabbath (Heb. shabbath,) we present the following from Smith's Bible Dictionary, edited by S.W. Barnum. Under "Passover," he says:—

"On the 15th, the night being passed, there was a holy convocation, and during that day no work might be done, except the preparation of necessary food (Ex.12:16)... On the 16th of the month, 'the morrow after the sabbath' (i.e., after the day of holy convocation,) the first sheaf of harvest was offered and waved by the priest before the Lord."

Under "Pentecost" he says:--

"Pentecost (fr. Gr. pentecoste = the fiftieth sc. day from the second day of the feast of unleavened bread or the Passover)... I. The time of the festival was calculated from the second day of the Passover, the 16th of Nisan. The law prescribes that a reckoning should be kept from 'the morrow after the sabbath' to the morrow after the completion of the seventh week, which would, of course, be the fiftieth day (Lev. 23:11, 15, 16; Deut. 16:9)."

On the expression "morrow after the sabbath," as given in the foregoing extract, he has this note:—

"It has been generally held that the 'sabbath' here = the first day of holy convocation of the Passover, the 15th of Nisan mentioned in Lev. 23:7 (compare 24,

32, 39). Some have made the 'Sabbath' here = the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath of creation, as the Jewish writers have called it; and thus the day of Pentecost would always fall upon the first day of the week. But Bähr proves from Josh. 5:11 and Lev. 23:14, that the omer was offered on the 16th of Nisan."

Bagster's Greek Lexicon, under "Pentecoste," says:—

"One of the three great Jewish festivals, so called because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day, reckoning from the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, i.e., from the 16th day of Nisan."

Young's Concordance says:--

"Pentecost. Feast on fiftieth day after Passover."

If we take "the morrow after the sabbath" to mean the day following the weekly Sabbath, then the important period of the fifty days to reach to the great festival of the Pentecost had no fixed starting point, but was left to depend on circumstances each year. Thus they would have to agree on some time when they would commence to reap their harvest, or designate some one to be the representative of the nation in this matter, and note the time when the reaping commenced, then wait till they reached a weekly Sabbath after that, and then on the morrow after that Sabbath begin to reckon the fifty days to the Pentecost. The least grain of serious thought will suffice to convince any one that God never would adopt any such roundabout methods in any part of His work, that He never left any important festival to be determined in this haphazard manner, and that the weekly Sabbath was never related in that manner to any part of that system. As the matter stood, everything was easy and consistent. By the 15th of Nisan, the first day of the Passover, some portion of the barley harvest was sure to be ripe; but none were permitted to reap and eat of it till a sheaf had been offered to the Lord. The priest had but to see that a sheaf was procured and waved on the morrow after the Passover sabbath, and then the harvest could proceed.

We need not dwell longer on this point. The evidence is conclusive that the term generally employed to designate the Sabbath, was applied to the first day of the Passover, and hence that was a sabbath. If the first day was a sabbath, was not the last day of the feast, which was exactly like it, a sabbath also? It was so, whether so expressly named or not.

Here, then, were three days, the first and last of the Passover, and the Day of Atonement, which were sabbaths, and to which the common term for sabbath is four times applied. This is sufficient to justify Paul's use of the term sabbaton (plural) as referring to them in Col. 2:16, even if we could find no more. But there are other reasons still.

Our next inquiry shall be, Is the assertion true that in the three other instances where the word "sabbath" occurs in the common version, namely, the festival of blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23:24), and the first and last days of the

Feast of Tabernacles (verse 39), it is wrongly translated, and should not have been rendered “sabbath,” but “rest”? We will state a few facts which no one who investigates the subject with any care can fail to perceive, and will then leave the reader to judge for himself. He will find this assertion, like the other, to be a bold untruth.

The ordinary word for Sabbath is shabbath. Its definition is, “cessation, time of rest, Sabbath.” The word three times rendered “sabbath” in Lev. 23:24, 39, is shabbathon. Its definition is, “rest, a time of rest.” Both words are from one common root, shavath, meaning “to cease, to rest.” Both have the same definition. Both are used to designate Jewish yearly festival days, of which there were seven exactly alike as has been shown. To two of them the word shabbath is applied, to three of them the word shabbathon. Will our critics now tell us the difference between these words, and why the three instances of shabbathon should not be rendered “sabbath” also?

Gesenius defines shabbathon as follows:

“Abstract noun a keeping of the sabbath, sabbatism, sabbath rites.”

And it may be worth while to add that this word, in connection with shabbath, is also applied to the weekly Sabbath, as in Ex. 31:15; 32:2, 3; Lev. 23:2. In Ex. 16:23 it is the leading word applied to the weekly Sabbath; thus shabbathon shabbath-godesh, “the sabbatism of the Sabbath holy unto the Lord.” To apply Gesenius’s definition of shabbathon to the memorial of blowing of trumpets, and to the first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles,

where this word alone is used, we should read: “In the seventh month in the first day of the month, shall ye have a keeping of a sabbath.” Lev. 23:24. “Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month... ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days, on the first day shall be a keeping of a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a keeping of a sabbath,” or a sabbatism. Now, to say that these days which were set apart as a “sabbatism,” or the keeping of a sabbath,” could not be called “sabbaths,” is to reason not only carelessly, but contrary to all the scriptural and philological evidence in the case.

But finally and lastly it is asserted that Paul in Col. 2:16, must refer, by the word sabbaths, to the weekly Sabbath only; for all the Jewish annual sabbaths so-called, are included in the term holy-day (Greek, heorte, feast-day.) Truth compels us to brand this, also, as false. In the Passover there were five days, in the Feast of Tabernacles, six, between the first and last, which were the sabbaths of those feasts. These intervening days all belonged to the feast, and were the heortai, “feast-days,” but not sabbaths. The word feast-day would include these days, nothing more. Then there were the Pentecost, the day of blowing of trumpets, and the Day of Atonement, standing by themselves, which were not heortai, but sabbata. The Septuagint uses sabbaton in Lev. 23:15, 32, in reference to the Passover sabbath and the Day of Atonement, and in Lev. 25:2, 4, in reference to the seventh year sabbath.

It thus appears, beyond any possibility of reasonable question, that Paul, in Col. 2:16, had no reference whatever to the weekly Sabbath of the Lord, but only to the seven annual sabbaths of the Jews.

Uriah Smith