

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE WEEK

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

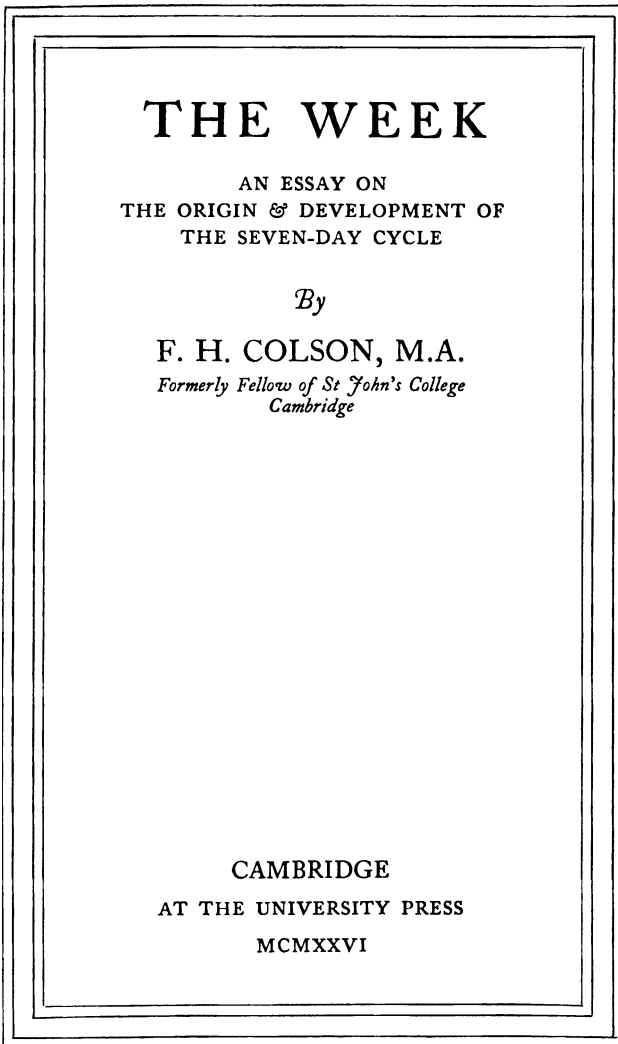
Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107486690

© Cambridge University Press 1926

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1926

First paperback edition 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-48669-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate
or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E

THIS little book has at any rate the justification that it is the first or almost the first attempt to present the subject with any fullness to English readers. The only exception known to me is an article by Julius Hare on 'The Names of the Days of the Week,' in the *Philological Museum* of 1830. That article is longer than my own treatise and is distinguished throughout by great learning, but it covers very different ground, to say nothing of the fact that additional sources of knowledge have naturally become available in the course of almost a century. I myself wrote a few pages on the subject in the course of some notes on Justin Martyr in the *Journal of Theological Studies* of January, 1922, and at the end of these I remarked that I had met with no good monograph on the Week, and that what I had written was put forward as much in the hope of eliciting as of giving information. That hope has been disappointed, but since then I have come across a great deal of German work which has added much to my knowledge. Of this the most noteworthy items are substantial articles by Schürer, by Jensen and others and by Boll, to which references are given on pp. 20, 45 and 58. To these I might add Maass' *Tagesgötter*, though I have not had occasion to quote it.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

• vi •

The principal difference between my treatment and theirs lies in this—that I am more impressed, than they seem to be, with the feeling that the silent and unofficial diffusion of a new time-cycle through a vast empire is a very remarkable fact and that it argues some powerful motive behind it, and I have spent some effort in trying to arrive at some conception of what this motive was. Further this same feeling has led me to the belief that the Planetary Week, like Mithraism and the other mystery-religions, is an important factor in the background of primitive Christianity, and that its existence must not be ignored, especially when we consider the origin of the Christian Sunday. This aspect of the question is almost totally ignored by the scholars I have mentioned and indeed, I think, by nearly all the theologians who have examined with laborious and sometimes fanciful ingenuity the possible traces of the mystical beliefs of paganism in Christian theology and institutions. Some years ago I listened to a paper on this subject by an eminent divine now dead. I said to him afterwards, ‘There is one thing you have not mentioned—the week.’ He looked at me with surprise and said, ‘Who do you mean by the week?’ When I explained that my word was spelt with an *e* he remained equally mystified.

While I have no illusions which would lead me to expect a wide circulation for the book, I

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of
the Seven-Day Cycle

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

• vii •

do hope that outside the narrow circle of professional scholars, it may interest others here and there, who have the curiosity to know something about the history of an institution which governs their lives and the lives of most of the civilized nations. To such I have tried to make myself intelligible. All Greek and nearly all Latin have been banished from the body of the text and I have explained many points which to a good Classical scholar need no explanation. At the same time I hope that the latter will find that he is furnished with the references which will enable him to test the accuracy of what is stated as fact and the validity of the inferences drawn from the facts. That these inferences should meet with general agreement is more than I expect, indeed more than I wish. I would rather repeat in another form what I said in my earlier note mentioned above that I hope the book may stimulate a further enquiry into a subject which has to my mind been somewhat strangely neglected in this country.

F. H. C.

Cambridge
June 1926

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-48669-0 - *The Week: An Essay on the Origin & Development of the Seven-Day Cycle*

F. H. Colson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

§ 1. <i>The Week in General</i>	page 1
§ 2. <i>The Jewish Week</i>	11
§ 3. <i>The Planetary Week</i>	18
§ 4. <i>The Relation of the Jewish to the Planetary Week</i>	39
§ 5. <i>The Driving-Force behind the Week</i>	62
§ 6. <i>The Week in the New Testament and the Early Church</i>	82
§ 7. <i>The Week in Northern Europe</i>	108
<i>Appendix</i>	117