

Reflections On The Sabbath



With reference's to John Bunyan, John Calvin, John Gill, William Huntington and Puritan and other writers.

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March 2016

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Introduction	5
No Place of Rest For The Sole Of My Feet	5
Serious Errors Held	6
An Ignorant reply	7
How to deal with such correspondence	8
My First Letter	9
Conclusion	12
My response to the unnamed minister	13
My observations and responses	13
Conclusion	16
Seventh Day Sabbath and Christian Sabbath	17
By John Bunyan	17
Questions about the Sabbath	25
Question 1	25
Question 2	29
Question 3	36
Question 4	39
Question 5	50
Fourth Commandment	92
by John Calvin	92
Of the Circumstances of Public Worship	100
A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity John Gill	100

Summation	120
The Law and Gospel	122
By F. L. Gosden	122
The Law and Gospel	123
by J.C. Philpot	123
The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law	131
By Philip Mauro	131
The Gentile Believer and The Law	132
The Sabbath	140
By Gilbert Beebe	140
Old Testament Sabbath	147
William Huntington	147
The Law of Faith	147
Dead To The Law	147
Further Consideration	148
Conclusion	148

Introduction

On my return from a mission trip to the Philippines in 2003, I sought to fellowship with Strict and Particular Baptists in England but soon discovered a problem, an issue of doctrinal error, that separated Christian believers. On account of that issue I feel it right to portray the truth with respect to the Sabbath in order to make clear what the scripture teaches and to prevent those who seek to teach things contrary to scripture and bind their false teaching on others. This error I had encountered at the Bierton Particular Baptists church in England in 1984.. The church had church had lapsed into using general redemption hymns and maintaining the Law of Moses was the rule of life for the believer and at the time these issues were replicated in other Strict and Particular Baptist churches. This book is written to show that the Sabbath as given by Moses is not the Christian day of worship. That the first day of the week, commonly called today the Lords day, is not the Sabbath day as given by Moses. That the Christian is not bound by any law to keep any day of the week, month or year holy and the Christ is the true rest for the people go God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of all that Moses pointed to in the Law.

An extract for Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists¹

No Place of Rest For The Sole Of My Feet

Gen 8 verse 9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters

¹ Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists by David Clarke

were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

Serious Errors Held By A Strict Baptist Minister

In 2003, I sought fellowship with like-minded believers, only to find a reoccurrence of serious errors in doctrine and practices, that I had experienced in my church at Bierton in 1984, found amongst those who should have known better.

A minister and pastor of a Strict Baptist church in the south of England told me that I would not be accepted into membership by any Gospel Standard Church. This was because I had questioned his views on the Law of Moses and its sabbath.

And so in my case on my return to the UK, after a period of many years, unlike the dove of Noah, I was not received back into the ark (of church membership). It has now been over 10 years since this incident.

I had informed him that if he held the position he did then he would have a problem with the Sabbath. I sought to be of assistance to him, as he would certainly find his belief in the Law of Moses a stumbling block to himself and also to others, if he taught those things. I wanted him to be honest with himself.

He informed me, in agitated tones, that my views would exclude me from membership of any Gospel Standard cause. I was however the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists (Strict and Particular Gospel Standard cause) and was familiar with this kind of problem and felt it right to discuss such matters as they were serious, as will be shown.

All the former members of the Bierton church had died and this matter regarding the Law of Moses had arisen there along

with other matters which moved my to succeed from the Church² over matters of conscience, in 1984. I remain the sole member by default as according to our church rules only the church can terminate one membership and the church never did terminate my membership as they wanted me to return. How ever while on mission work in the Philippines the Bierton chapel was taken over by another set of Trustees the Association of Grace Baptist Churches LTD, and later sold.³ This association were not in sympathy with our Articles of Religion.

So what was I to do? And now I was told I would not be welcomed in any Gospel Standard Church. My response was one of dismay and hurt. So I decided I must write to this man as he was in serious error believing I could help him. His reply was far from satisfactory and less then gracious without any attempt to enlighten me to his un-scriptural position. Here is this mans reply:

**An Ignorant reply
from the Unnamed Minister 2nd December 2003**

Dear David,

It is not my custom to answer letters of this nature. However, I have been persuaded by many friends to make this brief reply. I am thankful to be the recipient of your letter and not the writer.

David, the views that you hold on the Law and the Lord's Day are wholly wrong and derogatory to the person and work

² The Bierton Crisis relates the whole matter

³ See Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists Chapter 33 My Return To The Uk

of Christ. I can assure you that neither the church at B, nor the church at HE (of which I am a trustee), nor P, SS or hold your errors, and would never receive into church membership those that hold such notions. Furthermore, there is not one church on the Gospel Standard list that holds your views or would receive into church membership any that believed such none scriptural notions.

I have learned the hard way, David, never to enter into endless questions of this nature and soul destroying controversy that brings nothing but pain to the brethren and disturbs the peace of the churches, “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:12). “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and striving about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain (Titus 3:9).

May God grant you light from his Word to turn from your errors? Please respect my wish not to publish my letter in any of your books.

Yours sincerely

Un named Minister.

How to deal with such correspondence

This letter was in fact a reply to my letter that I sent to him in connection with the issue we were talking about. I had written to this minister seeking to help him as he had problems with the Sabbath. He had stated to me that I imagined strange things in connection with the gospel and so I wrote in order to establish a starting point to seek to resolve this difference of opinion and his problem. In fact his reply revealed gross errors

on his part and demonstrated the need to defend the gospel truth.

My First Letter To The Minister of Strict Baptist Church

This is the letter that I sent to this minister which resulted in his rejection of the me and the truth that I maintained and advanced.

Date: 18th November 2003-12-10

Dear Un- named Minister (By request)

I too hate controversy. So please let us not be contentious. The truth is given to us as light in order to shine in a dark place and I would not be faithful to its cause if I remained silent over an issue, which the scripture speaks so plainly about. I believe the distinction between Law and Gospel is a real distinction, which the scripture clearly speaks about. An argument, which rests upon a fact that one has held a view for 30 years and has contended over it, carries no weight when it opposes the plain teaching of scripture. A child who has no learning, in the school of the wise, but who believes the straight foreword words of scripture, is wiser than the men of this world who have read and studied all the works of many theologians.

This only would I learn of you received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law or the hearing of Faith. The contrasting statement in this instant is between works done to or according to Law or the hearing of faith, which is without reference to works done to Law. The Law in question is the Law, which came by Moses, and which was 430 years after the Gospel had been declared to Abraham. The Law here is the 10

commandments, which was delivered at Mount Sinai. I am not imagining this (as you have suggested) but quoting the plain teaching of Gods word.

Satan hates the truth and his ploy is to ridicule those who teach the truth. He will use underhanded methods to pick at the child of God by saying such things by saying ah! “That is your own imagination, you are wrong”. This is because he hates the truth and does not wish the child of God to be free from the condemnation of the Law. But the child of God will be safe if he sticks close to the word of the Lord and he will not be confounded.

The Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The Law came by Moses. Not Adam, Noah or Abraham. Those who say otherwise contradict the word of God. The epistle to the Galatians is very clear about this. All arguments to the contrary are wrong and it does not matter who argues them. I am not being contentious by stating what the Scriptures say, as this is the Word of God, without comment or alteration or explanation. The plain word states the Law, and by which I understand to mean the 10 Commandments, came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

This is without controversy and must not be gain said. Those who seek to change the plain meaning of these words are the ones causing contention and being controversial. They wrest the Word of God. The scripture does not say the Law came by Adam, or Noah, or Abraham, but by Moses.

The contention between the child of God and child of the bondwomen is foretold by the allegory of the two sons of Abraham Ishmael and Isaac. There was a contention then, so it is now. There will always be a contention between the spiritual man and the natural man. The Apostle makes the point that the one who contends for the Law as a rule of life is the natural

man, or son born to the bondwoman, whilst the spiritual man is the heir of promise and the true son.

It is always the son of the bondwomen who will persecute the freeborn Son who is the seed of promise. This will always be the case. I am then going to ask you not to persecute me because I speak the truth, as stated here in this part of God's Word. There have been many books and many sermons spoken upon this subject and great minds have wrested with these issues. I maintain that it does not matter if the whole of the Christian world, and its writers or preachers were to opposed to the truth here spoken off, it will not alter the truth that the Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

The Law in all its glory came by Moses, to a people who had been chosen to be separate from all other people. It came to the Jew and not the Gentile. This Law, which came by Moses, excluded the gentiles from the covenants of promise. It did not include them.

Unless this can be agreed upon this straightforward statement of truth then we can go no further. There is no point in seeking to go further because if one seeks to alter truth in order to make scripture fit our system of doctrine and religious thinking then we will be deceived and not be those who rightly divide the word of truth.

I am open to discuss these issues with you, or with any one, but will not contend with you. It does hurt when you say it is my imagination when I recite the scripture. I know that I have a tender conscience and I would not wish to harm a child of God and if you are lead by the same Spirit you too would be grieved you if you know you hurt a child of God. I would never mean to hurt you, in any way so please do not get offended if I express that you are wrong on an issue of doctrine, that you mentioned and came up in discussion.

I am open to correction but this must be from the Word of God and according to it. I am very clear in my understanding of many scriptures and I am also aware that I am not clear on others. When I speak that thing that I know why do you find it strange that I can be so certain.

The problem that you have A----, with your view of Law, will be that is that of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath according to Moses is the seventh day of the week (Saturday) not the first Day of the week. And this cannot be altered or changed. You have the problem of wresting the scripture if you try and alter the scripture to make it fit your view of Law and Gospel. I believe I can help you in this matter, by sharing with you the scriptures, but you will need to be patient with me and not get wounded with me or upset if you disagree with me. I would also ask you not to get personal with me by saying I have an imagination, which is wrong. I felt your spirit was wrong towards me in your retort at that point. Please forgive me if I came over to you like that, in such a manor.

Yours Sincerely

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
David Clarke. 18th November 2003

Conclusion

to the Response of the ignorant reply of the nu-named minister

This method of response by this un-named minister to my genuine letter to is ungracious, un-scriptural and very hurtful. This is not the answer of God but that of a carnal religious man whose rule of life is the Law of Moses.

He advances no scripture truth to confirm his view regarding the subject of Law and gospel. It is as though his

ears were Psalm 58 verse 5. His ears were stopped like a deaf adder and though I speak ever so scripturally, logically and with moral persuasion he would not listen. Therefore how can he respond to the truth? Then just as the adder he seeks to bite at the heel. I was thankful for the promise in scripture that says, they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Mark 16 verse 18.

This minister had informed me that I would not be accepted into membership of any Gospel Standard church, holding the views I had expressed.

I wonder why he did not wish for me to publish what he wrote. I felt him a bully as he took leave to give me a bashing metaphorically, behind closed doors, and then seek to bind me to silence, him and then walk out of the room, pretending nothing had happened. Not so, as I am set for a defence and conformation of the gospel, and will not remain silent.

It is for this reason there is a need to teach the next generation of men the glorious truths of gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is of paramount importance. This is the reason for the project that is now called the **Bierton Particular Baptist College**.

My response to the unnamed minister

I did not respond immediately to this letter but have left the matter for almost 10 years. The time however to has come to deal with these errors and other like errors.

Here is my response to that letter:

My observations and responses

To: Minister of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist Church
Date: 18th November 2003

This letter suggests that such people who have views of the Lords Day and Sabbath day, as I do and teach, are wrong. To say he is like a weak brother like other are weaker brethren, and they have a tender conscience, is a subtle ploy of satan. That such views are hurtful to them and because they have a tender conscience towards the Lord and the their weakness must be considered by others is wrong. They cannot hear the truth. I believe this to be false. It is a deceit and the answer of Satan.

In this matter there is no problem, as no Christian would wish to offend the weak believers conscience, in the thing that he allows himself to do, and so cause a weak brother to stumble. I put it to the reader that this mans righteousness, the Un-named Minister is one of the flesh and so carnal and therefore not from Heaven. This man is seeking to bind the free to the bondage of Law, Sin and Death. The trial by fire will reveal this in due course. Let the Lord Jesus be the one to judge.

The reality is that such who assert their views on others as this man does, and insist we follow them are the ones who cause division. They say others must follow them and their way. This man is an elder and one who is the strong as Peter was, and the Jews who through bewitchment joined those who wanted to circumcise all believers. These were dogs. In fact dumb dogs. A dog without a bark is of no use to warn of approaching danger.

They caused the dispute by saying unless these converts be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses they cannot be saved.

And as such we are instructed to mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine, which ye have

learned; and avoid them. Rom 16 verse 17. Paul and Barnabus had no small dissension and disputation with them. Act 15 verses 1. Also When Peter came to Antioch, Gal. 2 11, Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed. Paul and Barnabus had strong contention with him and rebuked him openly. This was because Peter had been carried away with the Jews dissimulation. So too, in this issue, the un-named Minister is wrong along with those who too dissimulate; as he caused the division as can be seen in his letter.

This David is excluded from the privileges of a gospel church because he follows the Lord Jesus. And so the scriptures are fulfilled they that live godly shall suffer persecution.

To cap it all this minister thinks it right to beat me up metaphorically, behind closed doors, and then bind me to silence so as not to inform other of what he has done and said.

Set for a defence and Confirmation of the Gospel. I fell **the time has come** to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Grace be with you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Maintain The Scripture Teaches the new man of grace is a new creation and he has a new nature whose motions are those of a good man. He also is possessed of his old nature that always seeks to dominate the new. Those who experience the new birth are those who were chosen by the Father, in Christ before the foundation of the world. They have been regenerated and are free to respond to the Gospel by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their right standing before God is based upon Gods act of Justification, where by the righteousness of the God man Jesus Christ is imputed to them, and in that righteousness they are declared just.

They are given the grace of faith to believe all the truth of God, and by faith have peace with God when they look too, and depend upon, the finished work of Christ, in his death. Who by it made full atonement for their sins?

The sentence of justification is passed upon the conscience of the believer as they rest in Christ and look to him for all their salvation. The Lord Jesus is their true Sabbath rest.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5 verses 17

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor 5 verses 20.

Conclusion

In conclusion my understanding of scripture and views in connection with the Law of Moses and The Gospel of Christ are not strange or odd but have been held by many faithful ministers of the gospel historically, including Calvin, Tindale, Bunyan, Gill, Huntington. Although they may differ in their expressions I maintain that the term first day of the week and it being the Christian Sabbath it wrong and I invite you to write the conclusion after you have read the follow articles.

Please take a look for your self.

Seventh Day Sabbath and Christian Sabbath

By John Bunyan

Questions about the nature and perpetuity of the seventh-day sabbath and proof that the first day of the week is the true Christian Sabbath

‘The Son of man is lord also of the Sabbath day.’

Date published 1685.

All our inquiries into divine commands are required to be made personally, solemnly, prayerful. To ‘prove all things,’ and ‘hold fast’ and obey ‘that which is good,’ is a precept, equally binding upon the clown, as it is upon the philosopher. Satisfied from our observations of nature, that there is a God; our next inquiry is into the revelation of his will: which, when understood, must be implicitly obeyed, in defiance of any usages of society, and of every erroneous pre-conceived opinion. In this important investigation, we shall find, that the commands of God revealed to man, fall under two classes.

First, Moral and Eternal, being essential to the happiness of all created intelligences, whether pure or sinful. As, the fear and love of the Creator, who preserves and bountifully blesses his creatures; and flowing from this is love to all his creation. He who wantonly destroys life in order that he may glut a demoniac propensity with the agonizing death struggle, is a practical atheist. The Christian will cherish and promote the happiness of all; he dares only to take away life to preserve life.

Second, Ceremonial or Temporal. Those which have been commanded by God, for local, family or national observances, and which, when they have fulfilled their intended object, are removed or suffered gradually to die away.

The well-being of society requires that a portion of time be set apart for divine worship. Individuals are commanded to pray without

ceasing. An invaluable custom leads families to unite in morning and evening prayer; and it is an important question whether the Creator having sanctified, and rested on, the seventh day, intended that rest as a pattern to all his rational creatures. If so, the seventh day must depend upon our being able to fix upon which day of the week the creation commenced. Again our inquiries will extend to those injunctions, given to the Jews in the wilderness, to sanctify certain days to public worship; and whether that law was intended for all mankind. In either case it is essential that we ascertain whether those various Sabbaths of weeks--of months or of years--with the ceremonies to be performed on them, were to continue to the end of time or for a limited period.

In all these inquiries we are strictly confined to revelation, for there is no indication in nature, or in any of its laws, of a day of rest; but on the contrary a state of progression marks every day alike. Our Lord has taught us that 'the Sabbath was made for man,' and therefore did not exist among the angels, prior to the creation of man, as all moral or universal obligations must have existed; for they are the same from eternity to eternity; and over this, like other ceremonial or local commands, the Creator claims dominion. 'The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.'

Researches into these questions were made in earlier times, and some curious calculations have appeared to prove, that the work of creation commenced on the day called Monday, so that what is now termed the first day of the week, was originally the rest of God from creation; as it was his rest from the work of redemption, by rising from the tomb. But the extent of that period called a day, in creation, has never been defined: and the

terms 'work' or 'rest,' as applied to the Deity, are used in condescension to our finite powers. The controversy upon this subject assumed a more public and definite form at the Reformation. Sir Thomas More asserted that the seventh day was superseded by the first, in obedience to tradition:⁴ it forms the first of the five commandments of Holy Church--'The Sundays hear thou mass.' William Tyndale, in reply, contends that 'we be lords over the Sabbath'; we may change it for Monday, or any other day, as we see need, or have two every week, if one is not enough to teach the people.⁵ Calvin preferred a daily assembling of the church, but if that was impossible, then at stated intervals: his words are--'Since the Sabbath is abrogate, I do not so rest upon the number of seven, that I would bind the church to the bondage thereof; neither will I condemn those churches that have other solemn days for their meetings.'⁶ Luther considers the observance of the Jewish Sabbath one of the 'weak and beggarly rudiments.'⁷

The controversy became still more popular in this country, when James the First and Charles the First put forth the book of sports to be allowed and encouraged on Sundays. The Puritans called Sunday 'The Sabbath,' and a voluminous contest was carried on as to whether it ought not rather to be called 'The Lord's day.' In 1628, Mr. Brabourne, a clergyman of note, kept the Jewish Sabbath, and in a short time several churches, in England, assembled on that day, and were called

⁴ Dialogues, 1st chapter, xxv.

⁵ Answer to More.

⁶ Institutes, b. ii. ch. 8.

⁷ Com. on Gal. 4:9.

‘seventh day, or Sabbath keepers’--many of them were Baptists. This led to the controversy in which Bunyan took his part, in this very conclusive and admirable treatise.

The work was first published in the year 1685, and was not reprinted until the year 1806, when it appeared in the third volume of select works by John Bunyan; since then it has been reprinted in two American editions of his works. The reason why it was not republished, probably was, that the churches of the Sabbath keepers died away. At this time only three are known in England; one of these is at Millyard, London, where my talented antiquarian friend, W. H. Black, is elder and pastor. These places of worship are supported by an endowment. Bunyan’s book does not appear to have been answered; indeed, it would require genius of no ordinary kind to controvert such conclusive evidence.

His arguments are, that the appearances of nature shew no difference of days--that no Sabbath or other day was set apart for worship before the giving of the Law at Sinai. ‘Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and madest KNOWN unto them thy holy Sabbaths, by the hand of Moses’ (Neh 9:13,14). ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work--and remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm, THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day’ (Deut 5:14,15). While many crimes are mentioned in patriarchal times, there is no complaint of Sabbath-breaking. We read of fratricide, drunkenness, lying, unbelief, theft, idolatry, slave-dealing, and other crimes, but no hint as to sanctifying or desecrating the Sabbath. At length, a few days before the giving of the law, a natural phenomenon announced to the Jews the great change that was at hand-- the manna fell in double quantity on Friday,

and was not found on Saturday. So new was this that, contrary to the command, the people went out on the seventh day as on other days, and were rebuked but not punished for it. But no sooner is the Sabbath instituted by Moses, than it is broken, and the Sabbath-breaker is punished with a cruel death. It was instituted as a peculiar observance to distinguish the Jews from all other nations--'The Lord hath given YOU the Sabbath' (Exo 16:39). 'The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath' (Exo 31:16,17). 'I gave them [the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt] my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them' (Eze 20:12). Ceremonies were commanded to be performed as the Sabbath worship, which cannot now be observed (see Lev 24; Numb 28; Neh 13:22; Eze 46:4). The Jewish Sabbath was 'a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ' (Col 2:16,17). The shadows have fled away; we possess the substance. The covenant of Moses was written on stone--the new covenant is written on our hearts (Heb 8:9,10). Bunyan admits no uncertainty as to a fixed day for christian worship: the law of nature requires it; the God of nature fixes the day, without borrowing it from the ministration of death. The Jewish passover and Sabbaths are superseded; Christ our passover is slain, and we have not an annual but a perpetual feast. We have an infinitely greater deliverance to commemorate than that of the Jews from Egypt. Released from the dominion and punishment of sin, we have entered into a rest boundless as eternity. Manna, which never fell on the Jewish Sabbath, falls in peculiar and rich abundance on the first day of the week, when it first began to fall. The first day is peculiarly sanctified and honoured of God. On this day the Son rested from His work of redemption (Heb 4:10). He is Lord of the Sabbath, and hath peculiarly blessed his own day. On this day some of the saints that slept arose (Matt 27:52,53). On this day Christ was made the head of the corner, and we will

rejoice and be glad in it. On the first day God begat his beloved Son from the dead (Acts 13:33). Let all the angels of God worship him (Heb 1:6). Hence it is called the Lord's day (Rev 1:10). This day is the only one named upon which Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection: it was on the evening of the first day of the week, and on the evening of the following eighth day, that they assembled and Christ appeared in the midst of them. On this day he walked with his disciples to Emmaus, and made their hearts to burn within them with holy joy and wonder. The marvels of the day of Pentecost honoured the first day of the week. On this day the first great conversion of 'about three thousand souls' took place. On this day the disciples at Jerusalem came together to break bread (Acts 20:7). Upon THE, not A, first day they broke bread; and upon THE first day, the collections were made for the poor saints (1 Cor 16:1,2). With such concurrent and ample testimony we must conclude that the seventh day Sabbath, with its Jewish ritual, is dissolved, and the first day has taken its place. The Saviour said, 'It is finished'; and from that moment to the end of the inspired volume, the seventh day is swallowed up in the glories of the first day of the week. Let Jews commemorate their temporal deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt with their divers ceremonies; but Christians, blessed with a foretaste of eternal glory, will commemorate the resurrection of their Lord, as the first fruits of an unspeakable rest from the dominion of sin, of Satan, and of hell. Our glorified Redeemer sanctioned and blessed the first day, with his personal appearance in the assemblies of his saints. His inspired apostles kept it, as it is recorded, and thus it is sanctioned by the Holy Ghost; and their descendants are bound to keep it to the end of the world. Go, little treatise, and carry conviction with thee. Emancipate the christian mind from all the beggarly rudiments of Jewish rites and ceremonies. Add to

the holy enjoyments of God's saints in public worship, on the day when their eternal redemption is commemorated by the triumphant resurrection of their Lord.--GEO. OFFOR.

Some may think it strange, since God's church has already been so well furnished with sound grounds and reasons by so many wise and godly men, for proof that the first day of the week is our true Christian sabbath, that I should now offer this small treatise upon the same account. But when the scales are even by what already is put in, a little more, you know, makes the weight the better.

Or grant we had down weight before, yet something over and above may make his work the harder, that shall by hanging fictions on the other end, endeavour to make things seem too light.

Besides, this book being little, may best suit such as have but shallow purses, short memories, and but little time to spare, which usually is the lot of the mean and poorer sort of men.

I have also written upon this subject, for that I would, as in other gospel truths, be a fellow witness with good men that the day in which our Lord rose from the dead should be much set by of Christians.

I have observed that some, otherwise sound in faith, are apt to be entangled with a Jewish sabbath, &c., and that some also that are afar off from the observation of that, have but little to say for their own practice, though good; and might I help them I should be glad.

A Jewish seventh-day sabbath has no promise of grace belonging to it, if that be true, as to be sure it is, where Paul says, The command to honour parents is the first commandment with promise (Eph 6:1-3).

Also it follows from hence, that the sabbath that has a promise annexed to the keeping of it, is rather that which the Lord Jesus shall give to the churches of the Gentiles (Isa 56).

Perhaps my method here may not in all things keep the common path of argumentation with them that have gone before me: but I trust [that] the godly wise will find a taste of scripture truth in what I present them with as to the sanction of our Christian sabbath.

I have here, by handling four questions, proved, that the seventh day sabbath was not

moral. For that must of necessity be done, before it can be made appear that the first day of the week is that which is the sabbath day for Christians. But withal it follows, that if the seventh day sabbath was not moral,⁵ the first day is not so. What is it then? Why, a sabbath for holy worship is moral; but this or that day appointed for such service, is sanctified by precept or by approved example. The timing then of a sabbath for us lies in God, not man; in grace, not nature; nor in the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones: God always reserving to himself a power to alter and change both time and modes of worship according to his own will.

A sabbath then, or day of rest from worldly affairs to solemnize worship to God in, all good men do by nature conclude is meet; yea, necessary: yet that, not nature, but God reveals.

Nor is that day or time by God so fixed on, in its own nature, better than any other: the holiness then of a sabbath lies, not in the nature or place of a day, but in the ordinance of God.

Nor doth our sanctifying of it, to the ends for which it is ordained, lie in a bare confession that it is such; but in a holy performance of the duty of the day to God by Christ, according to his word.

But I will not enlarge to detain the reader longer from the following sheets; but shall commit both him and them to the wise dispose of God, and rest,

Thine to serve thee,

⁵ The word 'moral' is here used to mark the difference between obligations binding on all mankind and a positive or limited command: thus, to love God is a moral or universal obligation, but to be baptized is positive and obligatory only on those who believe (Acts 8:37).—Ed.

Questions about the Sabbath

Questions about the nature and perpetuity of the Seventh day Sabbath

Question 1

Whether the seventh day sabbath is of, or made known to, man by the law and light of nature?

Something must be here premised before I show the grounds of this question. First then, by the law or light of nature, I mean that law which was concreate with man; that which is natural to him, being original with, and essential to, himself; consequently, that which is invariable and unalterable, as is that nature. Secondly, I grant that by this law of nature, man understands that there is one eternal God; that this God is to be worshiped according to his own will; consequently, that time must be allowed to do it in: but whether the law or light of nature teacheth, and that of itself, without the help of revelation, that the seventh day of the week is that time sanctified of God, and set apart for his worship, that is the question; and the grounds of it are these:

First, Because the law of nature is antecedent to this day, yea completed as a law before it was known or revealed to man, that God either did or would sanctify the seventh day of the week at all.

Now this law, as was said, being natural to a man, for man is a law unto himself (Rom 2), could only teach the things of a man, and there the Apostle stints it (1 Cor 2:11). But to be able to determine, and that about things that were yet without being, either in nature or by revelation, is that which belongs not to a man as a man; and the seventh day sabbath, as yet, was such. For Adam was completely made the day before; and God did not sanctify the seventh day before it was, none otherwise than by his secret decree. Therefore, by the law of nature, Adam understood it not, it was not made known to him thereby.

Second, To affirm the contrary, is to make the law of nature supernatural, which is an impossibility. Yea, they that do so make it a predictor, a prophet; a prophet about divine

things to come; yea, a prophet able to foretell what shall be, and that without a revelation; which is a strain that never yet prophet pretended to.

Besides, to grant this, is to run into a grievous error; for this doth not only make the law of nature the first of prophets, contrary to Genesis 3:10 compared with John 1:1 but it seems to make the will of God, made known by revelation, a needless thing. For if the law of nature, as such, can predict, or foretell God's secrets, and that before he reveals them, and this law of nature is universal in every individual man in the world, what need is there of particular prophets, or of their holy writings? And indeed here the Quakers and others split themselves. For if the law of nature can of itself reveal unto me one thing pertaining to instituted worship, for that we are treating of now, and the exact time which God has not yet sanctified and set apart for the performance thereof, why may it not reveal unto me more, and so still more; and at last all that is requisite for me to know, both as to my salvation, and how God is to be worshiped in the church on earth.

Third, If it be of the law of nature, then all men by nature are convinced of the necessity of keeping it, and that though they never read or heard of the revealed will of God about it; but this we find not in the world.

For though it is true that the law of nature is common to all, and that all men are to this day under the power and command thereof; yet we find not that they are by nature under the conviction of the necessity of keeping of a seventh day sabbath. Yea, the Gentiles, though we read not that they ever despised the law of nature, yet never had, as such, a reverence of a seventh day sabbath, but rather the contrary.

Fourth, If therefore the seventh day sabbath is not of the law of nature, then it should seem not to be obligatory to all. For instituted worship, and the necessary circumstances thereunto belonging, is obligatory but to some.

The tree that Adam was forbid to eat of, we read not but that his children might have eat the fruit thereof: and circumcision, the passover, and other parts of instituted worship was enjoined but to some.

Fifth, I doubt the seventh day sabbath is not of the law of nature, and so not moral; because though we read that the law of nature, and that before Moses, was charged upon the world, yet I find not till then, that the profanation of a seventh day sabbath was charged upon the world: and indeed to me this very thing makes a great scruple in the case.

A law, as I said, we read of, and that from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:13,14). The transgressions also of that law, we read of them, and that particularly, as in Genesis 4:8, 6:5, 9:21, 22, 12:13, 13:13, 18:12-15, 19:5; (Eze 16:49,50⁸); Genesis 31:30,

⁸ The original edition refers to (Eze 49, 50), but it is evidently a typographical error in omitting the chapter.

35:2, 40:15, 44:8-10; Deuteronomy 8:19, 20, 12:2; Psalm 106:35-37 and Romans the first and second chapters.

But in all the scriptures we do not read, that the breach of a seventh day sabbath was charged upon men as men all that time. Whence I gather, that either a seventh day sabbath was not discerned by the light of nature, and so not by that law imposed; or else, that men by the help and assistance of that, for we speak of men as men,⁹ in old time kept it better, than in after ages did the church of God with better assistance by far. For they are there yet found fault with as breakers of the sabbath (Eze 20:13).

It follows therefore, that if the law of nature doth not of itself reveal to us, as men, that the seventh day is the holy sabbath of God. That that day, as to the sanction of it, is not moral, but rather arbitrary, to wit, imposed by the will of God upon his people, until the time he thought fit to change it for another day.

And if so, it is hence to be concluded, that though by the light of nature men might see that time must be allowed and set apart for the performance of that worship that God would set up in his house, yet, as such, it could not see what time the Lord would to that end choose. Nature therefore saw that, by a positive precept, or a word revealing it, and by no other means.

Nor doth this at all take away a whit of that sanction which God once put upon the seventh day sabbath; unless any will say, and by sufficient argument prove, that an ordinance for divine worship receiveth greater sanction from the law of nature than from a divine precept: or standeth stronger when it is established by a law humane, for such is the law of nature, than when imposed by revelation of God.

⁹ Man unaided by revelation.

But the text will put this controversy to an end. The sanction of the seventh day sabbath, even as it was the rest of God, was not till after the law of nature was completed; God rested the seventh day and sanctified it (Gen 2:3). Sanctified it; that is, set it apart to the end there mentioned, to wit, to rest thereon.

Other grounds of this question I might produce, but at present I will stop here, and conclude, That if a seventh day sabbath was an essential necessary to the instituted worship of God, then itself also as to its sanction for that work, was not founded but by a positive precept; consequently not known of man at first, but by revelation of God

Question 2

Whether the seventh day sabbath, as to man's keeping of it holy, was ever made known to, or imposed by, a positive precept upon him until the time of Moses? which from Adam was about two thousand years.

Something must also be here premised, in order to my propounding of my grounds for this question; and that is, That the seventh day was sanctified so soon as it had being in the world, unto the rest of God, as it is Genesis 2:2, 3 and he did rest, from all his works which he had made therein. But the question is, Whether when God did thus sanctify this day to his own rest, he did also by the space of time above- mentioned, impose it as an holy sabbath of rest upon men; to the end they might solemnise worship to him in special manner thereon? And I question this,

First, Because we read not that it was. And reading, I mean, of the divine testimony, is ordained of God, for us to find out the mind of God, both as to faith and our performance of acceptable service to him.

In reading also, we are to have regard to two things.

I. To see if we can find a precept: or,

II. A countenanced practice for what we do. For both these ways we are to search, that we may find out what is that good, that acceptable will of God.

For the first of these we have Genesis 2:16, 17 and for the second, Genesis 8:20, 21 [as to public worship but not on a stated day].

Now as to the imposing of a seventh day sabbath upon men from Adam to Moses, of that we find nothing in holy writ either from precept or example. True, we find that solemn worship was performed by the saints that then lived: for both Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, sacrificed unto God (Gen 4:4, 8:20,21, 12:7, 13:4, 35:1), but we read not that the seventh day was the time prefixed of God for their so worshipping, or that they took any notice of it. Some say, that Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, brake also the seventh day sabbath, because he fell on that day;¹⁰ but we read not that the breach of a sabbath was charged upon him. That which we read is this; ‘Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?’ (Gen 3:11). Some say also that Cain killed Abel on a sabbath day;¹¹ but we read not that, in his charge, God laid any such thing at his door. This was it of which he stood guilty before God; namely, That his brother’s blood cried unto God against him from the ground (Gen 4:10).

I therefore take little notice of what a man saith, though he flourisheth his matter with many brave words, if he bring not

¹⁰ Adam is supposed by some rabbins not to have passed one night in a state of perfection, (see Ainsworth on Gen 3:1, 28:11; Psa 49:13), and to have fallen on the Sabbath day.

¹¹ The murder of Abel took place ‘at the end of days’; see margin to Genesis 4:3. Properly rendered ‘in process of time’; but by some supposed to mean at the end of the week. See Dr. Gill’s Commentary.

with him, 'Thus saith the Lord.' For that, and that only, ought to be my ground of faith as to how my God would be worshiped by me. For in the matters material to the worship of God, it is safest that thus I be guided in my judgment: for here only I perceive 'the footsteps of the flock' (Cant 1:8; Eze 3:11). They say further, that for God to sanctify a thing, is to set it apart. This being true; then it follows, that the seventh day sabbath was sanctified, that is, set apart for Adam in paradise; and so, that it was ordained a sabbath of rest to the saints from the beginning.

But I answer, as I hinted before, that God did sanctify it to his own rest. 'The LORD [also] hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' But again, it is one thing for God to sanctify this or that thing to an use, and another thing to command that that thing be forthwith in being to us. As for instance: the land of Canaan was set apart many years for the children of Israel before they possessed that land. Christ Jesus was long sanctified; that is, set apart to be our redeemer before he sent him into the world (Deut 32:8; John 10:36).

If then, by God's sanctifying of the seventh day for a sabbath, you understand it for a sabbath for man, (but the text saith not so) yet it might be so set apart for man, long before it should be, as such, made known unto him. And that the seventh day sabbath was not as yet made known to men.

Second, Consider secondly, Moses himself seems to have the knowledge of it at first, not by tradition, but by revelation; as it is Exodus 16:23, 'This is that [saith he] which the Lord hath said, [namely to me; for we read not, as yet, that he said it to any body else]. To morrow is the sabbath of the holy rest unto the Lord.'

Also holy Nehemiah suggesteth this, when he saith of Israel to God, Thou 'madest known unto them thy holy sabbath [by the hand of Moses thy servant]' (Neh 9:14). The first of these

texts shews us, that tidings of a seventh day sabbath for men, came first to Moses from heaven: and the second, that it was to Israel before unknown.

But how could be either the one or the other, if the seventh day sabbath was taught to men by the light of nature, which is the moral law? Or if from the beginning it was given to men by a positive precept for to be kept.

This therefore strengtheneth my doubt about the affirmative of the first question, and also prepareth an argument for what I plead as to this we have now under consideration.

Third, This yet seems to me more scrup- ulous, because that the punishment due to the breach of the seventh day sabbath was hid from men to the time of Moses; as is clear, for that it is said of the breaker of the sabbath, ‘They put him in ward, because it was not [as yet] declared what should be done to him’ (Num 15:32-36).

But methinks, had this seventh day sabbath been imposed upon men from the beginning, the penalty or punishment due to the breach thereof had certainly been known before now.

When Adam was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the penalty was then, if he disobeyed, annexed to the prohibition. So also it was as to circumcision, the passover, and other ordinances for worship. How then can it be thought, that the seventh day sabbath should be imposed upon men from the beginning; and that the punishment for the breach thereof, should be hid with God for the space of two thousand years! (Gen 2:16,17, 17:13,14; Exo 12:43-48) and the same chapter (v 19).

Fourth, God’s giving of the seventh day sabbath was with respect to stated and stinted worship in his church; the which, until the time of Moses, was not set up among his people. Things till then were adding or growing: now a sacrifice, then circumcision, then again long after that the passover, &c.

But when Israel was come into the wilderness, there to receive as God's congregation, a stated, stinted, limited way of worship, then he appoints them a time, and times, to perform this worship in; but as I said afore, before that it was not so, as the whole five books of Moses plainly shew: wherefore the seventh day sabbath, as such a limited day

cannot be moral, or of the law of nature, nor imposed till then.

And methinks Christ Jesus and his apostles do plainly enough declare this very thing. For that when they repeat unto the people, or expound before them the moral law, they quite exclude the seventh day sabbath. Yea, Paul makes that law to us complete without it.

We will first touch upon what Christ doth in this case.

As in his sermon upon the mount (Matt 5-7). In all that large and heavenly discourse upon this law, you have not one syllable about the seventh day sabbath.

So when the young man came running, and kneeling, and asking what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life, Christ bids him keep the commandments; but when the young man asked which; Christ quite leaves out the seventh day, and puts him upon the other. As in Matthew 19:16-19. As in Mark 10:17-20. As in Luke 18:18-20.

You will say, he left out the first, and second, and third likewise. To which I say, that was because the young man by his question did presuppose that he had been a doer of them: for he professed in his supplication, that he was a lover of that which is naturally good, which is God, in that his petition was so universal for every thing which he had commanded.

Paul also when he makes mention of the moral law, quite leaves out of that the very name of the seventh day sabbath, and professeth, that to us Christians the law of nature is

complete without it. As in Romans 3:7-19. As in Romans 13:7-10. As in 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

‘He that loveth another, saith he, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.’

I make not an argument of this, but take an occasion to mention it as I go. But certainly, had the seventh day sabbath been moral, or of the law of nature, as some would fain persuade themselves, it would not so slenderly have been passed over in all these repetitions of this law, but would by Christ or his apostles have been pressed upon the people, when so fair an opportunity sat these times offered it self unto them. But they knew what they did, and wherefore they were so silent as to the mention of a seventh day sabbath when they so well talked of the law as moral.

Fifth, Moses and the prophet Ezekiel both, do fully confirm what has been insinuated by us; to wit, that the seventh day, as a sabbath, was not imposed upon men until Israel was brought into the wilderness.

1. Moses saith to Israel, ‘Remember that thou wast a servant int he land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.’ Yea, he tells us, that the covenant which God made with them in Horeb, that written in stones, was not made with their forefathers, to wit, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but with them (Deut 5:1-15).

2. Ezekiel also is punctual as to this: I caused them, saith God by that prophet, ‘to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes,

and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them' (Eze 20:10-12; Exo 20:8, 31:13, 35:2).

What can be more plain? And these to be sure, are two notable witnesses of God, who, as you see, do jointly concur in this; to wit, That it was not from paradise, nor from the fathers, but from the wilderness, and from Sinai, that men received the seventh day sabbath to keep it holy.

True, it was God's sabbath before: for on the first seventh day we read, that God rested thereon, and sanctified it. Hence he calls it in the first place, MY sabbath. I gave them my sabbath: But it seems it was not given to the church till he had brought them into the wilderness.

But I say, if it had been moral, it had been natural to man; and by the light of nature men would have understood it, even both before it was, and otherwise. But of this you see we read nothing, either by positive law, or countenanced example, or any other way, but rather the flat contrary; to wit, that Moses had the knowledge of it first from heaven, not by tradition. That Israel had it, not of, or from their fathers, but in the wilderness, from him, to wit, Moses, after he had brought them out of the land of Egypt. And that that whole law in which this seventh day sabbath is placed, was given for the bounding and better ordering of them in their church state for their time, till the Messias should come and put, by a better ministration, this out of his church, as we shall further shew anon.

The seventh day sabbath therefore was not from paradise, nor from nature, nor from the fathers, but from the wilderness, and from Sinai.

Question 3

Whether when the seventh day sabbath was given to Israel in the wilderness the Gentiles, as such, was concerned therein.

Before I shew my ground for this question, I must also first premise, That the Gentiles, as such, were then without the church of God, and pale thereof; consequently had nothing to do with the essentials or necessary circumstances of that worship which God had set up for himself now among the children of Israel.

Now then for the ground of the question.

First, we read not that God gave it to any but to the seed of Jacob. Hence it is said to Israel, and to Israel only, 'The Lord hath given YOU the sabbath' (Exo 16:29). And again, 'also I gave THEM my sabbath' (Eze 20:5,12).

Now, if the gift of the seventh day sabbath was only to Israel, as these texts do more than seem to say; then to the Gentiles, as such, it was not given. Unless any shall conclude, that God by thus doing preferred the Jew to a state of gentileism; or that he bestowed on them, by thus doing, some high Gentile privilege. But this would be very fictitious. For, to lay aside reason, the text always, as to preference, did set the Jew in the first of places (Rom 2:10). Nor was his giving the seventh day sabbath to them but a sign and token thereof.

But the great objection is, because the seventh day sabbath is found amongst the rest of those precepts which is so commonly called the moral law; for thence it is concluded to be of a perpetual duration.

But I answer: That neither that as given on Sinai is moral; I mean, as to the manner and ends of its ministration, of which, God permitting, we shall say more in our answer to the fourth question, whither I direct you for satisfaction. But,

Second, The Gentiles could not be concerned, as such, with God's giving of a seventh day sabbath to Israel, because, as I

have shewed before, it was given to Israel, considered as a church of God (Acts 7:32). Nor was it given to them, as such, but with rites and ceremonies thereto belonging, so Leviticus 24:5- 9; Numbers 28:9, 10; Nehemiah 13:22; Ezekiel 46:4.

Now, I say, if this sabbath hath ceremonies thereto belonging, and if these ceremonies were essential to the right keeping of the sabbath: and again, if these ceremonies were given to Israel only, excluding all but such as were their proselytes, then this sabbath was given to them as excluding the Gentiles as such. But if it had been moral, the Gentiles could as soon have been deprived of their nature as of a seventh day sabbath, though the Jews should have appropriated it unto themselves only.

Again, to say that God gave this seventh day sabbath to the Gentiles, as such, (and yet so he must, if it be of the moral law) is as much as to say, that God hath ordained that that sabbath should be kept by the Gentiles without; but by the Jews, not without her ceremonies. And what conclusion will follow from hence, but that God did at one and the same time set up two sorts of acceptable worships in the world: one among the Jews, another among the Gentiles! But how ridiculous such a thought would be, and how repugnant to the wisdom of God, you may easily perceive.

Yea, what a diminution would this be to God's church that then was, for one to say, the

Gentiles were to serve God with more liberty than the Jew! For the law was a yoke, and yet the Gentile is called the dog, and said to be without God in the world (Deut 7:7; Psa 147:19,20; Matt 15:26; Eph 2:11,12).

Third, When the Gentiles, at the Jews' return from Babylon, came and offered their wares to sell to the children of Israel at Jerusalem on this sabbath; yea, and sold them to them too: yet not they, but the Jews were rebuked as the only breakers of that

sabbath. Nay, there dwelt then at Jerusalem men of Tyre, that on this sabbath sold their commodities to the Jews, and men of Judah: yet not they, but the men of Judah, were contended with, as the breakers of this sabbath.

True, good Nehemiah did threaten the Gentiles that were merchants, for lying then about the walls of the city, for that by that means they were a temptation to the Jews to break their sabbaths; but still he charged the breach thereof only upon his own people (Neh 13:15-20).

But can it be imagined, had the Gentiles now been concerned with this sabbath by law divine, that so holy a man as Nehemiah would have let them escape without a rebuke for so notorious a transgression thereof; especially considering, that now also they were upon God's ground, to wit, within and without the walls of Jerusalem.

Fourth, Wherefore he saith to Israel again, 'Verily my sabbaths YE shall keep.' And again, 'YE shall keep the sabbath.' And again, 'The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout THEIR generations' (Exo 31:14-16, 16:29).¹²

What can be more plain, these things thus standing int he testament of God, than that the seventh day sabbath, as such, was given to Israel, to Israel ONLY; and that the Gentiles, as such, were not concerned therein!

Fifth, The very reason also of God's giving of the seventh day sabbath to the Jews, doth exclude the Gentiles, as such, from having any concern therein. For it was given to the Jews, as was said before, as they were considered God's church, and for a sign and token by which they should know that he had

¹² 'The Lord hath given YOU the sabbath.' See also 31:17, 'It [the observance of the sabbath] is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.' — Ed.

chosen and sanctified them to himself for a peculiar people (Exo 31:13-17; Eze 20:12,13).

And a great token and sign it was that he had so chosen them: for in that he had given to them this sabbath, he had given to them (his own rest) a figure and pledge of his sending his Son into the world to redeem them from the bondage and slavery of the devil: of which indeed this sabbath was a shadow or type (Col 2:16,17).¹³

Thus have I concluded my ground for this third question. I shall therefore now propound another.

Question 4

Whether the seventh day sabbath did not fall, as such, with the rest of the Jewish rites and ceremonies? Or whether that day, as a sabbath, was afterwards by the apostles imposed upon the churches of the Gentiles?

I would now also, before I shew the grounds of my proposing this question, premise what is necessary thereunto; to wit, That time and day were both fixed upon by law, for the solemn performance of divine worship among the Jews; and that time and day is also by law fixed, for the solemnizing of divine worship to God in the churches of the Gentiles. But that the seventh day sabbath, as such, is that time, that day, that still I question.

Now before I shew the grounds of my questioning of it, I shall enquire into the nature of that ministration in the bowels of which this seventh day sabbath is placed. And,

¹³ This is a striking application of Colossians 2:17. The sabbath 'a shadow of things to come'; to the Jews it was a shadow of the rest that remaineth to the children of God, reflected from the completion of the work of creation. The day of rest and worship to the Christian, is a much stronger type, yet but a shadow of the holy enjoyments of his eternal rest, prefigured from the finishing of the mightier work of redemption.—Ed.

First, I say, as to that, the nature of that law is moral, but the ministration, and circumstances thereunto belonging, are shadowish and figurative.

By the nature of it, I mean the matter thereof: by the ministration and circumstances thereto belonging, I do mean the giving of it by such hands, at such a place and time, in such a mode, as when it was given to Israel in the wilderness.

The matter therefore, to wit, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength’: and ‘thy neighbour as thyself,’ is everlasting (Mark 12:29-31), and is not from Sinai, nor from the two tables of stone, but in nature; for this law commenced and took being and place that day in which man was created. Yea, it was concreate with him, and without it he cannot be a rational creature, as he was in the day in which God created him. But for the ministration of it from Sinai, with the circumstances belonging to that ministration, they are not moral, nor everlasting, but shadowish and figurative only.

That ministration cannot be moral for three reasons. 1. It commenced not when morality commenced, but two thousand years after. 2. It was not universal as the law, as moral, is; it was given only to the church of the Jews in those tables. 3. Its end is past as such a ministration, though the same law as to the morality thereof abides. Where are the tables of stone and this law as therein contained? We only, as to that, have the notice of such a ministration, and a rehearsal of the law, with that mode of giving of it, in the testament of God.

But to come to particulars.

1. The very preface to that ministration carrieth in it a type of our deliverance from the bondage of sin, the devil, and hell. Pharaoh, and Egypt; and Israel’s bondage there, being a type of these.

2. The very stones in which this law was engraven, was a figure of the tables of the heart. The first two were a figure of the heart carnal, by which the law was broken: the last two, of the heart spiritual, in which the new law, the law of grace is written and preserved (Exo 34:1; 2 Cor 3:3).

3. The very mount on which this ministration was given, was typical of Mount Zion. See Hebrews 12 where they are compared (vv 18-22).

4. Yea, the very church to whom that ministration was given, was a figure of the church of the gospel that is on Mount Zion. See the same scripture, and compare it with Acts 7:38; Revelation 14:1-5.

5. That ministration was given in the hand and by the disposition of angels, to prefigure how the new law or ministration of the Spirit was to be given afterwards to the churches under the New Testament by the hands of the angel of God's everlasting covenant of grace, who is his only begotten Son (Isa 63:9; Mal 3:1¹⁴; Acts 3:22,23).

6. It was given to Israel also in the hand of Moses, as mediator, to shew, or typify out, that the law of grace was in after times to come to the church of Christ by the hand and mediation of Jesus our Lord (Gal 3:19; Deut 5:5; Heb 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15, 12:24).

7. As to this ministration, it was to continue but 'till the seed should come'; and then must, as such, give place to a better ministration (Gal 3:19). 'A better covenant, established upon better promises' (Heb 8:6).

From all this therefore I conclude, that there is a difference to be put between the morality of the law, and the ministration

¹⁴ In Bunyan's original edition it is 'Matt 3, 1,' but this must be a typographical error.—Ed.

of it upon Sinai. The law, as to its morality was before; but as to this ministration, it was not till the church was with Moses, and he with the angels on Mount Sinai in the wilderness.

Now in the law, as moral, we conclude a time propounded, but no seventh day sabbath enjoined. But in that law, as thus ministered, which ministration is already out of doors;¹⁵ we find a seventh day; that seventh day on which God rested, on which God rested from all his works, enjoined. What is it then? Why the whole ministration as written and engraven in stones being removed, the seventh day sabbath must also be removed; for that the time nor yet the day, was as to our holy sabbath, or rest, moral; but imposed with that whole ministration, as such, upon the church, until the time of reformation: which time being come, this ministration, as I said, as such, ceaseth; and the whole law, as to the morality of it, is delivered into the hand of Christ, who imposes it now also; but not as a law of works, nor as that ministration written and engrave in stones, but as a rule of life to those that have believed in him (1 Cor 9:21).

So then, that law is still moral, and still supposes, since it teaches that there is a God, that time must be set apart for his church to worship him in, according to that will of his that he had revealed in his word. But though by that law time is required; yet by that, as moral, the time never was prefixed.

The time then of old was appointed by such a ministration of that law as we have been now discoursing of; and when that ministration ceaseth, that time did also vanish with it. And now by our new law-giver, the Son of God, he being 'lord also of the sabbath day,' we have a time prefixed, as the law of nature

¹⁵ 'Out of doors,' no more to be found, quite gone, fairly sent away.--Locke. 'Out of court.'--Law- term.—Ed.

requireth, a new day, by him who is the lord of it; I say, appointed, wherein we may worship, not in the oldness of that letter written and engraven in stones, but according to, and most agreeing with, his new and holy testament. And this I confirm further by those reasons that now shall follow.

First, Because we find not from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the Bible, anything written by which is imposed that seventh day sabbath upon the churches. Time, as I said, the law as moral requires; but that time we find no longer imposed. And in all duties pertaining to God and his true worship in his churches, we must be guided by his laws and testaments. By his old laws, when his old worship was in force; and by his new laws, when his new worship is in force. And he hath verily now said, 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev 21:5).

Second, I find, as I have shewed, that this seventh day sabbath is confined, not to the law of nature as such, but to that ministration of it which was given on Sinai: which ministration as it is come to an end as such, so it is rejected by Paul as a ministration no ways capable of abiding in the church now, since the ministration of the Spirit also hath taken its place (2 Cor 3). Wherefore instead of propounding it to the churches with arguments tending to its reception, he seeks by degrading it of its old lustre and glory, to wean the churches from any lineament¹⁶ thereof:

1. By calling of it the ministration of death, of the letter, and of condemnation, a term most frightful, but no ways alluring to the godly.

2. By calling it a ministration that now has no glory, by reason of the exceeding glory of that ministration under which by the Holy Spirit the New Testament churches are. And these are weaning considerations (2 Cor 3).

¹⁶ 'Any likement,' any fondness or partiality.—Ed.

3. By telling of them it is a ministration that tendeth to blind the mind, and to veil the heart as to the knowledge of their Christ: so that they cannot, while under that, behold his beauteous face, but as their heart shall turn from it to him (2 Cor 3).

4. And that they might not be left in the dark, but perfectly know what ministration it is that he means, he saith expressly, it is that 'written and engraven in stones.' See again 2 Corinthians 3. And in that ministration it is that this seventh day sabbath is found.

But shall we think that the apostle speaks any thing of all here said, to wean saints off from the law of nature, as such! No verily, that he retains in the church, as being managed there by Christ: but THIS ministration is dangerous now, because it cannot be maintained in the church, but in a way of contempt to the ministration of the Spirit, and is derogatory to the glory of that.

Now these, as I said, are weaning considerations. No man, I do think, that knows himself, or the glory of a gospel ministration, can, if he understands what Paul says here, desire that such a ministration should be retained in the churches.

Third. This seventh day sabbath has lost its ceremonies (those unto which before you are

cited by the texts) which was with it imposed upon the old church for her due performance of worship to God thereon. How then can this sabbath now be kept? Kept, I say, according to law. For if the church on which it was first imposed, was not to keep it, yea, could not keep it legally without the practising of those ceremonies: and if those ceremonies are long ago dead and gone, how will those that pretend to a belief of a continuation of the sanction thereof, keep it, I say, according as it is written?

If they say, they retain the day, but change their manner of observation thereof; I ask, who has commanded them so to do? This is one of the laws of this sabbath. 'Thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant' (Lev 24:5-8). You may see also other places, as Numbers 28:9, 10; Nehemiah 13:22 and Ezekiel 46:4.

Now if these be the laws of the sabbath, this seventh day sabbath; and if God did never command that this sabbath should by his church be sanctified without them: and, as was said before, if these ceremonies have been long since dead and buried, how must this sabbath be kept?

Let men take heed, lest while they plead for law, and pretend themselves to be the only doers of God's will,¹⁷ biggest transgressors thereof. And why can they not as well keep the other sabbaths? As the sabbath of months, of years, and the jubilee? For this, as I have shewed, is no moral precept, it is only a branch of the ministration of death and condemnation.

Fourth, The seventh day sabbath, as such, was a sign and shadow of things to come; and a sign cannot be the thing signified and substance too. Wherefore when the thing signified or substance, is come, the sign or thing shadowing ceaseth. And, I say, the seventh day sabbath being so, as a seventh day sabbath it ceaseth also. See again Exodus 31:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:12, 21; Colossians 2:14.

¹⁷ 'Any likement,' any fondness or partiality.—Ed.

* Edit. 1826, pp. 41, 42.

Nor do I find that our Protestant writers, notwithstanding their reverence of the sabbath, do conclude otherwise; but that though time as to worshipping God, must needs be contained in the bowels of the moral law, as moral; yet they for good reasons forbear to affix the seventh day as that time there too.

They do it, I say, for good reasons; reason drawn from the scripture; or rather, for that the scripture draws them so to conclude: yet they cast not away the morality of a sabbath of rest to the church. It is to be granted them, that time for God's worship abideth for ever, but the seventh day vanishes as a shadow and sign; because such indeed it was, as the scripture above cited declares as to the sanction thereof as a sabbath.

The law of nature then calls for time; but the God of nature assigns it, and has given power to his Son to continue SUCH time as himself shall by his eternal wisdom judge most meet for the churches of the Gentiles to solemnize worship to God by him in. Hence he is said to be 'Lord even of the sabbath day' (Matt 12:8).

Fifth, I find by reading God's word, that Paul by authority apostolical, takes away the sanctions of all the Jews' festivals and sabbaths.

This is manifest, for that he leaves the observation or non-observation of them, as things indifferent, to the mind and discretion of the believers. 'One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind' (Rev 14:5).

By this last clause of the verse, 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,' he doth plainly declare, that such days are now stript of their sanction.¹⁸ For none of God's laws, while they retain their sanction, are left to the will and mind of

¹⁸ This was the opinion of those great reformers, Tyndale, Calvin, and Luther; see introduction by the Editor. It was a sentiment which led to no practical evil.—Ed.

the believers, as to whether they will observe them or no. Men, I say, are not left to their liberty in such a case; for when a stamp of divine authority is upon a law, and abides, so long we are bound, not to our mind, but to that law: but when a thing, once sacred, has lost its sanction, then it falls, as to faith and conscience, among other common or indifferent things. And so the seventh day sabbath did. Again,

Sixth, Thus Paul writes to the church of Colosse. 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ' (Col 2:16,17). Here also, as he serveth other holy days, he serveth the sabbath. He gives a liberty to believers to refuse the observation of it, and commands that no man should judge against them for their so doing. And as you read, the reason of his so doing is, because the body, the substance is come. Christ saith he, is the body, or that which these things were a shadow or figure of. 'The body is of Christ.'

Nor hath the apostle, since he saith 'or of the sabbath' one would think, left any hole, out at which men's inventions could get: but man has sought out many; and, so, many he will use.

But again, That the apostle by this word 'sabbath' intends the seventh day sabbath, is clear; for that it is by Moses himself counted for a sign, as we have shewed: and for that none of the other sabbaths were a more clear shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ than this. For that, and that alone, is called 'the rest of God': in it God rested from all his works. Hence he calls it by way of eminency, 'MY sabbath, and MY holy day' (Isa 56:4, 58:13).

Yet could that rest be nothing else but typical; for God, never since the world began, really rested, but in his Son. 'This is he,' saith God, 'in whom I am well pleased.' This sabbath then, was God's rest typically, and was given to Israel as a sign

of his grace towards them in Christ. Wherefore when Christ was risen, it ceased, and was no longer of obligation to bind the conscience to the observation thereof. [Or of the sabbath.] He distinctly singleth out this seventh day, as that which was a most noble shadow, a most exact shadow. And then puts that with the other together; saying, they are a shadow of things to come; and that Christ has answered them all. 'The body is of Christ.'

Seventh, No man will, I think, deny but that Hebrews 4:45 intends the seventh day sabbath, on which God rested from all his works; for the text doth plainly say so: yet may the observing reader easily perceive that both it, and the rest of Canaan also, made mention of verse 5 were typical, as to a day made mention of verses 7 and 8 which day he calls another. He would not afterwards have made mention of another day. If Joshua had given them rest, he would not. Now if they had not that rest in Joshua's days, be sure they had it not by Moses; for he was still before.

All the rests therefore that Moses gave them, and that Joshua gave them too, were but typical of another day, in which God would give them rest (Heb 4:9,10). And whether the day to come, was Christ, or Heaven, it makes no matter: it is enough that they before did fail, as always shadows do, and that therefore mention by David is, and that afterward, made of another day. 'There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.' A rest to come, of which the seventh day in which God rested, and the land of Canaan, was a type; which rest begins in Christ now, and shall be consummated in glory.

And in that he saith 'There remains a rest,' referring to that of David, what is it, if it signifies not, that the other rests remain not? There remains therefore a rest, a rest prefigured by the seventh day, and by the rest of Canaan, though they are fled and gone.

‘There remains a rest’; a rest which stands not now in signs and shadows, in the seventh

day, or Canaan, but in the Son of God, and his kingdom, to whom, and to which the weary are invited to come for rest (Isa 28:12; Matt 11:20; Heb 4:11).

Yet this casts not out the Christians holiday or sabbath: for that was not ordained to be a type or shadow of things to come, but to sanctify the name of their God in, and to perform that worship to him which was also in a shadow signified by the ceremonies of the law, as the epistle to the Hebrews doth plentifully declare.

And I say again, the seventh day sabbath cannot be it, for the reasons shewed afore.

Eighth, Especially if you add to all this, that nothing of the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, is brought by Jesus, or by his apostles, into the kingdom of Christ, as a part of his instituted worship. Hence it is said of that ministration in the bowels of which this seventh day sabbath is found, that it has now NO glory; that its glory is done away, in or by Christ, and so is laid aside, the ministration of the Spirit that excels in glory, being come in the room thereof.

I will read the text to you. ‘But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: [It was given at first with this proviso, that it should not always retain its glory, that sanction, as a ministration]. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which was done

away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious' (2 Cor 3:7-11).

What can be more plain? The text says expressly, that this ministration doth NOT remain; yea, and insinuates, that in its first institution it was ordained with this proviso, 'It was to be done away.' Now if in its first institution upon Sinai it was thus ordained; and if by the coming in of the ministration of the spirit, this ordination is now executed; that is, if by it, and the apostle saith it, it is done away by a ministration that remains: then where is that seventh day sabbath?

Thus therefore I have discoursed upon this fourth question: And having shewed by this discourse that the old seventh day sabbath is abolished and done away, and that it has nothing to do with the churches of the Gentiles; I am next to shew what day it is that must abide as holy to the Christians, and for them to perform their New Testament church service in.

Take the question thus.

Question 5

Since it is denied that the seventh day sabbath is moral, and it is found that it is not to abide as a sabbath for ever in the church, What time is to be fixed on for New Testament saints to perform together, divine worship to God by Christ in?

Upon this question hangs the stress of all, as to the subject now under consideration: but before I can speak distinctly to it, I must premise, as I have in order to my speaking to the questions before, something for the better clearing of our way--

[Therefore I remark, that] we are not now speaking of all manner of worshipping God, nor of all times in which all manner of worship is to be performed; but of that worship, which is church worship, or worship that is to be performed by the assembly of saints, when by the will of God they in all parts of his dominion assemble together to worship him; which

worship hath a prefixed time allotted to, or for its performance, and without which it cannot, according to the mind of God, be done. This is the time, I say, that we are to discourse of, and not of ALL time appointed for all manner of worship.

I do not question but that worship by the godly is performed to God every day of the week; yea, and every night too, and that time is appointed or allowed of God for the performance of such worship. But this time is not fixed to the same moment or hour universally, but is left to the discretion of the believers, as their frame of spirit, or occasions,

or exigencies, or temptations, or duty shall require.

We meddle then only with that time that the worship aforesaid is to be performed in; which time the law of nature as such supposes, but the God of nature chooses. And this time as to the churches of the Gentiles, we have proved is not that time which was assigned to the Jews, to wit, THAT seventh day which was imposed upon them by the ministration of death; for, as we have shewed already, that ministration indeed is done away by a better and more glorious ministration, the ministration of the spirit; which ministration surely would be much more inferior than that which has now no glory, was it defective as to this. That is, if it imposed a gospel service, but appointed not time to perform that worship in: or if notwithstanding all its commendation, it should be forced to borrow of a ministration inferior to itself; that, to wit, the time without which by no means its most solemn worship can be performed.

This then is the conclusion, that TIME to worship God in, is required by the law of nature; but that the law of nature doth, as such, fix it on the seventh day from the creation of the world, that I utterly deny, by what I have said already, and have yet to say on that behalf. Yea, I hope to make it manifest, as I have, that this seventh day is removed; that God, by the

ministration of the spirit, has changed the time to another day, to wit, The first day of the week. Therefore we conclude the time is fixed for the worship of the New Testament Christians, or churches of the Gentiles, unto that day.

Now in my discourse upon this subject, I shall,

I. Touch upon those texts that are more close, yet have a divine intimation of this thing in them.

II. And then I shall come to texts more express.

FIRST, for those texts that are more close, yet have a divine intimation of this thing in them.

First, The comparison that the Holy Ghost makes between the rest of God from his works, and the rest of Christ from his, doth intimate such a thing. 'He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his' (Heb 4:10).

Now God rested from his works, and sanctified a day of rest to himself, as a signal of that rest, which day he also gave to his church as a day of holy rest likewise. And if Christ thus rested from his own works, and the Holy Ghost says he did thus rest, he also hath sanctified a day to himself, as that in which he hath finished his work, and given it (that day) also to his church to be an everlasting memento of his so doing, and that they should keep it holy for his sake.

And see, as the Father's work was first, so his day went before; and as the Son's work came after, so his day accordingly succeeded. The Father's day was on the seventh day from the creation, the Son's the first day following.

Nor may this be slighted, because the text says, as God finished his work, so Christ finished his; He also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his. He rested, I say, as God did; but God rested on his resting day, and therefore so did Christ. Not that he rested on the Father's resting day; for it is evident, that then he had great part of his work to do; for he

had not as then got his conquest over death, but the next day he also entered into his rest, having by his rising again, finished his work, viz., made a conquest over the powers of darkness, and brought life and immortality to light through his so doing.

So then, that being the day of the rest of the Son of God, it must needs be the day of the rest of his churches also. For God gave his resting day to his church to be a sabbath; and Christ rested from his own works as God did from his, therefore he also gave the day in which he rested from his works, a sabbath to the churches, as did the Father. Not that there are TWO sabbaths at once: the Father's was imposed for a time, even until the Son's should come; yea, as I have shewed you, even in the very time of its imposing it was also ordained to be done away. Hence he saith, that ministration 'was to be done away' (2 Cor 3:7). Therefore we plead not for two sabbaths to be at one time, but that a succession of time was ordained to the New Testament saints, or churches of the

Gentiles, to worship God in; which time is that in which the Son rested from his own works as God did from his.

Second, Hence he calls himself, The 'Lord even of the sabbath day,' as Luke 5; Matthew 12:8 shews. Now to be a LORD, is to have dominion, dominion over a thing, and so power to alter or change it according to that power; and where is he that dares say Christ has not this absolutely! We will therefore conclude that it is granted on all hands he hath. The question then is, Whether he hath exercised that power to the demolishing or removing of the Jews' seventh day, and establishing another in its room? The which I think is easily answered, in that he did not rest from his own works therein, but chose, for his own rest, to himself another day.

Surely, had the Lord Jesus intended to have established the seventh day to the churches of the Gentiles, he would himself in the first place have rested from his own works therein; but

since he passed by that day, and took no notice of it, as to the finishing of his own works, as God took notice of it when he had finished his; it remains that he fixed upon another day, even the first of the week; on which, by his rising again, and shewing himself to his disciples before his passion, he made it manifest that he had chosen, 'as Lord of the sabbath,' that day for his own rest: consequently, and for the rest of his churches, and for his worship to be solemnized in.

Third, And on THIS day some of the saints that slept arose, and began their eternal sabbath (Matt 27:52,53). See how the Lord Jesus hath glorified this day! Never was such a stamp of divine honour put upon any other day, no not since the world began. 'And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection,' &c. That is, they arose as soon as he was risen. But why was not all this done on the seventh day? No, that day was set apart that saints might adore God for the works of creation, and that saints through that might look for redemption by Christ. But now a work more glorious than that is to be done, and therefore another day is assigned for the doing of it in. A work, I say, of redemption completed, a day therefore by itself must be assigned for this; and some of the saints to begin their eternal sabbath with God in heaven, therefore a day by itself must be appointed for this. Yea, and that this day might not want that glory that might attract the most dim-sighted Christian to a desire after the sanction of it, the resurrection of Christ, and also of those saints met together on it: yea, they both did begin their eternal rest thereon.

Fourth, The psalmist speaks of a day that the Lord Jehovah, the Son of God, has made; and saith, 'we will rejoice and be glad in it.' But what day is this? Why the day in which Christ was made the 'head of the corner,' which must be applied to

the day in which he was raised from the dead, which is the first of the week.

Hence Peter saith to the Jews, when he treateth of Christ before them, and particularly of his resurrection. ‘This is the stone which WAS set at nought of you builders, which IS become the head of the corner.’ He was set at nought by them, the whole course of his ministry unto his death, and was made the head of the corner by God, on that day he rose from the dead. This day therefore is the day that the Lord Jehovah has made a day of rejoicing to the church of Christ, and we will rejoice and be glad in it (Psa 118:24).

For can it be imagined, that the Spirit by the prophet should thus signalise this day for nothing; saying, ‘This is the day which the Lord hath made’; to no purpose? Yes, you may say, for the resurrection of his son.

But I add, that that is not all, it is a day that the Lord has both made for that, and that we might ‘rejoice and be glad in it.’¹⁹ Rejoice, that is before the Lord while solemn divine worship is performed on it, by all the people that shall partake of the redemption accomplished then.

Fifth, God the Father again leaves such another stamp of divine note and honour upon this day as he never before did leave upon any; where he saith to our Lord, ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee’ (Acts 13:33). Still, I say, having respect to the first day of the week; for that, and no other, is the day here intended by the apostle. This day, saith God, is the day: ‘And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give thee the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.’ Wherefore the day in which God did this work, is

¹⁹ Psalm 118:24.

greater than that in which he finished the work of creation; for his making of the creation saved it not from corruption, but now he hath done a work which corruption cannot touch, wherefore the day on which he did this, has this note from his own mouth, THIS day, as a day that doth transcend.

And, as I said, this day is the first of the week; for it was on that day that God begat his beloved Son from the dead. This first day of the week therefore, on it God found that pleasure which he found not in the seventh day from the world's creation, for that in it his Son did live again to him.

Now shall not Christians, when they do read that God saith, 'This day,' and that too with reference to a work done on it by him, so full of delight to him, and so full of life and heaven to them, set also a remark upon it, saying, This was the day of God's pleasure, for that his Son did rise thereon, and shall it not be the day of my delight in him!

This is the day on which his Son was both begotten and born, and became the first fruits to God of them that sleep; yea, and in which also he was made by him the chief, and head of the corner; and shall not we rejoice in it? (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; Col 1:18; Rev 1:5).

Shall kings, and princes, and great men set a remark upon the day of their birth and coronation, and expect that both subjects and servants should do them high honour on that day, and shall the day in which Christ was both begotten and born, be a day contemned by Christians! And his name not be but of a common regard on that day?

I say again, shall God, as with his finger, point, and that in the face of the world, at this day, saying, 'Thou art my Son, this day,' &c., and shall not Christians fear, and awake from their employments, to worship the Lord on this day! If God remembers it, well may I! If God says, and that with all gladness of heart, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten

thee!’ may not! ought not I also to set this day apart to sing the songs of my redemption in?

THIS day my redemption was finished. This day my dear Jesus revived. This day he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Yea this is the day in which the Lord Jesus finished a greater work than ever yet was done in the world; yea, a work in which the Father himself was more delighted than he was in making of heaven and earth. And shall darkness and the shadow of death stain this day! Or shall a cloud dwell on this day! Shall God regard this day from above! And shall not his light shine upon this day! What shall be done to them that curse this day, and would not that the stars should give their light thereon. This day! After this day was come, God never, that we read of, made mention with delight, of the old seventh day sabbath more.

Sixth, Nor is that altogether to be slighted, when he saith, ‘When he bringeth in the first- begotten into the world, Let all the angels of God worship him.’ To wit, at that very time and day (Heb 1:6).

I know not what our expositors say of this text, but to me it seems to be meant of his resurrection from the dead; both because the apostle is speaking of that (v 5), and closes that argument with this text, ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first- begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.’

So then, for God’s bringing of his first- begotten now into the world, was by his raising him again from the dead after they by crucifying of him had turned him out of the same.

Thus then God brought him into the world, never by them to be hurried out of it again. For Christ being now raised from the dead, dies no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Now, saith the text, when he bringeth him thus into the world, he requireth that worship be done unto HIM. When? That very day, and

that by all the angels of God. And if by all, then ministers are not excluded; and if not ministers, then not churches; for what is said to the angels, is said to the church itself (Rev 2:1-7,8,11,12,17,18,29, 3:1,6,7,13,14,22).

So then, if the question be asked, when they must worship him: the answer is, when he brought him into the world, which was on the first day of the week; for then he bringeth him again from the dead, and gave the whole world and the government thereof into his holy hand. This text therefore is of weight as to what we have now under consideration, to wit, that the first day of the week, the day in which God brought his first-begotten into the world, should be the day of worshipping him by all the angels of God.

Seventh, Hence this day is called ‘the Lord’s day,’ as John saith, ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,’ the day in which Jesus rose from the dead (Rev 1:10).

‘The Lord’s day.’ Every day, say some, is the Lord’s day. Indeed this for discourse sake may be granted; but strictly, no day can so properly be called the Lord’s day, as this first day of the week; for that no day of the week or of the year has those badges of the Lord’s glory upon it, nor such divine grace put upon it as has the first day of the week.

This we have already made appear in part, and shall make appear much more before we have done therewith.

There is nothing, as I know of, that bears this title but the Lord’s supper, and this day (1 Cor 11:20; Rev 1:10). And since Christians count it an abuse to allegorize the first, let them also be ashamed to fantasticalize the last. The Lord’s day is doubtless the day in which he rose from the dead. To be sure it is not the old seventh day; for from the day that he arose, to the

end of the Bible, we find not that he did hang so much as one twist of glory upon that; but this day is beautified with glory upon glory, and that both by the Father and the Son; by the prophets and those that were raised from the dead thereon; therefore this day must be more than the rest.

But we are as yet but upon divine intimations, drawn from such texts which, if candidly considered, do very much smile upon this great truth; namely, that the first day of the week is to be accounted the Christian sabbath, or holy day for divine worship in the churches of the saints. And SECOND, Now I come to the texts that are more express.

Then First, This was the day in the which he did use to shew himself to his people, and to congregate with them after he rose from the dead. On the first first-day, even on the day on which he rose from the dead, he visited his people, both when together and apart, over, and over, and over, as both Luke and John do testify (Luke 24; John 20). And preached such sermons of his resurrection, and gave unto them; yea, and gave them such demonstration of the truth of all, as was never given them from the foundation of the world. Shewing, he shewed them his risen body; opening, he opened their understandings; and dissipating, he so scattered their unbelief on THIS day, as he never had done before. And this continued one way or another even from before day until the evening.

Second, On the next first day following the church was within again; that is, congregated to wait upon their Lord. And John so relates the matter, as to give us to understand that they were not so assembled together again till then. 'After eight days,' saith he, 'again his disciples were within,' clearly concluding, that they were not so on the days that were between, no not on the old seventh day.

Now why should the Holy Ghost thus precisely speak of their assembling together upon the first day, if not to confirm

us in this, that the Lord had chosen that day for the new sabbath of his church? Surely the Apostles knew what they did in their meeting together upon that day; yea, and the Lord Jesus also; for that he used so to visit them when so assembled, made his practice a law unto them. For practice is enough for us New Testament saints, especially when the Lord Jesus himself is in the head of that practice, and that after he rose from the dead.

Perhaps some may stumble at the word ‘after,’ after eight days; but the meaning is, at the conclusion of the eighth day, or when they had spent in a manner the whole of their sabbath in waiting upon their Lord, then in

comes their Lord, and finisheth that their day’s service to him with confirming of Thomas’ faith, and by letting drop other most heavenly treasure among them. Christ said, he must lie three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, yet it is evident, that he rose the third day (1 Cor 15:4).

We must take then a part for the whole, and conclude, that from the time that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, to the time that he shewed his hands and his side to Thomas, eight days were almost expired; that is, he had sanctified unto them two first days, and had accepted that service they had performed to him therein, as he testified by giving of them so blessed a farewell at the conclusion of both those days.

Hence now we conclude, that this was the custom of the church at this day, to wit, upon the first day of the week to meet together, and to wait upon their Lord therein. For the Holy Ghost counts it needless to make a continued repetition of things; it is enough therefore if we have now and then mention made thereof.

Obj. But Christ shewed himself alive to them at other times also, as in John 21 &c.

Ans. The names of all those days in which he so did are obliterated and blotted out, that they might not be idolized; for Christ did not set them apart for worship, but this day, the first day of the week, by its name is kept alive in the church, the Holy Ghost surely signifying thus much, that how hidden soever other days were, Christ would have his day, the first day had in everlasting remembrance among saints.

Churches also meet together now on the week days, and have the presence of Christ with them too in their employments; but that takes not off from them the sanction of the first day of the week, no more than it would take away the sanction of the old seventh day, had it still continued holy to them: wherefore this is no let or objection to hinder our sanctifying of the first day of the week to our God. But,

Third, Add to this, that upon Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, mention is made of their being together again: for Pentecost was always the morrow after the sabbath, the old seventh day sabbath. Upon this day, I say, the Holy Ghost saith, they were again ‘with one accord together in one place.’

But oh! the glory that then attended them, by the presence of the Holy Ghost among them: never was such a thing done as was done on that first day until then. We will read the text, ‘And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost’ (Acts 2:1-4).

Here is a first day glorified! Here’s a countenance given to the day of their Christian assembling. But we will note a few things upon it.

1. The church was now, as on other first days, all with one accord in one place. We read not that they came together by virtue of any precedent revelation, nor by accident, but contrariwise by agreement, they were together 'with one accord,' or by appointment, in pursuance of their duty, setting apart that day, as they had done the first days afore, to the holy service of their blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. We read that this meeting of theirs was not begun on the old sabbaths, but when Pentecost was fully come: the Holy Ghost intimating, that they had left now, and began to leave, the seventh day sabbath to the unbelieving Jews.

3. Nor did the Holy Ghost come down upon them till every moment of the old sabbath was past, Pentecost, as was said, was FULLY come first. 'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.' And then, &c.

And why was not this done on the seventh day sabbath? But, possibly, to shew, that the ministration of death and condemnation was not that, by or through which Christ the Lord would communicate so good a gift unto his churches (Gal 3:1-5).

This gift must be referred to the Lord's day, the first day of the week, to fulfil the scripture, and to sanctify yet farther this holy day unto the use of all New Testament churches of the saints. For since on the first day of the week our

Lord did rise from the dead, and by his special presence, I mean his personal, did accompany his church therein, and so preach as he did, his holy truths unto them, it was most meet that they on the same day also should receive the first fruits of their eternal life most gloriously.

And, I say again, since from the resurrection of Christ to this day, the church then did receive upon the first day, but as we read, upon no other, such glorious things as we have

mentioned, it is enough to beget in the hearts of them that love the Son of God, a high esteem of the first day of the week. But how much more, when there shall be joined to these, proof that it was the custom of the first gospel church, the church of Christ at Jerusalem, after our Lord was risen, to assemble together to wait upon God on the first day of the week with their Lord as leader.

To say little more to this head, but only to repeat what is written of this day of old, to wit, that it should be proclaimed the selfsame day, to wit, the morrow after the sabbath, which is the first day of the week, 'that it may be an holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings' (Lev 23:21).

This ceremony was about the sheaf that was to be waved, and bread of first fruits, which was a type of Christ; for he is unto God 'the first fruits of them that slept' (1 Cor 15:20).

This sheaf, or bread, must not be waved on the old seventh day, but on the morrow after, which is the first day of the week, the day in which Christ rose from the dead, and waved himself as the first fruits of the elect unto God. Now from this day they were to count seven sabbaths complete, and on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, which was the first day of the week again; and this Pentecost upon which we now are, then they were to have a new meat offering, with meat offerings and drink offerings, &c.

And on the selfsame day they were to proclaim that that first day should be a holy convocation unto them. The which the apostles did, and grounded that their proclamation so on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not on ceremonies, that at the same day they brought three thousand souls to God (Acts 2:41).

Now what another signal [applause] was here put upon the first day of the week! The day in which our Lord rose from the

dead, assembled with his disciples, poured out so abundantly of the Spirit, and gathered even by the first draught that his fishermen made by the gospel, such a number of souls to God.

Thus then they proclaimed, and thus they gathered sinners on the first first-day that they preached; for though they had assembled together over and over with their Lord before therein, yet they began not jointly to preach until this first day Pentecost.

Now, after this the apostles to the churches did never make mention of a seventh day sabbath. For as the wave sheaf and the bread of first fruits were a figure of the Lord Jesus, and the waving, of his life from the dead: so that morrow after the sabbath on which the Jews waved their sheaf, was a figure of that on which our Lord did rise; consequently, when their morrow after the sabbath ceased, our morrow after that began, and so has continued a blessed morrow after their sabbath, as a holy sabbath to Christians from that time ever since.

Fourth, We come yet more close to the custom of churches; I mean, to the custom of the churches of the Gentiles; for as yet we have spoken but of the practice of the church of God which was at Jerusalem; only we will add, that the customs that were laudable and binding with the church at Jerusalem, were with reverence to be imitated by the churches of the Gentiles; for there was but one law of Christ for them both to worship by.

Now then, to come to the point, to wit, that it was the custom of the churches of the Gentiles, on the first day of the week, but upon no other that we read of,²⁰ to come together to perform divine worship to their Lord.

Hence it is said ‘And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,’ &c. (Acts 20:7).

²⁰ ‘That we read of’ in the New Testament; for this is our sole authority in all inquiries as to a Christian’s faith and practice.—Ed.

This is a text, that as to matter of fact cannot be contradicted by any, for the text saith plainly they did so, the disciples then came together to break bread, the disciples among the Gentiles, did so.

Thus you see that the solemnizing of a first day to holy uses was not limited to, though first preached by the church that was at Jerusalem. The church at Jerusalem was the mother church, and not that at Rome, as some falsely imagine; for from this church went out the law and the holy word of God to the Gentiles. Wherefore it must be supposed that this meeting of the Gentiles on the first day of the week to break bread, came to them by holy tradition²¹ from the church at Jerusalem, since they were the first that kept the first day as holy unto the Lord their God.

And indeed, they had the best advantage to do it; for they had their Lord in the head of them to back them to it by his presence and preaching thereon.

But we will a little comment upon the text. 'Upon the first day of the week.' Thus you see the day is nominated, and so is kept alive among the churches. For in that the day is nominated on which this religious exercise was performed, it is to be supposed that the Holy Ghost would have it live, and be taken notice of by the churches that succeed.

It also may be nominated to shew, that both the church at Jerusalem, and those of the Gentiles did harmonize in their sabbath, jointly concluding to solemnize worship on a [the

²¹ 'Tradition' is a communication without writing, and when made orally by some apostle or messenger from the first church at Jerusalem, and the message so obeys as to be left upon record by the Holy Ghost, it has the same authority as if it had been commanded in an epistle. It has nothing to do with the vain traditions of the fathers (so called), which were not heard of until after the inspired volume was completed and closed. Any subsequent commands are censures upon God's omniscience, and are deserving only of contempt.—Ed.

same] day. And then again to shew, that they all had left the old sabbath to the unbelievers, and jointly chose to sanctify the day of the rising of their Lord, to this work.

They ‘came together to break bread,’ to partake of the super of the Lord. And what day so fit as the Lord’s day for this? This was to be the work of that day, to wit, to solemnize that ordinance among themselves, adjoining other solemn worship thereto, to fill up the day, as the following part of the verse shews. This day therefore was designed for this work, the whole day, for the text declares it. The first day of the week was set by them apart for this work.

‘Upon THE first day’; not upon A first day, or upon one first day, or upon such a first day; for had he said so, we had had from thence not so strong an argument for our purpose: but when he saith, ‘upon the first day of the week’ they did it, he insinuates, that it was their custom. [It was] also upon one of these, [that] Paul being among them, preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow. Upon the first day: what, or which first day of this, or that, of the third or fourth week of the month? No, but upon the first day, every first day; for so the text admits us to judge.

‘Upon the first day of the week, WHEN the disciples came together,’ supposes a custom when, or as they were wont to come together to perform such service among themselves to God: then Paul preached unto them, &c.

It is a text also that supposes an agreement among themselves as to this thing. They came together then to break bread; they had appointed to do it then, for that then was the day of their Lord’s resurrection, and that in which he himself congregated after he revived, with the first gospel church, the church at Jerusalem.

Thus you see, that breaking of bread, was the work, the work that by general consent was agreed to be by the churches

of the Gentiles performed upon the first day of the week. I say, by the churches; for I doubt not but that the practice here, was also the practice of the rest of the Gentile churches, even as it had been before the practice of the church at Jerusalem.

For this practice now did become universal, and so this text implies; for he speaks here universally of the practice of all disciples as such, though he limits Paul preaching to that church with whom he at present personally was. Upon the first day of the week, 'when the disciples came together to break bread,' Paul being at that time at Troas preached to them on that day.

Thus then you see how the Gentile churches did use to break bread, not on the old sabbath, but on the first day of the week. And, I say, they had it from the church at Jerusalem; where the apostles were first seated, and beheld the way of their Lord with their eyes.

Now, I say, since we have so ample an example, not only of the church at Jerusalem, but also of the churches of the Gentiles, for the keeping of the first day to the Lord, and that as countenanced by Christ and his apostles, we should not be afraid to tread in their steps, for their practice is the same with law and commandment. But,

Fifth, We will add to this another text. 'Now [saith Paul] concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come' (1 Cor 16:1,2).

This text some have greatly sought to evade, counting the duty here, on this day to be done, a duty too inferior for the sanction of an old seventh day sabbath; when yet to show mercy to an ass on the old sabbath, was a work which our Lord no ways condemns (Luke 13:15, 14:5).

But to pursue our design, we have a duty enjoined, and that of no inferior sort. If charity be indeed as it is, the very bond of perfectness: and if without it all our doings, yea and sufferings too, are not worthy so much as a rush (1 Cor 13; Col 3:14). we have here a duty, I say, that a seventh day sabbath, when in force, was not too big for it to be performed in.

The work now to be done, was, as you see, to bestow their charity upon the poor; yea, to provide for time to come. And I say, it must be collected upon the first day of the week. Upon THE first day; not A first day, as signifying one or two, but upon THE first day, even every first day; for so your ancient Bibles have it;²² also our later must be so understood, or else Paul had left them to whom he did write, utterly at a loss. For if he intended not every first day, and yet did not specify a particular one, it could hardly even have been understood which first day he meant. But we need not stand upon this. This work was a work for A first-day, for EVERY first day of the week.

Note again that we have this duty here commanded and enforced by an apostolical order: ‘I have given order,’ saith Paul, for this; and his orders, as he saith in another place, ‘are the commandments of the Lord.’ You have it in the same epistle (chap. 14:37).

Whence it follows, that there was given even by the apostles themselves, a holy respect to the first day of the week above all the days of the week; yea, or of the year besides.

²² The New Testament by Whittinghan, 1557; the Genevan or Puritan Bible by Knox, Coverdale, and others, 1560; and the New Testament revised by Tomson, 1576, very frequently reprinted, and very favourite translations among our puritan and pilgrim forefathers in the faith. The marginal note to the Puritan Bible, in Acts 20:7, ‘first day,’ is, ‘which we call Sunday. Of this place, and also of the 1 Corinthians 16:2, we gather that the Christians used to have their solemn assemblies this day, laying aside the ceremony of the Jewish sabbath.’—Ed.

Further, I find also by this text, that this order is universal. I have, saith he, given this order not only to you, but to the churches of Galatia. Consequently to all other that were concerned in this collection (2 Cor 8, 9, &c.).

Now this, whatever others may think, puts yet more glory upon the first day of the week. For in that all the churches are commanded, as to make their collections, so to make them on this day: what is it, but that this day, by reason of the sanction that Christ put upon it, was of virtue to sanctify the offering through and by Christ Jesus, as the altar and temple afore did sanctify the gift and gold that was, and was offered on them. The proverb is, 'The better day, the better deed.' And I believe, that things done on the Lord's day, are better done, than on other days of the week, in his worship.

Obj. But yet, say some, here are no orders to keep this first day holy to the Lord.

Ans. 1. That is supplied; for that by this very text this day is appointed, above all the days of the week, to do this holy duty in.

2.. You must understand that this order is but additional, and now enjoined to fill up that

the Puritan Bible, in Acts 20:7, 'first day,' is, 'which we call Sunday. Of this place, and also of the 1 Corinthians 16:2, we gather that the Christians used to have their solemn assemblies this day, laying aside the ceremony of the Jewish sabbath.'—Ed.

which was begun as to holy exercise of religious worship by the churches long before.

3. The universality of the duty being enjoined to this day, supposes that this day was universally kept by the churches as holy already.

4. And let him that scrupleth this, shew me, if he can, that God by the mouth of his apostles did ever command that all the

churches should be confined to this or that duty on such a day, and yet put no sanction upon that day; or that he has commanded that this work should be done on the first day of the week, and yet has reserved other church ordinances as a public solemnization of worship to him, to be done of another day, as of a day more fit, more holy.

5. If charity, if a general collection for the saints in the churches is commanded on this day, and on no other day but this day; for church collection is commanded on no other, there must be a reason for it: and if that reason had not respect to the sanction of the day, I know not why the duty should be so strictly confined to it.

6. But for the apostle now to give with this a particular command to the churches to sanctify that day as holy unto the Lord, had been utterly superfluous; for that they already, and that by the countenance of their Lord, and his church at Jerusalem, had done.

Before now, I say, it was become a custom, as by what hath been said already is manifest: wherefore what need that their so solemn a practice be imposed again upon the brethren? An intimation now of a continued respect thereto, by the very naming of the day, is enough to keep the sanctity thereof on foot in the churches. How much more then, when the Lord is still adding holy duty to holy duty, to be performed upon that day. So then, in that the apostle writes to the churches to do this holy duty on the first day of the week, he puts them in mind of the sanction of the day, and insinuates, that he would still have them have a due respect thereto.

Quest. But is there yet another reason why this holy duty should, in special as it is, be commanded to be performed on the first day of the week?

Ans. 1. Yes: for that now the churches were come together in their respective places, the better to agree about collections,

and to gather them. You know church worship is a duty, so long as we are in the world, and so long also is this of making collections for the saints. And for as much as the apostle speaks here, as I have hinted afore, of a church collection, when is it more fit to be done, than when the church is come together upon the first day of the week to worship God?

2. This part of worship is most comely to be done upon the first day of the week, and that at the close of that day's work. For thereby the church shows, not only her thankfulness to God for a sabbath day's mercy, but also returneth him, by giving to the poor, that sacrifice for their benefit that is most behoveful to make manifest their professed subjection to Christ (Prov 19:17; 2 Cor 9:12-15). It is therefore necessary, that this work be done on the first day of the week, for a comely close of the worship that we perform to the Lord our God on that day.

3. On the first day of the week, when the church is performing of holy worship unto God, then that of collection for the saints is most meet to be performed; because then, in all likelihood, our hearts will be most warm with the divine presence; consequently most open and free to contribute to the necessity of the saints. You know, that a man when his heart is open, is taken with some excellent thing; then, if at all, it is most free to do something for the promoting thereof.

Why, waiting upon God in the way of his appointments, opens, and makes free, the heart to the poor: and because the first day of the week was it in which now such solemn service to him was done, therefore also the apostle commanded, that upon the same day also, as on a day most fit, this duty of collecting for the poor should be done. 'For God loveth a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:6,7).

Wherefore the apostle by this, takes the churches as it were at the advantage, and as we say, [strikes] while the iron is hot,

to the intent he might, what in him lay, make their collections, not sparing nor of a grudging mind, but to flow from cheerfulness. And the first day

of the week, though its institution be set aside, doth most naturally tend to this; because it is the day, the only day, on which we received such blessings from God (Acts 3:26).

This is the day on which, at first, it rained manna all day long from heaven upon the new testament church, and so continues to do this day.

Oh! the resurrection of Christ, which was on this day, and the riches that we receive thereby. Though it should be, and is, I hope thought on every day; yet when the first of the week is fully come! Then to-day! This day! This is the day to be warmed; this day he was begotten from the dead.

The thought of this, will do much with an honest mind: this is the day, I say, that the first saints did find, and that after saints do find the blessings of God come down upon them; and therefore this is the day here commanded to be set apart for holy duties.

And although what I have said may be but little set by of some, yet, for a closing word as to this, I do think, could but half so much be produced from the day Christ rose from the dead quite down [to the end of revelation], for the sanction of a seventh day sabbath in the churches of the Gentiles, it would much sway with me. But the truth is, neither doth the apostle Paul, nor any of his fellows, so much as once speak one word to the churches that shows the least regard, as to conscience to God, of a seventh day sabbath more. No, the first day, the first day, the first day, is now all the cry in the churches by the apostles, for the performing church worship in to God. Christ began it on THAT day: then the Holy Ghost seconded it on that day: then the churches practised it on that day. And to conclude; the apostle by the command now under

consideration, continues the sanction of that day to the churches to the end of the world.

But as to the old seventh day sabbath, as hath been said afore in this treatise, Paul, who is the apostle of the Gentiles, has so taken away that whole ministration in the bowels of which it is; yea, and has so stript it of its old testament grandeur, both by terms and arguments, that it is strange to me it should by any be still kept up in the churches; specially, since the same apostle, and that at the same time, has put a better ministration in its place (2 Cor 3).

But when the consciences of good men are captivated with an error, none can stop them from a prosecution thereof, as if were itself of the best of truths.

Obj. But Paul preached frequently on the old sabbath, and that after the resurrection of Christ.

Ans. To the unbelieving Jews and their proselytes, I grant he did. But we read not that he did it to any new testament church on that day: nor did he celebrate the instituted worship of Christ in the churches on that day. For Paul, who had before cast out the ministration of death, as that which had no glory, would not now take thereof any part for new testament instituted worship; for he knew that that would veil the heart, and blind the mind from that, which yet instituted worship was ordained to discover.

He preached then on the seventh day sabbath, of a divine and crafty love to the salvation of the unbelieving Jews.

I say, he preached now on that day to them and their proselytes, because that day was theirs by their estimation. He did it, I say, of great love to their souls, that if possible, he might save some of them.

Wherefore, if you observe, you shall still find, that where it is said that he preached on that day, it was to that people, not to

the churches of Christ. See Acts 9:20, 13:14-16, 16:13, 17:1-3, 18:4.

Thus, though he had put away the sanction of that day as to himself, and had left the Christians that were weak to their liberty as to conscience to it, yet he takes occasion upon it to preach to the Jews that still were wedded to it, the faith, that they might be saved by grace.

Paul did also many other things that were Jewish and ceremonial, for which he had, as then, no conscience at all, as to any sanction that he believed was in them.

As his circumcising of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3).

His shaving of his head (Acts 18:18).

His submitting to Jewish purifications (Acts 21:24-26).

His acknowledging of himself a Pharisee (chap. 23:6).

His implicitly owning of Ananias for high priest after Christ was risen from the dead (Acts 23:1-5).

He tells us also that, 'unto the Jews he became as a Jew' that he might save the Jew. And 'without law,' to them that were without law, that also he might gain them. Yea, he became, as he saith, 'all things to all men,' that he might gain the more, as it is 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

But these things, as I said, he did not of conscience to the things; for he knew that their sanction was gone. Nor would he suffer them to be imposed upon the churches directly or indirectly; no, not by Peter himself (Gal 2:11).

Were I in Turkey with a church of Jesus Christ, I would keep the first day of the week to God, and for the edification of his people: and would also preach the word to the infidels on their sabbath day, which is our Friday; and be glad too, if I might have such opportunity to try to persuade them to a love of their own salvation.

Obj. But if the seventh day sabbath is, as you say, to be laid aside by the churches of the Gentiles, why doth Christ say to

his, 'Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day?' For, say some, by this saying it appears, that the old seventh day sabbath, as you have called it, will as to the sanction of it, abide in force after Christ is ascended into heaven.

Ans. I say first, these words were spoken to the Jewish Christians, not to the Gentile churches. And the reason of this first hint, you will see clearer afterwards.

The Jews had several sabbaths; as, their seventh day sabbath, their monthly sabbaths, their sabbath of years, and their jubilee (Lev 25).

Now if he means their ordinary sabbaths, or that called the seventh day sabbath, why doth he join the winter thereto? for in that he joineth the winter with that sabbath that he exhorteth them to pray their flight might not be in, it should seem that he meaneth rather their sabbath of years, or their jubilee, which did better answer one to another than one day and a winter could.

And I say again, that Christ should suppose that their flight should, or might last some considerable part of a winter, and yet that then they should have their rest on those seventh day sabbaths, is a little beside my reason, if it be considered again, that the Gentiles before whom they were then to fly, were enemies to their sabbath, and consequently would take opportunity at their sabbaths to afflict them so much the more. Wherefore, I would that they who plead for a continuation of the seventh day sabbath from this text, would both better consider it, and the incoherence that seems to be betwixt such a sabbath and a winter.

But again, were it granted that it is the seventh day sabbath that Christ here intendeth; yet, since as we have proved, the sanction before this was taken away; I mean before this flight should be, he did not press them to pray thus because by any

law of heaven they should then be commanded to keep it holy; but because some would, through their weakness, have conscience of it till then. And such would, if their flight should happen thereon, be as much grieved and perplexed, as if it yet stood obligatory to them by a law.

This seems to have some truth in it, because among the Jews that believed, there continued a long time many that were wedded yet to the law, to the ceremonial part thereof, and were not so clearly evangelized as the churches of the Gentiles were. 'Thou seest brother,' said James to Paul, 'how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law' (Acts 21:20, 15:5).

Of these, and such weak unbelieving Jews, perhaps Christ speaks, when he gives this exhortation to them to pray thus; whose consciences he knew would be weak, and being so, would bind when they were entangled with an error, as fast as if it bound by a law indeed.

Again, though the seventh day sabbath and ceremonies lost their sanction at the resurrection of Christ, yet they retained some kind of being in the church of the Jews, until the desolation spoken of by Daniel should be.

Hence it is said, that then the oblation and sacrifices shall cease (Dan 9:27). And hence it

is, that Jerusalem and the temple are still called the holy place, even until this flight should be (Matt 24:15).

Now if Jerusalem and the temple are still called holy, even after the body and substance, of which they were shadows, were come; then no marvel though some to that day that believed were entangled therewith, &c. For it may very well be supposed that all conscience of them would not be quite taken away, until all reason for that conscience should be taken away also. But when Jerusalem, and the temple, and the Jews' worship, by the Gentiles was quite extinct by ruins, then in

reason that conscience did cease. And it seems by some texts, that all conscience to them was not taken away till then.

Quest. But what kind of being had the seventh day sabbath, and other Jewish rites and ceremonies, that by Christ's resurrection were taken away?

Ans. These things had a virtual and a nominal being. As to their virtual being, that died that day Christ did rise from the dead, they being crucified with him on the cross (Col 2).

But now, when the virtual being was gone, they still with the weak retained their name, among many of the Jews that believed, until the abomination that maketh desolate stood in the holy place: for in Paul's time they were, as to that, but ready to vanish away.

Now, I say, they still retaining their nominal grandeur, though not by virtue of a law, they could not, till time and dispensation came, be swept out of the way. We will make what hath been said, as to this, out by a familiar similitude.

There is a lord or great man dies; now being dead, he has lost his virtual life. He has now no relation to a wife, to children, virtually; yet his name still abides, and that in that family, to which otherwise he is dead. Wherefore they embalm him, and also keep him above ground for many days. Yea, he is still revered by those of the family, and that in several respects. Nor doth any thing but time and dispensation wear this name away.

Thus then the Old Testament signs and shadows went off the stage in the church of Christ among the Jews. They lost their virtue and signification when Christ nailed them to his cross (Col 2). But as to their name, and the grandeur that attended that, it continued with many that were weak, and vanished not, but when the abomination that made them desolate came.

The sum then and conclusion of the matter is this; the seventh day sabbath lost its glory when that ministration in which it was, lost its: But yet the name thereof might abide a long time with the Jewish legal Christians, and so might become obligatory still, though not by the law, to their conscience, even as circumcision and other ceremonies did: and to them it would be as grievous to fly on that day, as if by law it was still in force.

For, I say, to a weak conscience, that law which has lost its life, may yet through their ignorance, be as binding as if it stood still upon the authority of God.

Things then become obligatory these two ways. (1.) By an institution of God. (2.) By the over-ruling power of a man's misinformed conscience. And although by virtue of an institution divine worship is acceptable to God by Christ, yet conscience will make that a man shall have but little ease if such rules and dictates as it imposes be not observed by him.

This is my answer, upon a supposition that the seventh day sabbath is in this text intended: and the answer, I think, stands firm and good.

Also, there remains, notwithstanding this objection, no divine sanction in or upon the old seventh day sabbath.

Some indeed will urge, that Christ here meant the first day of the week, which here he puts under the term of sabbath. But this is foreign to me, so I waive it till I receive more satisfaction in the thing.

Quest. But if indeed the first day of the week be the new christian sabbath, why is there no more spoken of its institution in the testament of Christ?

Ans. No more! What need is there of more than enough! Yea, there is a great deal found in the testament of the Lord Jesus to prove its authority divine.

(1.) For we have shewed from sundry scriptures, that from the very day our Lord did rise from the dead, the church at Jerusalem, in

which the twelve apostles were, did meet together on that day, and had the Lord himself for their preacher, while they were auditors; and thus the day began.

(2.) We have shewed that the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, did second this of Christ, in coming down from heaven upon this day to manage the apostles in their preaching; and in that very day so managed them in that work, that by his help they then did bring three thousand souls to God.

(3.) We have shewed also, that after this the gentile churches did solemnize this day for holy worship, and that they had from Paul both countenance and order so to do.

And now I will add, that more need not be spoken: for the practice of the first church, with their Lord in the head of them to manage them in that practice, is as good as many commands. What then shall we say, when we see a first practice turned into holy custom?

I say, moreover, that though a seventh day sabbath is not natural to man as man, yet our christian holy day is natural to us as saints, if our consciences are not clogged before with some old fables, or Jewish customs.

But if an old religion shall get footing and rooting in us, though the grounds thereof be vanished away, yet the man concerned will be hard put to it, should he be saved, to get clear of his clouds, and devote himself to that service of God which is of his own prescribing.

Luther himself, though he saw many things were without ground which he had received for truth, had yet work hard enough, as himself intimates, to get his conscience clear from all those roots and strings of inbred error.

But, I say, to an untainted and well bred Christian, we have good measure, shaken together, and running over, for our christian Lord's day. And I say again, that the first day of the week, and the spirit of such a Christian, suit one another as nature suiteth nature; for there is as it were a natural instinct in Christians, as such, when they understand what in a first day was brought forth, to fall in therewith to keep it holy to their Lord.

1. The first day of the week! Why it was the day of our life. 'After two days he will revive us,' and in the third day 'we shall live in his

sight.' 'After two days' there is the Jews' preparation, and seventh day sabbath, quite passed over; and in the third day, that is the first day of the week, which is the day our Lord did rise from the dead, we began to live by him in the sight of God (Hosea 6:2; John 20:1; 1 Cor 15:4).

2. The first day of the week! That is the day in which, as I hinted before, our Lord was wont to preach to his disciples after he rose from the dead; in which also he did use to shew them his hands and his feet (Luke 24:38,39; John 20:25). To the end they might be confirmed in the truth of his victory over death and the grave for them. The day in which he made himself known to them in breaking bread. The day in which he so plentifully poured out the Holy Ghost upon them. The day in which the church, both at Jerusalem and those of the Gentiles, did use to perform to God divine worship: all which has before been sufficiently proved. And shall we not imitate our Lord, nor the church that was immediately acted²¹ by him in this, and the churches their fellows? Shall, I say, the Lord Jesus do all this in his church, and they together with him! Shall the churches of the Gentiles also fall in with their Lord and with their mother at Jerusalem herein! And again, shall all this be so punctually committed to sacred story, with the day in

which these things were done, under denomination, over and over, saying, These things were done on the first day, on the first day, on the first day of the week, while all other days are, as to name, buried in everlasting oblivion! And shall we not take that notice thereof as to follow the Lord Jesus and the churches herein? Oh stupidity!

3. This day of the week! They that make but observation of what the Lord did of old, to as many sinners, and with his churches on this day, must needs conclude, that in this day the treasures of heaven were broken up, and the richest things therein communicated to his church. Shall the children of this world be, as to this also, wiser in their generations than the children of light, and former saints, upon whose

²¹ ‘Acted by,’ a mode of speech now obsolete; it means ‘actuated by’ or ‘influenced by.’—Ed.

shoulders we pretend to stand, go beyond us here also.

Jacob could by observation gather that the place where he lay down to sleep was no other but the house of God, and the very gate of heaven (Gen 28:17).

Laban could gather by observation, that the Lord blessed him for Jacob’s sake (Gen 30:27).

David could gather by what he met with upon Mount Moriah, that that was the place where God would have the temple builded, therefore he sacrificed there (1 Chron 21:26-28, 22:1,2; 2 Chron 3:1).

Ruth was to mark the place where Boaz lay down to sleep, and shall not Christians also mark the day in which our Lord rose from the dead (Ruth 3:4).

I say, shall we not mark it, when so many memorable things were done on it, for, and to and in the churches of God! Let saints be ashamed to think that such a day should be looked over, or counted common, when tempted to it by Satan, when [it was] kept to religious service of old, and when beautified

with so many divine characters of sanctity as we have proved, by Christ, his church, the Holy Ghost, and the command of apostolical authority it was.

But why, I say, is this day, on which our Lord rose from the dead, nominated as it is? why was it not sufficient to say 'he rose again,' or, he rose again the third day? without a specification of the very name of the day. For, as was said afore, Christ appeared to his disciples, after his resurrection, on other days also, yea, and thereon did miracles to. Why then did not these days live? Why was their name, for all that, blotted out, and this day only kept alive in the churches?

The day on which Christ was born of a virgin; the day of his circumcision, the day of his baptism, and of his transfiguration, are not by their names committed by the Holy Ghost to holy writ to be kept alive in the world, nor yet such days in which he did many great and wonderful things. But THIS day, this day is still nominated; the first day of the week is the day. I say, why are things thus left with us? But because we, as saints of old, should gather, and separate, what is of divine authority from the rest.

For in that this day is so often nominated while all other days lie dead in their graves, it is as much as if God should say, Remember the first day of the week to keep it holy to the Lord your God.

And set this aside, and I know not what reason can be rendered, or what prophecy should be fulfilled by the bare naming of the day.

When God, of old, did sanctify for the use of his church a day, as he did many, he always called them either by the name of the day of the month, or of the week, or by some other signal by which they might be certainly known, why should it not then be concluded, that for this very reason the first day of

the week is thus often nominated by the Holy Ghost in the testament of Christ?

Moreover, he that takes away the first day, as to this service, leaves us now no day, as sanctified of God, for his solemn worship to be by his churches performed in. As for the seventh day sabbath, that, as we have seen, is gone to its grave with the signs and shadows of the Old Testament. Yea, and has such a dash left upon it by apostolical authority, that it is enough to make a Christian fly from it for ever (2 Cor 3).

Now, I say, since that is removed by God: if we should suffer the first day also to be taken away by man, what day that has a divine stamp upon it, would be left for us to worship God in?

Alas! the first day of the week is the Christian's market day, that which they so solemnly trade in for sole provision for all the week following. This is the day that they gather manna in. To be sure the seventh day sabbath is not that. For of old the people of God could never find manna on that day. 'On the seventh day [said Moses] which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none' (Exo 16:26).

Any day of the week manna could be found, but on that day it was not to be found upon the face of the ground. But now our first day is the manna day; the only day that the churches of the New Testament, even of old, did gather manna in. But more of this anon.

How will it out of my mind but that it is a very high piece of ingratitude, and of uncomely behaviour, to deny the Son of God his day, the

Lord's day, the day that he has made. And as we have shewed already, this first day of the week is it; yea, and a great piece of unmannerliness is it too, for any, notwithstanding the old seventh day is so degraded as it is, to attempt to impose it on the Son of God. To impose a day upon him which yet Paul

denies to be a branch of the ministration of the Spirit, and of righteousness. Yea, to impose a part of that ministration which he says plainly 'which was done away,' for that a better ministration stript it of its glory, is a high attempt indeed (2 Cor 3).

Yet again, the apostle smites the teachers of the law upon the mouth, saying, 'understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm' (1 Tim 1:7).

The seventh day sabbath, was indeed God's rest from the works of creation; but yet the rest that he found in what the first day of the week did produce, for Christ was born from the dead on it, more pleased him than did all the seventh days that ever the world brought forth: wherefore, as I said before, it cannot be but that the well-bred Christian must set apart this day for solemn worship to God, and to sanctify his name therein.

Must the church of old be bound to remember that night in which they did come out of Egypt! must Jephtha's daughter have four days for the virgins of Israel yearly to lament her hard case in! Yea, must two days be kept by the church of old, yearly, for their being delivered from Haman's fury! And must not one to the world's end be kept by the saints for the Son of God their Redeemer, for all he has delivered them from a worse than Pharaoh or Haman, even from the devil, and death, and sin, and hell! Oh stupidity! (Exo 12:24; Judg 11:39,40; Esth 9:26-32).

A day! say some, God forbid but he should have a day. But what day? Oh! The old day comprised within the bounds and bowels of the ministration of death.

And is this the love that thou hast to thy Redeemer, to keep that day to him for all the service that he hath done for thee, which has a natural tendency in it to draw thee off from the

consideration of the works of thy redemption, to the creation of the world! Oh stupidity!

But why must he be imposed upon? Has he chosen that day? Did he finish his work thereon? Is there in all the New Testament of our Lord, from the day he rose from the dead, to the end of his holy book, one syllable that signifies in the least the tenth part of such a thing? where is the scripture that saith that this Lord of the sabbath commanded his church, from that time, to do any part of church service thereon? Where do we find the churches to gather together thereon?

But why the seventh day? What is it? Take but the shadow thereof away. Or what shadow now is left in it since its institution as to divine service is taken long since from it?

Is there any thing in the works that was done in that day, more than shadow, or that in the least tends otherwise to put us in mind of Christ; and he being come, what need have we of that shadow? And I say again, since that day was to be observed by a ceremonial method, and no way else, as we find; and since ceremonies have ceased, what way of divine appointment is there left to keep that old sabbath by Christians in?

If they say, ceremonies have ceased. By the same argument, so is the sanction of the day in which they were to be performed. I would gladly see the place, if it is to be found, where it is said, That day retains its sanction, which yet has lost that method of service which was of God appointed for the performance of worship to him thereon.

When Canaan worship fell, the sanction of Canaan fell. When temple worship, and altar worship, and the sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood fell, down also came the things themselves. Likewise so, when the service, or shadow and ceremonies of the seventh day sabbath fell, the seventh day sabbath fell likewise.

On the seventh day sabbath, as I told you, manna was not to be found. But why? For that that day was of Moses and of the ministration of death. But manna was not of him. Moses, saith Christ, 'gave you not that bread of heaven' (John 6:31,32). Moses, as was said, gave that sabbath in tables of stone, and God gave that manna from heaven. Christ, nor his Father, gives grace by the law; no not by that

law in which is contained the old seventh day sabbath itself.

The law is not of faith, why then should grace be by Christians expected by observation of the law? The law, even the law written and engraven in stones, enjoins perfect obedience thereto on pain of the curse of God. Nor can that part of it now under consideration, according as is required, be fulfilled by any man, was the ceremony thereto belonging, allowed to be laid aside (Isa 58:13). Never man yet did keep it perfectly, except he whose name is Jesus Christ: in him therefore we have kept it, and by him are set free from that law, and brought under the ministration of the Spirit.

But why should we be bound to seek manna on that day, on which God says, none shall be found.

Perhaps it will be said, that the sanction of that day would not admit that manna should be gathered on it.

But that was not all, for on that day there was none to be found. And might I choose, I had rather sanctify that day to God on which I might gather this bread of God all day long, then set my mind at all upon that in which no such bread was to be had.

The Lord's day, as was said, is to the Christians the principal manna day.

On this day, even on it manna in the morning very early was gathered by the disciples of our Lord, as newly springing out of the ground. The true bread of God: the sheaf of first fruits, which is Christ from the dead, was ordained to be waved

before the Lord on the morrow after the sabbath, the day on which our Lord ceased from his own work as God did from his (Lev 23).

Now therefore the disciples found their green ears of corn indeed! Now they read life, both in and out of the sepulchre in which the Lord was laid. Now they could not come together nor speak one to another, but either their Lord was with them, or they had heart enflaming tidings from him. Now cries one and says, The Lord is risen: And then another and says, He hath appeared to such and such.

Now comes tidings to the eleven that their women were early at the sepulchre, where they had a vision of angels that told them their Lord was risen: Then comes another and says, The Lord is risen indeed. Two also came from Emmaus and cried, We have seen the Lord: and by and by, while they yet were speaking, their Lord shows himself in the midst of them.

Now he calls to their mind some of their eminent passages of his life, and eats and drinks in their presence, and opens the scriptures to them: yea, and opens their understanding too, that their hearing might not be unprofitable to them; all which continued from early in the morning till late at night. Oh! what a manna day was this to the church. And more than all this you will find, if you read but the four evangelists upon this subject.

Thus began the day after the sabbath, and thus it has continued through all ages to this very day. Never did the seventh day sabbath yield manna to Christians. A new world was now begun with the poor church of God, for so said the Lord of the sabbath, 'Behold, I make all things new.' A new covenant, and why not then a new resting day to the church? Or why must the old sabbath be joined to this new ministration? let him that can, show a reason for it.

Christians, if I have not been so large upon things as some might expect; know, that my brevity on this subject is, from

consideration that must needs not be spoken thereto, and because I may have occasion to write a second part.

Christians, beware of being entangled with old testament ministrations, lest by one you be brought into many inconveniencies.

I have observed, that though the Jewish rites have lost their sanction, yet some that are weak in judgment, do bring themselves into bondage by them. Yea, so high have some been carried as to a pretended conscience to these that they have at last proceeded to circumcision, to many wives, and the observation of many bad things besides.

Yea, I have talked with some pretending to Christianity, who have said, and affirmed, as well as they could, that the Jewish sacrifices must up again.

But do you give no heed to these Jewish fables 'That turn from the truth' (Titus 1:14). Do you, I say, that love the Lord Jesus, keep

close to his testament, his word, his gospel, and observe HIS holy day.

And this caution in conclusion I would give, to put stop to this Jewish ceremony, to wit, That a seventh day sabbath pursued according to its imposition by law, (and I know not that it is imposed by the apostles) leads to blood and stoning to death those that do but gather sticks thereon (Num 15:32-36). A thing which no way becomes the gospel, that ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness (2 Cor 3). Nor yet the professors thereof (Luke 9:54-56).

Nor can it with fairness be said, that that sabbath day remains, although the law thereof is repealed. For confident I am, that there is no more ground to make such a conclusion, than there is to say, that circumcision is still of force, though the law for cutting of the uncircumcised is by the gospel made null and void.

I told you also in the epistle, that if the fifth commandment was the first that was with promise; then it follows, that the fourth, or that seventh day sabbath, had no promise entailed to it. Whence it follows, that where you read in the prophet of a promise annexed to a sabbath, it is best to understand it of our gospel sabbath (Isa 56).

Now if it be asked, What promise is entailed to our first day sabbath? I answer, The biggest of promises. For,

First, The resurrection of Christ was tied by promise to this day, and to none other. He rose the third day after his death, and that was the first day of the week, 'according' to what was fore-promised in the scriptures (Hosea 6:1,2; 1 Cor 15:3-6).

Second, That we should live before God by him, is a promise to be fulfilled on this day; 'After two days will he revive us: in the third day - we shall live in his sight' (Hosea 6:2). See also Isaiah 26:19 and compare them again with 1 Corinthians 15:4.

Third, The great promise of the new testament, to wit, the pouring out of the Spirit, fixeth upon these days; and so he began in the most wonderful effusion of it upon Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, that the scriptures might be fulfilled (Acts 2:16-19). Nor could these three promises be fulfilled upon any other days, for that the scripture had fixed them to the first day of the week.

I am of opinion that these things, though but briefly touched upon, cannot be fairly objected against, however they may be disrelished by some.

Nor can I believe, that any part of our religion, as we are Christians, stand in not kindling of fires, and not seething of victuals, or in binding of men not to stir out of those places on the seventh day, in which at the dawning thereof they were found. And yet these are ordinances belonging to that seventh day sabbath (Exo 16:23-29).

Certainly it must needs be an error to impose these things by divine authority upon new testament believers, our worship standing now in things more weighty, spiritual and heavenly.

Nor can it be proved, as I have hinted before, that this day was, or is to be imposed without those ordinances, with others in other places mentioned and adjoined, for the sanction of that day they being made necessary parts of that worship that was to be performed thereon.

I have charity for those that abuse themselves and their Lord, by their preposterous zeal and affection for the continuing of this day in the churches. For I conclude, that if they did either believe, or think of the incoherence that this day with its rites and ceremonies has with the ministration of the Spirit, our new testament ministration, they would not so stand in their own light as they do, nor so stiffly plead for a place for it in the churches of the Gentiles. But as Paul insinuates in other cases, there is an aptness in men to be under the law because they do not hear it (Gal 4).

Nor will it out of my mind, but if the seventh day sabbath was by divine authority, and to be kept holy by the churches of the Gentiles, it should not have so remained among the Jews, Christ's deadliest enemies, and have been kept so much hid from the believers, his best friends. For who has retained the pretended sanction of that day from Christ's time, quite down in the world, but the Jews, and a few Jewish Gentiles, I will except some. But, I say, since a sabbath is that without which the great worship of God

under the gospel cannot be well performed: how can it be thought, that it should as to the knowledge of it, be confined to so blasphemous a generation of the Jews, with whom that worship is not?

I will rather conclude, that those Gentile professors that adhere thereto are Jewified, legalized, and so far gone back

from the authority of God, who from such bondage has set his churches free.

I do at this time but hint upon things, reserving a fuller argument upon them for a time and place more fit; where, and when, I may perhaps also show, some other wild notions of those that so stiffly cleave to this.

Meantime, I entreat those who are captivated with this opinion, not to take it ill at my hand that I thus freely speak my mind. I entreat them also to peruse my book without prejudice to my person. The truth is, one thing that has moved me to this work, is the shame that has covered the face of my soul, when I have thought of the fictions and fancies that are growing among professors. And while I see each fiction turn itself to a faction, to the loss of that good spirit of love, and that oneness that formerly was with good men.

I doubt not but some unto whom this book may come, have had seal from God, that the first day of the week is to be sanctified by the church to Jesus Christ. Not only from his testimony, which is, and should be, the ground of our practice; but also, for that the first conviction that the Holy Ghost made upon their consciences, to make them know that they were sinners, began with them for breaking this sabbath day; which day, by that same spirit was told them, was that now called the first day, and not the day before, and the Holy Ghost doth not use to begin this work with a lie, which first conviction the Spirit has followed so close, with other things tending to complete the same work, that the soul from so good a beginning could not rest until it found rest in Christ. Let this then to such be a second token that the Lord's day is by them to be kept in commemoration of their Lord and his resurrection, and of what he did on this day for their salvation. Amen.

Note: I believe John Bunyan's arguments are good but I do not agree that the first Day of the week is The Christian Sabbath but rather the rest we have in the Lord Jesus. Now read the;

Fourth Commandment

by John Calvin

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR 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, &C.

28. The purport of the commandment is, that being dead to our own affections and works, we meditate on the kingdom of God, and in order to such meditation, have recourse to the means which he has appointed. But as this commandment stands in peculiar circumstances apart from the others, the mode of exposition must be somewhat different. Early Christian writers are wont to call it typical, as containing the external observance of a day which was abolished with the other types on the advent of Christ. This is indeed true; but it leaves the half of the matter untouched. Wherefore, we must look deeper for our exposition, and attend to three cases in which it appears to me that the observance of this commandment consists. First, under the rest of the seventh days the divine Lawgiver meant to furnish the people of Israel with a type of the spiritual rest by which believers were to cease from their own works, and allow God to work in them. Secondly he meant that there should be a stated day on which they should assemble to hear the Law, and perform religious rites, or which, at least, they should specially employ in meditating on his works, and be thereby trained to piety.

Thirdly, he meant that servants, and those who lived under the authority of others, should be indulged with a day of rest, and thus have some intermission from labour.

29. We are taught in many passages²³ that this adumbration of spiritual rest held a primary place in the Sabbath. Indeed, there is no commandment the observance of which the Almighty more strictly enforces. When he would intimate by the Prophets that religion was entirely subverted, he complains that his sabbaths were polluted, violated, not kept, not hallowed; as if, after it was neglected, there remained nothing in which he could be honoured. The observance of it he eulogises in the highest terms, and hence, among other divine privileges, the faithful set an extraordinary value on the revelation of the Sabbath. In Nehemiah, the Levites, in the public assembly, thus speak: “Thou madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.” You see the singular honour which it holds among all the precepts of the Law. All this tends to celebrate the dignity of the mystery, which is most admirably expressed by Moses and Ezekiel. Thus in Exodus: “Verily my sabbaths shall ye keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you. Ye shall keep my sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever does any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a

²³ Num. 13:22; Ezek. 20:12; 22:8; 23:38; Jer. 27:21, 22, 27; Isaiah 55:2; Neh. 9:14.

sign between me and the children of Israel for ever,” (Exodus 31:13–17). Ezekiel is still more full, but the sum of what he says amounts to this: that the sabbath is a sign by which Israel might know that God is their sanctifier. If our sanctification consists in the mortification of our own will, the analogy between the external sign and the thing signified is most appropriate. We must rest entirely, in order that God may work in us; we must resign our own will, yield up our heart, and abandon all the lusts of the flesh. In short, we must desist from all the acts of our own mind, that God working in us, we may rest in him, as the Apostle also teaches (Heb. 3:13; 4:3, 9).

30. This complete cessation was represented to the Jews by the observance of one day in seven, which, that it might be more religiously attended to, the Lord recommended by his own example. For it is no small incitement to the zeal of man to know that he is engaged in imitating his Creator. Should any one expect some secret meaning in the number seven, this being in Scripture the number for perfection, it may have been selected, not without cause, to denote perpetuity. In accordance with this, Moses concludes his description of the succession of day and night on the same day on which he relates that the Lord rested from his works. Another probable reason for the number may be, that the Lord intended that the Sabbath never should be completed before the arrival of the last day. We here begin our blessed rest in him, and daily make new progress in it; but because we must still wage an incessant warfare with the flesh, it shall not be consummated until the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: “From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord,” (Isaiah 66:23); in other words, when God shall be “all in all,” (I Cor. 15:28). It may seem, therefore, that by the seventh day the Lord delineated to his people the future perfection of his sabbath on the last day, that by continual

meditation on the sabbath, they might throughout their whole lives aspire to this perfection.

31. Should these remarks on the number seem to any somewhat far-fetched, I have no objection to their taking it more simply: that the Lord appointed a certain day on which his people might be trained, under the tutelage of the Law, to meditate constantly on the spiritual rest, and fixed upon the seventh, either because he foresaw it would be sufficient, or in order that his own example might operate as a stronger stimulus; or, at least to remind men that the Sabbath was appointed for no other purpose than to render them conformable to their Creator. It is of little consequence which of these be adopted, provided we lose not sight of the principal thing delineated—viz. the mystery of perpetual resting from our works. To the contemplation of this, the Jews were every now and then called by the prophets, lest they should think a carnal cessation from labour sufficient. Beside the passages already quoted, there is the following: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,” (Isaiah 58:13, 14). Still there can be no doubt, that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished. He is the truth, at whose presence all the emblems vanish; the body, at the sight of which the shadows disappear. He, I say, is the true completion of the sabbath: “We are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life,” (Rom. 6:4). Hence, as the Apostle elsewhere says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the

sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ,” (Col. 2:16, 17); meaning by body the whole essence of the truth, as is well explained in that passage. This is not contented with one day, but requires the whole course of our lives, until being completely dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days.

32. The two other cases ought not to be classed with ancient shadows, but are adapted to every age. The sabbath being abrogated, there is still room among us, first, to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the Word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and public prayer; and, secondly, to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour. It cannot be doubted that the Lord provided for both in the commandment of the Sabbath. The former is abundantly evinced by the mere practice of the Jews. The latter Moses has expressed in Deuteronomy in the following terms: “The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant;—that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou,” (Deut. 5:14). Likewise in Exodus, “That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed,” (Exod. 23:12). Who can deny that both are equally applicable to us as to the Jews? Religious meetings are enjoined us by the word of God; their necessity, experience itself sufficiently demonstrates. But unless these meetings are stated, and have fixed days allotted to them, how can they be held? We must, as the apostle expresses it, do all things decently and in orders (1 Cor. 14:40). So impossible, however, would it be to preserve decency and order without this politic arrangements that the dissolution of it would instantly lead to the disturbance and ruin of the Church. But if the reason for which the Lord appointed a sabbath to the

Jews is equally applicable to us, no man can assert that it is a matter with which we have nothing to do. Our most provident and indulgent Parent has been pleased to provide for our wants not less than for the wants of the Jews. Why, it may be asked, do we not hold daily meetings, and thus avoid the distinction of days? Would that we were privileged to do so! Spiritual wisdom undoubtedly deserves to have some portion of every day devoted to it. But if, owing to the weakness of many, daily meetings cannot be held, and charity will not allow us to exact more of them, why should we not adopt the rule which the will of God has obviously imposed upon us?

33. I am obliged to dwell a little longer on this because some restless spirits are now making an outcry about the observance of the Lord's day. They complain that Christian people are trained in Judaism, because some observance of days is retained. My reply is, That those days are observed by us without Judaism, because in this matter we differ widely from the Jews. We do not celebrate it with most minute formality, as a ceremony by which we imagine that a spiritual mystery is typified, but we adopt it as a necessary remedy for preserving order in the Church. Paul informs us that Christians are not to be judged in respect of its observance, because it is a shadow of something to come (Col. 2:16); and, accordingly, he expresses a fear lest his labour among the Galatians should prove in vain, because they still observed days (Gal. 4:10, 11). And he tells the Romans that it is superstitious to make one day differ from another (Rom. 14:5). But who, except those restless men, does not see what the observance is to which the Apostle refers? Those persons had no regard to that politic and ecclesiastical arrangement,²⁴ but by retaining the days as types

²⁴ N“Finem istum politicum et ecclesiasticum ordinem.”P—French, “la police et ordre en l’Eglise;” policy and order in the Church.

of spiritual things, they in so far obscured the glory of Christ, and the light of the Gospel. They did not desist from manual labour on the ground of its interfering with sacred study and meditation, but as a kind of religious observance; because they dreamed that by their cessation from labour, they were cultivating the mysteries which had of old been committed to them. It was, I say, against this preposterous observance of days that the Apostle inveighs, and not against that legitimate selection which is subservient to the peace of Christian society. For in the churches established by him, this was the use for which the Sabbath was retained. He tells the Corinthians to set the first day apart for collecting contributions for the relief of their brethren at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:2). If superstition is dreaded, there was more danger in keeping the Jewish sabbath than the Lord's day as Christians now do. It being expedient to overthrow superstition, the Jewish holy day was abolished; and as a thing necessary to retain decency, orders and peace, in the Church, another day was appointed for that purpose.

34. It was not, however, without a reason that the early Christians substituted what we call the Lord's day for the Sabbath. The resurrection of our Lord being the end and accomplishment of that true rest which the ancient sabbath typified, this day, by which types were abolished serves to warn Christians against adhering to a shadowy ceremony. I do not cling so to the number seven as to bring the Church under bondage to it, nor do I condemn churches for holding their meetings on other solemn days, provided they guard against superstition. This they will do if they employ those days merely for the observance of discipline and regular order. The whole may be thus summed up: As the truth was delivered typically to the Jews, so it is imparted to us without figure; first, that during our whole lives we may aim at a constant rest from our own works, in order that the Lord may work in us by

his Spirit; secondly that every individual, as he has opportunity, may diligently exercise himself in private, in pious meditation on the works of God, and, at the same time, that all may observe the legitimate order appointed by the Church, for the hearing of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and public prayer: And, thirdly, that we may avoid oppressing those who are subject to us. In this way, we get quit of the trifling of the false prophets, who in later times instilled Jewish ideas into the people, alleging that nothing was abrogated but what was ceremonial in the commandment,²⁵ (this they term in their language the taxation of the seventh day), while the moral part remains—viz. the observance of one day in seven.²⁶ But this is nothing else than to insult the Jews, by changing the day, and yet mentally attributing to it the same sanctity; thus retaining the same typical distinction of days as had place among the Jews. And of a truth, we see what profit they have made by such a doctrine. Those who cling to their constitutions go thrice as far as the Jews in the gross and carnal superstition of sabbatism; so that the rebukes which we read in Isaiah (Isa. 1:13; 58:13) apply as much to those of the present day,²⁷ as to those to whom the Prophet addressed them. We

²⁵ As to this liberty, See Socrates, Hist. Trip. Lib. 9 c. 38.

²⁶ French, “ne discernans entre le Dimanche et le Sabbath autrement, sinon que le septième jour estoit abrogé qu’on gardoit pour lors, mais qu’il on faloit, neantmoins garder un;”—making no other distinction between the Sunday and the Sabbath, save that the seventh day, which was kept till then, was abrogated, but that it was nevertheless necessary to keep some one day.

²⁷ French, “leur conviendroyent mieux;”—would be more applicable to them. as to those to whom the Prophet addressed them. We must be careful, however, to observe the general doctrine—viz. in order that religion may neither be lost nor languish among us, we must diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external aids which tend to promote the worship of God.

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Of the Circumstances of Public Worship

A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity John Gill

Book 3—Chapter 8

Of the Circumstances of Public Worship, as to Place and Time

The circumstances of "place" and "time" of public worship deserve consideration; since for public worship there must be some certain "place" to meet and worship in, and some stated "time" to worship at. As to the first of these, it may soon be dispatched; since there does not appear to be any place appointed for it until the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness. It is probable that there was some certain place where our first parents worshipped, after their expulsion from the garden of Eden; whither Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices, and offered them; but where it was is not easy to say; perhaps the cherubim and flaming sword, at the east of the garden of Eden, were the symbols of the divine presence, since the Lord is frequently represented as dwelling between the cherubim; which may have respect, as to the cherubim in the tabernacle and temple, so to these; and there might be a stream of light, splendour, and glory, an emblem of the Shekinah, or divine Majesty, which had then appeared in the form of a

flaming sword; and now near to this, or however in sight of it, might be the place of public worship; and hence when Cain was driven from these parts, he is said to be "hid from the face of God," and to go out "from the presence of the Lord," (Gen. 3:24, 4:3, 4, 14, 16). As for the patriarchs in succeeding times, before the flood, it does not appear that they had any other places to worship in but their own houses, where families might agree to meet, and worship in them in turn and course. And the patriarchs after the flood, as they were strangers, sojourners, and travellers in the earth; they built altars here and there for their convenience, and where they worshipped. Abraham in his travels came to a place near Bethel, as it was afterwards called, and built an altar, and worshipped; and on his return from Egypt he came to the same place again, and there worshipped as before (Gen. 12:8, 13:3, 4). Jacob, in his travels, came to a place called Luz, and where he remarkably enjoyed the divine presence, and thought it no other than the house of God, and therefore set up a stone for a pillar, and said it should be the house of God; and called the name of the place Bethel; and which God so honoured as to call himself by the name of the "God of Bethel;" and hither, with his family, he came many years after, and erected an altar unto God (Gen. 28:17-22, 31:13, 35:6, 7). There does not seem to be any settled place of worship until the tabernacle was built in the wilderness; and then every man was to bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and there offer it, before the tabernacle of the Lord (Lev. 17:4, 5), and this tabernacle was moveable from place to place; not only while in the wilderness, but when the Israelites were come into the land of Canaan: it was first at Gilgal, then at Shiloh, after that at Nob and Gibeon; hence the Lord says, he had not dwelt in an house, in any fixed place, from the time the Israelites came out

of Egypt; as if he had before²⁸; but had walked in a tent, in a tabernacle (2 Sam. 7:6). It had been said by the Lord, that when the Israelites came into the land that was given them, there would be a place chosen of God to dwell in, and where all offerings were to be brought, and feasts kept (Deut. 12:10, 11), the name of the place was not mentioned, but it eventually appeared, that the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there, were meant; and the place where the temple was to be built was first discovered by David, and shown to Solomon; and which was confirmed to him by the Lord himself, to be the place he had chosen for an house of sacrifice (1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 7:12), and this continued a place of worship until destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity it was rebuilt, and remained to the times of Christ. Indeed, after the captivity, there were synagogues erected in various parts of the land of Judea, which were a sort of chapels of ease, where prayer was made, and Moses and the prophets read and expounded on Sabbath days; but no sacrifices were offered in them, nor any of the yearly feasts kept there: and whereas there had been, before the times of Christ, there still was a controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, whether the temple at Jerusalem or mount Gerizzim, were the place of worship; this was decided by our Lord, who declared that the time was coming, that neither at the one place nor at the other, should God be worshipped; but everywhere (John 4:20, 21), as the apostle also says (1 Tim. 2:8), and, indeed, since, under the gospel dispensation, as was foretold, the name of the Lord should be great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun to the going down of it; and offerings of prayer and praise should be offered to him in every place (Mal. 1:11). No one place could be fixed on for all the

28 See my Note on 1 Chron. xvii. 5. See Gill on "1 Chron. 17:1

nations of the earth to meet and worship in; and saints are now therefore at liberty to build places of worship for their convenience wherever they please, as the first Christians did, and continued to do.

But the circumstance of "time," or a stated day of worship, requires more particular consideration; it having been a matter of controversy which has exercised the minds of good and learned men, for a century or two past, and not yet decided to the satisfaction of all parties; and in order to obtain what satisfaction we can, it will be proper to inquire,

1. What day has been, or is observed, as a stated time of public worship; with the reasons thereof. And,

1a. First, it has been thought and asserted, that the seventh day from the creation was enjoined Adam in a state of innocence, as a day of public and religious worship, and so to be observed by his posterity in after times; but if it was enjoined Adam in his state of innocence, it must be either by the law of nature, written on his heart, or by a positive law given him.

1a1. First, it does not seem to be the law of nature written on his heart; for then,

1a1a. He must be bound to keep a Sabbath before the institution of it; he was created on the sixth day, after the image of God; one part of which was the law of nature, written on his heart; but the institution of the Sabbath day was not until the seventh day, if it was then; for it is yet a matter of question.

1a1b. There would have been some remains of it in his posterity after the fall; and even among the Gentiles, for these have the "law written in their hearts," (Rom. 2:14) but now it does not appear that they were ever directed by the law and light of nature to observe the seventh day of the week as an holy Sabbath; what has been alleged in favour of it will be considered hereafter.

1a1c. Was this the case, it would have been reinscribed with other laws in more legible characters on the hearts of God's people in regeneration, according to the promise in the covenant of grace (Heb. 8:10), and had the law of the seventh day Sabbath been one of them, it must easily have been discerned by them; and the observance of it would have been out of question. Nor,

1a2. Secondly, does it seem to be enjoined Adam, by any positive law; and, indeed, if it had been written on his heart, as a branch of the law of nature, there would have been no need of any such law to have directed and instructed him; and to have a positive law given him, to keep a seventh day Sabbath, without any positive rules and directions what worship should be observed by him on that day, which do not appear, the law would have been useless; we have no account of any positive law given to Adam in a state of innocence, but that which forbade eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which tree, and its fruit, we know nothing of; and did we, that law would not be binding upon us. The proof of such a law, with respect to the Sabbath, is founded,

1a2a. On Genesis 2:2, 3, where it is said, that God having ended his work, "rested on the seventh day, and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it". But,

1a2a1. No mention is made of a Sabbath, and of the sanctification of that, as in the fourth command (Ex. 20:11), only of the seventh day, and not of that as a Sabbath.

1a2a2. The words are a narrative of what God did himself; but do not contain a precept of what Adam should do; they only declare what God did, that he blessed and sanctified the seventh day; but do not enjoin Adam to keep it holy, as a Sabbath.

1a2a3. At most they seem only to design a destination of that day to holy service hereafter; God "blessed" it, that is,

pronounced it an happy day; all his works being finished, and man, an holy creature, the crown and glory of all, made after his image²⁹: on a survey of which, God rested, and took delight, pleasure, and refreshment in them, on the seventh day; which he "sanctified," not by keeping it holy himself, nor by imparting any holiness to it, which a day is not capable of; but he separated, or set it apart for holy use in after time, which is a very common sense of this word: so Jeremiah was sanctified before he was born; that is, appointed and ordained to be a holy prophet; which purpose was not carried into execution until some time after; and so God might be said to sanctify or set apart in his mind and purpose the seventh day to be an holy Sabbath in future time; though it was not actually executed, as it should seem by what will be hereafter observed, until many hundred years after the creation. Besides,

1a2a4. The words in Genesis 2:2, 3, are understood by many learned men proleptically, or by way of anticipation; as other things are in this same chapter; so some places are called by the names they bore in the times of Moses, which they had not from the beginning (see Gen. 2:11-14); or the words may be considered as in a parenthesis; and the rather, since had they been read, or to be read, in common with the preceding, the word "God," and the phrase the "seventh day," would have been omitted; and have been read, "and he blessed and sanctified it;" and the reason for it, which follows, seems manifestly taken from the fourth command, as given on Mount Sinai (Ex. 20:11), and Moses writing his history of the creation, after this precept was given, took the opportunity of inserting this whole passage, to give the greater sanction to it with the Israelites.

²⁹ Vid. Heidegger. Hist. Patriarch. Exercit. 3. s. 58. p. 109.

1a2a5. After all, be it that the text in Genesis enjoins the keeping the seventh day from the creation as a Sabbath; which seventh day now cannot be known by any people or persons whatever, it could never be the same with the Jewish seventh day Sabbath; for that was to be observed after six days labour of man; "Six days shalt thou labour," &c. whereas this could be only after the six days labour of God, who rested from his work on the seventh; but it was Adam's first day, and could not with any propriety be called a rest from labour to him, when, as yet, he had not laboured at all: such a Sabbath was not suitable to him in a state of innocence, which supposes imperfection and sin; the creature would not have been in bondage had he not sinned, this was the effect of the fall; Adam, in innocence, had no manservant nor maidservant, nor any cattle in a state of bondage, groaning under burdens, to rest from their labours. This is a law merely calculated for sinful man.

1a2b. The other remaining proof of such a law so early is taken from Hebrews 4:3, 4, where no mention is made of a seventh day Sabbath; and in which the apostle takes notice of the several rests which had been under the former dispensation, and shows, that neither of them was the rest promised, and had, under the gospel dispensation: not the seventh day rest from the creation, for that was God's rest: not the rest of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, which Joshua gave them; for then David, a long time after, would not have spoken of another day of rest, the gospel dispensation, into which believers now enter. Upon the whole, it must appear at least very dubious and uncertain, that there was any institution of a seventh day Sabbath from the creation; and especially when it is considered,

1b. Secondly, that there is no proof of the patriarchs from Adam to the times of Moses observing such a day. For,

1b1. We nowhere read of any law being given them for the observation of the seventh day Sabbath; Adam and Eve had a law which forbid the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; which Tertullian calls the primordial law; Abel was taught the law of sacrifices; Noah had the laws which forbid eating the blood with the flesh of a beast alive, and the shedding of human blood; and Abraham the law of circumcision; but neither of them had any law, as we know of, which enjoined them to observe the seventh day Sabbath. The Jews pretend that there were seven laws given to the sons of Noah; but this of keeping the seventh day Sabbath is not among them.

1b2. Many of the religious actions of the patriarchs are taken notice of, and commended, both ceremonial and moral; as their offering of sacrifice, calling on the name of the Lord, prayer to God, and meditation on him and his works their piety, fear of God, and eschewing evil; but not a word of their observance of a seventh day Sabbath.

1b3. The sins of men, both before and after the flood, are observed, but Sabbath breaking does not appear among them. The old world was full of violence, rapine, and oppression; and in the new world, intemperance, incest, idolatry, and other sins, men were chargeable with; but not with this: it does not appear among the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah; nor is it to be found among the abominations for which the old inhabitants of Canaan were cast out of it. But no sooner was the law of the Sabbath given to the Israelites in the wilderness, but we hear of the breach of it, and of a severe punishment of it.

1b4. It was the general opinion of the ancient fathers of the Christian church, that the patriarchs did not observe a Sabbath, nor were obliged to it; but were righteous men, and saved without it: not Adam, nor Abel, nor Enock, nor Noah, nor Melchizedek, nor Lot, nor Abraham, nor Job, nor any before

Moses; so say Justin Martyr³⁰, Irenaeus³¹, Tertullian³², and Eusebius³³; by whom are mentioned particularly all the above persons, as good men, and non-observers of a Sabbath. Some have fancied that they have found instances of a seventh day Sabbath observed in the time of the patriarchs; as at the offerings of Cain and Abel, which are said to be "in process of time," or "at the end of days," (Gen. 4:3) but this phrase seems to design, not the end of a week, or seven days, no number being expressed, but rather the end of a year, days being sometimes put for a year³⁴; and so refers to the harvest, at the end of the year, when the fruits of the earth were gathered in; and therefore Cain might think his sacrifice, at that time, would have been the more acceptable. And some conjecture a Sabbath was observed by Noah, in the ark (Gen. 8:10, 12), since he is said to send out the dove again after seven days; but this number seven has respect, not to the first day of the week, from whence the days were numbered; but the first sending out of the dove, be it on what day it may. And besides, Noah might have respect to the known course of the moon, which puts on another face every seven days³⁵; and which, in its increase and wane, might have an influence upon the water, which he was careful to observe and make trial of this way. Moreover, it is

³⁰ Dialog. cum Trypho. p. 236, 240, 241, 245, 261, 319.

³¹ Adv. Haeres. l. 4. c. 30.

³² Adv. Judaeos, c. 2, 3, 4.

³³ Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 2, 4. Demonstr. Evangel. l. 1. c. 6. & Praepar. Evangel. l. 7. c. 6. p. 304.

³⁴ Vid. Heidegger. Hist. Patriarch. Exercitat. 5. s. 18. p. 178.

³⁵ Ibid. Exercitat. 18. s. 32. p. 562.

observed, that in Job's time there was a day when the sons of God met together (Job 1:6, 2:1), but who these sons of God were, whether angels or men, is not certain; nor where, nor on what day they met; no mention is made of a seventh day, much less of a Sabbath; nor of a certain rotation of this day every week; nor of the distance between the first and second meeting. Arguments from this, and the above instances, must be very farfetched, and are very slight and slender grounds to build such an hypothesis upon, as the observation of a seventh day Sabbath.

1c. Thirdly, there is no mention of a Sabbath before the descent of the manna in the wilderness of Sin: some of the Jewish writers³⁶ speak of it as given at Marah, a few weeks before, which they suppose is included in the word "statute," (Ex. 15:25) but this is said without any foundation; but the seventh day from the descent of the manna is expressly called a "Sabbath," (Ex. 16:23-26) and is the first we hear of, and which appears to be quite a new thing; for had the Israelites been used to a seventh day Sabbath, the rulers of the people might easily have conjectured, that the reason of twice as much bread being gathered on the sixth day, was on the account of the Sabbath being the day following, as a provision for that, had that been the case, without coming to tell Moses of it, who gave this as a reason of it to them; "Tomorrow is," or rather it should be supplied, "shall be, the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord;" for a "tomorrow" cannot be spoken of with propriety in the present tense, "is;" but as future, "shall be;" and therefore on the seventh day, when the manna ceased, which was a confirmation of it, he says to them, "see," take notice of it, as something new and wonderful, and a sufficient

³⁶ T. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Zuta, p. 101. Ed. Meyer. Yalkut, par. 1 fol. 73. 2, 3.

reason of the institution of the Sabbath, and why that day was given unto them for a Sabbath; and when the fourth command was given, a month after, it is introduced with a "memento," as the other commands are not; "Remember," what had been lately enjoined them; and that appears to be a new law; for when a man was found the breach of it, no penalty being as yet people brought him to Moses, and he was put into the ward, until the mind of God was known concerning it (Num. 15:31-36). Moreover, if there had been a Sabbath before the giving of the manna, the Sabbath preceding the seventh day from the descent of that, must have been the fifteenth of the month, on which day it is certain the Jews had a wearisome journey, by divine appointment, the cloud going before them (Ex. 16:1), and was concluded with gathering quails; so that it was not a day of rest to them, nor the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord.

1d. Fourthly, the seventh day Sabbath, as it was declared on the descent of the manna, that it was peculiar to the Jews; "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath;--so the people rested the seventh day" (Ex. 16:29, 30). Song it was when it received a further sanction from the fourth precept of the decalogue. For,

1d1. The whole decalogue, or ten commands of the law of Moses, as such, were given to the Jews only³⁷; as a covenant, it was made with the Israelites in the wilderness, and not even with their fathers, which were before them; and in which respect they had the preference to all other nations on earth, as Moses affirms (Deut. 5:2-21, 4:6-8), and as is affirmed by David (Ps. 147:19, 20) and by the apostle Paul, (Rom. 9:4), and which appears from the preface to the decalogue; "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" which cannot be said of any other nation.

³⁷ Vid. Zanchii. Oper. tom. 4. l. 1. c. 11. p. 222, 223.

1d2. The fourth command is particularly and expressly declared as peculiar to them; "My Sabbaths shall ye keep," saith the Lord; "for it is a sign between me and you," and not others (Ex. 31:13), that is, of the national covenant between them. The same is repeated (Ex. 31:16, 17), where the children of Israel, as distinct from all other nations to whom it was no sign, are directed to keep the Sabbath. Song Nehemiah says, that when God spoke to the Israelites in the wilderness, he made "known to them his holy Sabbath;" which it seems had not been made known unto them before; but now was made known to them, and not to others; and is mentioned along with peculiar precepts, statutes, and laws commanded them (Neh. 9:14), and the prophet Ezekiel, from the Lord, tells the Jews, that the Lord had "given," to their fathers in the wilderness, his "Sabbaths, to be a sign between him and them;" it is not said he restored them, but "gave" them, denoting a new institution, and as peculiarly belonging to them: and this is the sense of the Jewish nation in general³⁸, that the Sabbath only belongs to them, and that the Gentiles are not obliged to keep it; for though a Gentile proselyte or stranger within the gate, for the sake of national decorum, and to avoid offence and scandal, was to do no work on it for an Israelite, yet he might for himself, as the Jews interpret it³⁹; but then this supposes, that a stranger not within the gate, was not obliged to observe it. Besides, some of the Jewish writers understand this stranger, or proselyte, of a proselyte of righteousness, who was under equal obligation to the commands of the law as a Jew.

³⁸ Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. s. 1.

³⁹ T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosephot Yebamot, art. 84. Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 20. s. 14.

1d3. The time and place when and where this precept was given, with the reason of it, show that it was peculiar to the Jews; it was given them in the wilderness, after they were come out of Egypt; and their deliverance from thence is expressly observed, as the reason why it was commanded them (Deut. 5:15). The Lord's resting on the seventh day from his works of creation, is used as an argument to enforce the keeping of the seventh day Sabbath, now enjoined; but not as a reason of the institution of it.

1d4. None but Jews were ever charged with the breach of the seventh day Sabbath; the children of Israel were charged with it in the wilderness, soon after it was enjoined them (Ezek. 20:20, 21, 23, 24), so in Nehemiah's time, though the Tyrians, who sold fish to the Jews on Sabbath days, were threatened, and shut out of the city, and forbid to come there with their goods; yet it was the Jews who bought them, who are charged with the profanation of the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15-20), and it was the sense of the Jews, that the Gentiles are not to be punished for the breach of it; yea, rather, that they are punishable for keeping it⁴⁰; they having no other laws binding upon them: but the seven laws they speak of, as given to the sons of Noah.

1d5. The law of observing the seventh day Sabbath is not of a moral nature; was it, it would be binding on all mankind, Jews and Gentiles; and could not have been dispensed with, nor abolished, as it is (Matthew 12:1-12; Col. 2:16, 17), and if such, as has been observed, it must have been written on the heart of Adam, when created; and would be, not only reinscribed on the hearts of regenerate men, but even the work of it would appear to be written on the hearts of Gentiles, as

⁴⁰ T. Bab. Betza, fol. 16. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 58. 2. & 59. 1. Bemigdar Rabb. fol. 234. 4. Maimon. Hilchot, Melachim, c. 10. s. 9.

their consciences would bear witness; whereas it does not appear. Some, indeed, pretend to say, that the seventh day of the week was reckoned holy with the Gentiles; but of all the instances produced from Clemens and Eusebius, there is but one now extant among the poets, and that is in Hesiod; and the seventh day he speaks of as holy, is not the seventh day of the week, but the seventh day of the month, the birthday of Apollo, as the poet himself suggests, and the Scholiasts⁴¹ on him; which was the seventh day of the month Thargelion, kept sacred at Athens on that account; hence Apollo was called Ebdomegena⁴². As for the Jews' seventh day Sabbath, the Heathen writers⁴³ speak of it as having its origin from Moses, and as peculiar to the Jews⁴⁴, and the day itself was held by them in the utmost contempt (see Lam. 1:7); there is scarce a poet of their⁴⁵ but has a lash at it, and at the Jews on account of it; and represent them as a parcel of idle people, who keep that day to indulge themselves in sloth; the principal day of the week sacred with the Gentiles, was the first day of the week, dedicated to the sun, and from thence called Sunday: so that if any argument can be drawn from the observation of the heathens, it is in favour of the Christian, and not of the Jewish Sabbath.

1d6. It is impracticable and impossible, that a seventh day Sabbath should be kept by all people, in all nations of the

⁴¹ Proclus & Moschepulus in *ibid.*

⁴² Plutarch. *Sympos.* l. 8. c. 1.

⁴³ Justin e Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. Tacit. *Hist.* l. 5. c. 4.

⁴⁴ *Cultaque Judaeo septima Sacra viro,* Ovid. *de arte amandi*, l. 1.

⁴⁵ Juvenal. *Satyr.* 6. v. 158. *Satyr.* 14. v. 105, 106. Pers. *Satyr.* 5. v. 184. Martial. l. 4. ep. 4. vid. Senecam apud Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, l. 6. c. 11.

world, at the same time exactly and precisely. It was and could only be observed by the Jews themselves, when they were together under a certain meridian; it cannot be kept now by them, as they are scattered about in distant parts of the world, with any precision, at the same time; such an hypothesis proceeds upon a false notion that the earth is plain, and has everywhere the same horizon, and is not globular, nor having horizons, and meridians, and degrees of longitude different in every place and country; which latter is most certainly true. If the earth is a globe, consisting of two hemispheres, when it is day on one side of the globe, it is night on the other; so that let the Sabbath begin at what time you please; if from sun setting, as the Jews begin theirs, and continue it to sun setting the next day; when it is sun setting with us, it is sunrising with those in the other hemisphere; and so "vice versa;" and if it is begun at midnight, and continued to midnight, as with us; when it is midnight on one side the globe, it will be midday, or noon, on the other: so in each case there must be half a day's difference in the exact time of the Sabbath; and according to the variations in horizons, meridians, and longitudes, will the day differ. If therefore the earth is a globe, as it is certain, it is; and as horizons, meridians, and longitudes differ, as they most certainly do, then it is impossible that the same exact precise time should be every where kept; and God has never commanded that which is impossible. Besides, it may be observed, that in Greenland, and other northern countries, for several months together, there is no sun rising nor sun setting, and so no days to be distinguished that way, the sun being at such a time always above the horizon; so that a Sabbath day, consisting of twenty four hours, or of a day and a night, cannot be observed in such parts of the world; nay, it has been made to appear, that one and the same day, at one and the same place, may be Friday, Saturday, and what is called Sunday. Supposing

a Turk, whose Sabbath is Friday, and a Jew, whose Sabbath is Saturday, and a Christian, whose Sabbath is the first day of the week, dwell together; the Turk and the Christian set out on their travels at the same time, leaving the Jew where he was; the Turk by travelling westward loses a day, and the Christian travelling eastward gets one; so that both compassing the world, and meeting together again at the same place, the Jew continuing where he was, the same day will be Friday to the Turk, a Saturday to the Jew, and Sunday to the Christian; so Dr. Hevlin⁴⁶. Those that travel round the world westward, it is observed by others⁴⁷, as this makes their days longer, so they find fewer in compassing the globe, losing one day in tale, though they lose no time; so that if the Sabbath of their nation was the seventh, they would find it their sixth on their return: and those that travel eastward, as their days are shorter, are more in number, and gain one in tale; and on their return, would find their eighth, or first day of the week, to be the nation's Sabbath. Song there would be three Sabbaths kept in a nation, and all exactly observing time. It may be said, the same objection will lie against the first day as the seventh. It is granted; but then we observe that on another footing, as will be seen presently.

1e. Fifthly, the first day of the week, or Lord's day, is now the day of worship observed by the generality of Christians; upon what account, and by what authority, must be our next inquiry. Not by virtue of any positive precept, or express command of Christ, for which there is none; wherefore some

⁴⁶ Plutarch. Sympos. l. 8. c. 1.

⁴⁷ See Dr. Watts's Holiness of Times, &c. p. 55.

great and good men, as Calvin⁴⁸, Beza⁴⁹, Zanchius⁵⁰, and others, have been of opinion that it was a matter of pure choice, in the first churches, and a branch of their Christian liberty; who were left free, as to choose a place where, so the time when to worship; and therefore fixed on this day, and substituted it in the room of the Jewish Sabbath, antiquated, as being most proper and suitable, and having the sanction of an apostolic practice; to which I have been inclined to agree; only cannot but be of opinion, that the practice and examples of the apostles of Christ, men respired by the Holy Spirit, who wrote, taught, and practised no other than agreeable to "the commandments of the Lord," (Matthew 28:20; 1 Cor. 14:37) carry in them the nature, force, and obligation of a precept. So though there is no express command for infant baptism, yet had it been countenanced, as it has not been, by the like practice and examples of the apostles, we should have judged it our duty to have followed such a practice and such examples; it is upon this footing we observe the first day of the week, as being

1e1. The most proper and suitable day for divine worship; as the change of the day of worship was necessary, there being a new dispensation, and new ordinances of divine service; and to testify to the world our faith of Christ's coming, death, and resurrection from the dead no day was so proper as the first day of the week, which immediately followed upon, and was the next remove from the seventh day Sabbath, now abrogated; so that the Christian church was never without a day of worship, pointed at so early by the practice of the apostles, who met that

⁴⁸ Institut. 1. 2. c. 8. s. 34.

⁴⁹ Confess. Fidei. c. 5. s. 41.

⁵⁰ In Precept. 4. tom. 4. p. 670.

very first day of the week on which Christ rose from the dead; and which further shows the propriety and suitableness of this day as a day of rest; Christ had now finished the great work of our redemption and salvation; and so ceased from his work, as God did from his; and it may be further observed, that after our Lord's resurrection from the dead, we never read, throughout the whole New Testament, that ever the Jews' seventh day Sabbath was kept by any Christian assembly; only the first day of the week. Song that,

1e2. The observation of this day is confirmed by the practice and examples of the disciples of Christ, and of the first churches; for,

1e2a. On the very day Christ rose from the dead, which was the first day of the week, the disciples assembled together, and Christ appeared in the midst of them, and by his gracious presence and divine instructions, showed his approbation of their thus meeting together, and encouraged them to it; and on that day week they met again, and Christ again stood in the midst of them; now though there had been a seventh day preceding this, the disciples did not assemble on that day, but on this, and Christ with them (John 20:19, 29).

1e2b. The apostles met together on the day, of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, as has been proved by many learned writers. Just before our Lord's ascension, he ordered his disciples to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Spirit; and though there were two Jewish seventh day Sabbaths before Pentecost, from the time of his ascension, yet it does not appear that they met together on either of them; but on this day they did; and it looks as if they had an order from Christ to meet on it, and a promise from Christ that they should then have the Spirit descend upon them; and therefore it seems they were waiting for that day, in expectation of having the promise fulfilled on and hence it is said, "When the day of Pentecost

was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," (Acts 2:1) and this day was honoured and confirmed by the miraculous effusion of the Spirit, by preaching the gospel to men of all nations, and by the conversion and baptism of three thousand persons.

1e2c. It was on the first day of the week that the disciples at Troas met together to break bread, when Paul preached unto them (Acts 20:7). Now he had been there seven days before, so that there must have been in that time a seventh day Sabbath of the Jews; but it does not appear that he and they assembled on that day; but only on the first, and that for religious worship, he, to break bread to celebrate the Supper of the Lord, and they, to hear him preach.

1e2d. The apostle Paul gave orders to the church at Corinth, as he had to the churches of Galatia, to make a collection for the poor saints on the first day of the week, when met together (1 Cor. 16:1, 2) which shows that it was usual to meet on that day; yea, it implies an order, or the renewal and confirmation of an order, to meet on that day, or otherwise how should the collection be made on it; and what day so proper as when the saints meet for divine worship, and their hearts are warmed and refreshed with the word and ordinances. In an ancient copy, mentioned by Beza on the place, after "the first day of the week," it is added, by way of explanation, the "Lord's day;" and also in others⁵¹; and so Jerome⁵² explains it.

1e2e. This is the day John means by the "Lord's day," when he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," (Rev. 1:10) he speaks of it as then a well known name of it; so called because Christ rose from the dead on it; in commemoration of which it

⁵¹ Vid. Mill. in loc.

⁵² Adv. Vigilantium Oper. tom. 2. fol. 42.

was kept, and in which his gospel was preached and ordinances administered; for it was now upwards of sixty years from the resurrection of Christ to John's being an exile in Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation; and this day was observed as a day of religious worship in the earliest ages of Christianity. Ignatius⁵³, who died but eight or ten years after the apostle John, says, "Let us keep the Lord's day, on which our Life arose." And Justin Martyr⁵⁴, a few years after him, says, on the day commonly called Sunday (by the heathens, meaning the first day of the week) all met together in city and country for divine worship. Dionysius of Corinth, speaks of the Lord's day as an holy day⁵⁵, and Clemens of Alexandria⁵⁶, in the same century, observes, that he that truly keeps the Lord's day glorifies the resurrection of the Lord. Tertullian⁵⁷, in the beginning of the third century, speaks of the acts of public worship, as "Lord's day solemnities". And in the same century Origen⁵⁸ and Cyprian⁵⁹ make mention of the first day as the "Lord's day," and the time of worship; and so it has been in all ages to the present time.

⁵³ Ad Magnes. p. 35.

⁵⁴ Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99.

⁵⁵ Apud Euseb. l. 4. c. 23. Irenaeus, l. 5. c. 24.

⁵⁶ Stromat. l. 7. p. 744.

⁵⁷ Deut. Anima, c. 9.

⁵⁸ Homil. 5. in Esaiam, fol. 104. 3. et alibi.

⁵⁹ Ep. 33. p. 66. & Ep. 58. p. 138.

Summation

Now upon the whole, since it does not appear that a seventh day Sabbath was enjoined Adam in innocence; nor that the patriarchs ever observed it; and that the first mention of it was at the giving of the manna; and that it was ordered to be observed by the Jews, and them only, by the fourth precept of the decalogue, since abrogated; and that the first day of the week, or Lord's day, is substituted in its room, as the day of worship, by the practice and example of the apostles; there surely can remain no scruple about the observance of the latter: but if, after all, the fourth command, with the morality of it, hangs upon the minds of any; be it that that command is still in force, though not granting it, which would bring us back to Judaism, and into a state of bondage; and allow it all the morality that can be ascribed to a day; according to the letter of it, it requires no more nor other than this, a rest on the seventh day, after six days labour; it does not direct to any epoch from whence it is to begin, as from the creation of the world, the seventh day from which the greatest mathematician in the world cannot assure us which it is, nor even the year of the creation; it only directs to, and regards the seventh day from whence a man begins to labour in whatsoever place or country he lives; nor does it direct to any set time or hour when to begin these seven days, or by what names to call the days of the week; the rule is only, "Six days shall thou labour and do all thy work," or thou mayest if thou wilt, "but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God;" and such an account of time as is made in whatsoever place a man lives, is to be taken, and of which every man is capable; it does not require he should be a skilful mathematician a man that uses the spade, or follows the plough, is capable of counting six days, on which he has wrought, and when he comes to the seventh, he must know it is not his own, but the Lord's; and such an account a

man may keep, let him live on what side of the globe he will; in Europe or in America, north or south; in Great Britain, or in the East and West Indies: nor is the observation of the first day any objection to this rule, since that is after six days labour; the very first day on which Christ rose, kept by his disciples, was after six days labour; for the Jews' sabbath being between that and the six days labour can be no objection, since that was a day of rest, and not of labour; so that for that time there were two successive days of rest, after the six days of labour; when, upon the next return of the first, which was immediately after, it proceeded regularly, as it does now. In short, the only safe rule to go by is, that of the apostles, be the day what it may; "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord," (Rom. 14:6) or he ought so to do. Which leads me to observe,

2. In what manner the Lord's day is to be regarded or observed; not to ourselves, to our own profit and pleasure; but to the Lord, to his service and glory.

2a. Not as a Jewish Sabbath; with such strictness and severity as not to kindle a fire, dress any manner of food, and travel no further than what is called a Sabbath day's journey; though perhaps these were not enjoined with the strictness some have imagined. But,

2b. We are not to do our own work; that is, to follow any trade, business, or occupation employed in on other days; otherwise there are works of piety, mercy, and charity to be done; and also of necessity, for the preservation of life, the comfort and health of it, our own or others.

2c. It is to be employed more especially in acts of public worship, in assembling together for that purpose, in preaching, and hearing the word preached, in prayer and staging praises.

2d. In private acts of devotion, both before and after public worship; such as has been already observed, when the duty of public hearing the word was considered.

2e. The whole of the day should be observed, from morning to evening; the early part should not be indulged in sleep, nor any part spent in doing a man's own business, in casting up his accounts, and setting right his shop books; nor in carnal pleasures and recreations, in games and sports; nor in walking in the fields; nor in taking needless journeys. But besides public worship, men should attend to reading the scriptures, prayer and meditation, and Christian conferences; and in such pious exercises should they spend the whole day.

The Law and Gospel

By F. L. Gosden

Preached at Gilead Chapel, Brighton, (This is just an extract from the opening part to his sermon)

One Lord's Day evening 3 April 1946

“Great peace have they which love thy law: nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119:165)

The law in the text is the gospel. The Law of Moses is a good law, holy and just; but it is not a law that sinners love. They reverence it, but it is an authority which can only curse them because they continue not in all things commanded, and shuts them up in prison; it can make nothing perfect; it leaves a sinner where it finds him; it brings him under its condemning power.

But the law of the text is the law of the gospel. The apostle James speaks of it as ‘the perfect law of liberty.’ It is perfect because it makes the comers thereunto perfect and because the Lord Jesus, Who is the sum and substance of it, is perfect-made perfect through suffering. The Law of Moses was a perfect law of bondage- the perfection of the Mosaic Law is the perfection of the justice of God exercised in the

condemnation of sinners. The law of the gospel is the perfection of liberty.

‘Great peace have they which love thy law.’ There is a blessedness in this description of the gospel as being ‘a law’, for where there is a law there is authority; and Oh, the blessedness of the authority of the gospel as contrasted with the terribleness of the authority of the law. The gospel is greater than the law not by its abrogation or destruction, but in its fulfilment; its authority abounds over the law, for ‘where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’ The apostle speaks of it in this way: ‘For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ

Jesus hath made me free, from the law of sin and death.’ He then goes on to speak of what the law, could not do. So that we see there are three laws, three authorities, three powers, three dominions spoken of. First, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the law of the gospel making one free, from the law of sin and death; secondly, the dominion of sin in our members. Then there is thirdly, the Law of Moses that is the Ten Commandments; and what this law could not do, ‘in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.’ That is the authority, the power of the gospel. The apostle said, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ’: it is the power or the authority of God in a particular direction and to a blessed end; it is the power of God unto salvation in them that believe. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed, the righteousness of faith?

The Law and Gospel

by J.C. Philpot

I shall take the occasion to offer my thoughts on these three distinct points:

1 Why the law is not the believer's rule of life.

2 What is the rule?

3 Disprove the objection cast upon us that our views lead to doctrinal or practical antinomianism.

By a believer, I understand one who by faith in Christ is delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, and who knows something experimentally of the life, light, liberty and love of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. By the law I understand chiefly, though not exclusively, the Law of Moses. And by the rule of life I understand and outward and inward guide, by following which a believer directs his walk and conversion before God, the Church and the world.

It is very necessary to bear strictly in mind that we are speaking wholly and solely a believer. What has the law to do with a believer in Christ Jesus? Is he required by the revealed will of God to take the law as a guiding rule in his life? I answer, No; and for several reasons.

God does not leave us at liberty to take at will one part of the law and leave the other. It must be taken as a whole or left as a whole, for God has so revealed it. I cannot find in any part of God's Word any mitigation of its terms, or any halving of it, so that, according to the views of many divines who have written on the subject, we may be dead to it as a covenant, yet alive to it as a rule. The essential and distinguishing characteristic of the law is that it is a covenant of works, requiring full and perfect obedience, attaching a tremendous curse to the least infringement of its commands. If then I, as a believer, take the law as my rule of life, I take it with its curse; I put myself under its yoke, for in receiving it as my guide, (and if I do not this it is not my rule,) I take it with all its conditions and subject to all its penalties.... The indispensable

connection between a covenant and its rules is clearly shown in Gal. 5:1-6, where the apostle testifies to “every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law”. It is idle to talk of taking the law for a rule of life, and not for a covenant; for the two things are essentially inseparable; and as he who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all (James 2:10), so he who takes but one precept of the law for his rule, (as the Galatians took that of circumcision,) by taking that one, virtually adopts the whole, and by adopting the whole puts himself under the curse which attaches to their infringement.

People speak very fluently about the law being a rule of life that think little of the resulting consequences; for amongst them is this, that its written precepts and not its mere spirit, must be the rule. Now, these precepts belong to it only as a covenant, for they were never disjoined by the Authority that gave them, and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. To show this connection between the precepts and the covenant is the chief drift of the epistle to the Galatians, who were looking to the law and not the gospel, and having begun in the Spirit, were attempting to be made perfect by the flesh. Read with enlightened eyes, this blessed epistle would at once decide in favour of the gospel as our guiding rule of Christian conduct and conversation. Observe how Paul chides those who would so act: he calls them “foolish Galatians”, and asks who hath bewitched them that they should not obey the truth (that is, the gospel), “before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among them.” He appeals to their own

experience and asks them: “receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” He draws a line of distinction here between those works which are done in obedience to the law as a guiding rule, and that power of God

felt in the heart which attends a preached gospel when heard in faith, and asks them under which of the two they had received the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit. But observe, further, now he bids them “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). Now to “walk” is to live and act, and the rule which he here gives for this living and acting is not the law but the Spirit, and he tells them of the blessedness of this divine leading and guiding: “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law”: that is, neither as a covenant nor as a rule that they were free from its curse as a condemning covenant, and from its commands as a galling yoke which neither they nor their fathers could bear (Acts 15:10). But to show them that deliverance from the law did not set them free from a higher and more perfect rule of obedience, he bids them “fulfill the law of Christ”, which is love, a fruit of the Spirit and not produced by the law which worketh wrath and gendereth to bondage (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 4:24).

If we are willing to abide by the inspired Word of Truth we need to go no further than this very Epistle to decide the whole question. For in it we have laid down the rule according to which believers should walk, which is a “new creature” (or a new creation): “For in Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and on the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16). Is the law or the Spirit’s work upon the heart held out here as the rule of a believers walk? The law is strictly a covenant of works; it knows nothing of mercy, reveals nothing of grace, and does not communicate the blessed Spirit. Why, then, if I am a believer in Christ and have received his grace and truth into my heart, am I to adopt for the rule of life that which does not testify of Jesus either in the Word or in my conscience? If I am to walk as a believer, it must be by a life of faith in the Son of God (Gal 2:20). Is the

law my rule here? If it be, where are those rules to be found? “The law is not of faith”. How, then, can it law down rules for the life of faith? If I wish to walk as becomes a believer with the Church, what help will the law give me there? To walk as such must be by the law of love as revealed in Christ and made known in my heart by the power of God. If I am to walk in the ordinances of God’s house, are these to be found revealed in the law?

We give the law its due honour. It had a glory, as the Apostle argues (2Cor 3) as the ministration of death and condemnation, but this glory is done away, and why are we to look to it now as our guiding rule? The ministration of the Spirit, of life, and of righteousness “doth much more exceed in glory”, and why are we to be condemned if we prefer the Spirit to the letter, life to death, and righteousness to condemnation? A rule must influence as well as guide, or else it be a dead rule. If you chose to be guided by the killing letter which can only minister condemnation and death, and we chose for our rule that which ministers the Spirit, righteousness, and life, which has the better rule? It is much to be feared that those who thus walk and talk have still the veil over their heart, and know nothing of what the Apostle means when he says: “Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord” (2Cor 3:17-18).

But not only have we these deductions to influence the mind in rejecting the law as a rule for a believers walk, but also we have the express testimony of God as a warrant for so doing. We read, for instance, “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Rom. 7:4). As a believer in Christ, the law is dead to me, and I am to it. The Apostle has clearly and beautifully opened up this subject. He assumes that a

believer in Christ is like a woman is remarried after the death of her first husband; and he declares that “she is bound by the law of her husband as long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband (verse 2). Of course the first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. Now adopting the figure of Paul’s, may we not justly ask: Which is to be the rule of the wife’s conduct when remarried, the regulations of the first or the second husband?

2. What, then, is the believer’s rule of life. Is he without rule? A lawless wretch because he abandons the Law of Moses for his rule has no guide to direct his steps? God forbid! For I subscribe heart and soul to the words of the Apostle: Being not without law to God, but under law to Christ “(1Cor 9:21)⁶⁰. The believer then has a guiding rule, which we may briefly call the gospel. This rule we may divide into two branches. The gospel as written by the divine finger upon the heart, and the gospel as written by the blessed Spirit in the Word of truth. These do not form two distinct rules, but the one is the counterpart of the other; and they are mutually helpful to and corroborative of each other. One of the promises of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:21-34; Heb. 8:8-12 compared) was: “I will write My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts.” This writing of the law of God in their heart, I need not tell you, is that which distinguishes it from the law of Moses which was written on tables of stone: and becomes an internal rule whereas the law of Moses was but an external rule.

This internal rule seems to be pointed out in Romans 8:2 where we find these words: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.” By “the law of the Spirit of life”, I understand that guiding rule

⁶⁰ not under THE law, as our version; there being not definite article expressed or implied in the original.

(for a rule in Scripture is frequently called a law; the word law in Hebrew signifying literally “instruction”) which the Spirit of God, as communicating life, is in a believers heart. It is, therefore, the liberating, sanctifying, guiding influence of the Spirit of God, in his soul which, as a law or a rule, delivers him from “the law of sin and death”; by which I understand not so much the law of Moses, as the power and prevalence of his corrupt nature.

If this then be a correct exposition of the text, we have a guiding internal rule distinct from the law of Moses, and a living rule in the heart, which that never was nor could be; for it did not communicate the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-5) But this internal rule as being “the law of the Spirit of life”, has power to lead all the children of God; for in the same chapter (verse 14) the Apostle declares that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This leading which is peculiar to the children of God and is an evidence of their sonship, delivers them from the law; for if we are led by Spirit we are not under the law” (Gal 5:8) either as a covenant or as a rule, for we have a better covenant and a better rule (Heb. 8:6). What is the main use of a rule but to lead? But who can lead like a living Guide? How can a dead law lead a living soul? The very proof that we are the children of God is that we are led by the Spirit; and this inward leading becomes our guiding rule. And is it not a disparaging of the guidance of the blessed Spirit to set up in opposition to His guiding rule a dead law and to call those Antinomians who prefer a living guide to a dead letter? This living guide is that holy, and blessed Spirit who “guides into all truth” (Jn. 16:13). Here is the main blessedness of the work and grace upon the heart, that the leading and guiding of the blessed Spirit form a living rule every step of the way; for He not only quickens the soul into spiritual life, but maintains the

life which He gave, and performs⁶¹ it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). This life is eternal, as the blessed Lord at the well of Samaria declared, that the water that he should give the believer should be in a well of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn. 4:14) It is then this springing well in a believer's soul which is the guiding rule, for, as producing and maintaining the fear of God, it is "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death" (Pro.14: 27).

But lest this guiding internal rule be abused, which it might be by enthusiasm, and that they might not be left to substitute delusive fancies for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the God of all grace has given to His people an external rule in precepts of the gospel as declared by the mouth of the Lord and His apostles, but more particularly as gathered up in the epistles as a standing code of instruction for the living family of God. Nor do these at all clash with the rule of which I have just spoken, but on the contrary harmonize entirely and thoroughly with it; for, in fact, it is one and the same rule; the only difference between them being that the blessed Spirit had revealed the one in the written Word, and by the application of that Word to the soul makes the other to be a living rule of heart.

Now there is not a single part of particle of our walk and conduct before God or man which is not revealed and unculcated in the precepts of the gospel; for, though we have not minute directions, we have what far excels all such unnecessary minutiae- most blessed principles enforced by every gracious and holy motive, and forming, when rightly seen and believed, a most perfect code of inward and outward conformity to the revealed will of God, and of all holy walk and conduct in our families in the church and in the world.

⁶¹ or finishes- margin

I would say that a believer has a rule to walk but which is sufficient to guide him in every step of the way; for if he has the eternal quickening's, teachings and leadings of the Spirit to make his conscience tender in the fear of God, and has a law of love written upon the heart by the finger of God; and besides this has the precepts of the gospel as a full and complete code of Christian obedience, what more can he want to make him perfect in every good word and work (Heb. 13:21). Can the law do any of these things for him? Can it give him life, in the first instance, when it is a killing letter? Can it maintain life, if it is not in its power to bestow it?

But it may be asked: Do you then set aside the two great commandments of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" etc. and "thy neighbor as thyself"? No, On the contrary, the gospel as an external and internal rule fulfills them both, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10). So this blessed rule of the gospel not only does not set aside the law as regards its fulfillment, but so to speak absorbs into itself and glorifies and harmonizes its two great commandments, by yielding to them in obedience of heart, which the law could not give; for the believers serves in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6), as Christ's freeman (Jn. 8:32) and not as Moses's bond slave. This is willing obedience not a legal task. This will explain the meaning of the Apostle: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: for the new man of grace, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, delights in the law of God, not only for its holiness, but as inculcating that to do which fills the renewed heart and the inward delight love to God and His people..."

The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law

By Philip Mauro

The Gentile Believer and The Law

We have said that the experience of the “wretched man” of Romans 7 is not the normal experience of a converted Gentile. It is, nevertheless, a sad fact that it may (and often does) become the abnormal experience of converted Gentiles, who, through ignorance of the great gospel truths revealed in Romans, or through the influence of Judaizing teachers and legal systems of theology, fall from their standing in grace, and seek justification, or the gift of the Spirit, through law-works. Hence the solemn warning of Galatians 5:4: “You are deprived of all effect from Christ, whosoever in law are being justified; you are fallen from grace.” For as there were in Paul’s day, so are there now, many who desire “to be of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”

So also the struggle of that “wretched man” becomes the experience of many unconverted Gentiles who, totally ignorant of remission of sins through faith in the blood of Christ.... are seeking perpetually (because seeking vainly) for and inclination of the heart to keep the Mosaic Law. The condition of such, if they be earnest and sincere in their desire to keep the law, is indeed “wretched” in the extreme.

It was needful, therefore, that, in addition to the revelation given in Romans 7 of deliverance for the believing Jew from the yoke of the Law, the Epistle to the Galatians should have been incorporated into the Word of God, in order to instruct and warn Gentile believers against putting themselves under that yoke.

In referring, however, to Galatians our object will be simply to seek the light it throws upon the conflict described in Romans 7. What we find in Galatians affords strong confirmation to the view that the experience described in Romans 7 is that of a conscientious unconverted Israelite, and

not at all a “Christian” experience. In fact, the main object of the Apostle in writing to the assemblies of Galatia was to warn them against teachings, which would lead them into such an experience.

In Galatians 2 Paul relates how he remonstrated with the Apostle Peter for compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews (v. 14). We may be sure that the matter in dispute is esteemed by the Spirit of God to be exceedingly important; otherwise it would not be brought to our attention in the form of a rebuke administered by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to Peter, the leader of the twelve. In this connection Paul draws the line sharply between Jews and Gentiles, saying: “We, Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified out of the works of the Law, but out of the faithfulness of Christ, even we [Jews] have believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of the faithfulness of Christ, and not out of works of Law” (vv. 15-16). And he adds: “For if I build again the things I threw down, I constitute myself a transgressor.” That is to say, if he should set up the Law again as an obligation for himself, he would make himself a law-breaker. “For,” he continues, “I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God.” Here Paul again brings himself forward, as a typical Jew, and repeats in few words the doctrine elaborated in Romans “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live”; or, as the Greek may be equally well rendered, “I am not any longer living, it is Christ that lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God.”

It is possible for every believer to reach the place where he can make this saying of Paul his own. It involves death to sin and life to God in Christ, and the abiding presence of the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead. This verse obviously contains a condensed statement of the truth revealed

in Romans 6 and 7 concerning the believer's death (as to his old nature) with Christ, and his living again in the supernatural life of the risen Christ. That new life is not lived under the Law of Sinai. "I do not," says Paul, "make void the grace of God" (as Peter was doing by his dissimulation and by returning to the practice of Judaism) "for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing" (v. 21).

Galatians 3 Having thus dealt with the case of the believing Jew, who had been delivered from the Law by means of Christ's death, the Apostle directly addresses the Galatians, who, being Gentiles, never were under Law, but began their relations with God in the Spirit. The Jew began his service of God in the flesh. For him, therefore, there might be found some excuse for continuing after conversion as a man in the flesh under Law, not exercising the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free. But for Gentile believers, who never were under the Law, but had the great advantage of beginning in the Spirit, to put themselves under Law and to attempt to be perfected in the flesh was the "senseless" action of those who had been "bewitched." "O senseless Galatians, who had bewitched you," that you should act thus after the truth concerning Christ crucified has been plainly put before you? "Are you so senseless? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3). It was indeed "senseless" in the extreme to undertake the perfecting in the flesh of the work that was begun in the Spirit.

The Apostle then refers to Abraham, whose faith was accounted to him for righteousness, and points out that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles out of faith, proclaimed that good news to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all nations (Gentiles) be blessed." (Gal. 3:8).

The Galatians are warned of two serious facts. First, Paul teaches that all who are of the works of Law (in contrast to

those that are “of faith”) are under the curse of the Law. Second, he asserts that the curse comes upon every one who continues not in all things, which are written in the book of the Law to do them. From this it follows that no one is being justified with God in virtue of Law: “For the just shall live out of faith; but the man that does those things (required by the Law) shall live in virtue of them” (vv. 10-12).

In view of this, it would naturally be asked, How does it come about that the Jews, who were placed under the Law, which none of them has kept, have escaped from the curse of the Law? The answer is, “Christ has redeemed us (Jews) from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.” This statement manifestly applies solely to Israel, for the curse of the Law was never pronounced against the Gentiles. Hence Paul uses in verse 3:13 the pronoun “us.” The contrast between Jews and Gentiles is again clearly marked by 3:14, which goes on to say that Christ was made a curse for the Jews in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. The contrast between the curse of the Law, pronounced upon those who were under the Law, and the blessing of Abraham coming to the Gentile believers in Christ, is very instructive. And an additional result of the endurance by Christ of the curse of the Law is then set forth, namely, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The promise was made to Abraham and to his seed long before the Law was given. From this it follows that the Law, which was given 430 years after, cannot nullify the promise. If then the Law was not given for the purpose of adding anything to the promise, or of taking anything from it, why was it given? It was added for the sake of transgressions that is in order that the repeated transgressions of the Law by every Israelite might reveal the presence and nature of sin in the flesh, and show the futility of attempting to secure justification out of Law-works.

Moreover, it was given, not as a permanent institution, but only “until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.” (3:19).

This statement shows that the period of the Law was strictly limited in time, as it was limited also in scope to the children of Israel. Its era did not begin until 430 years after God had begun to deal with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants; and it ceased when the promised Seed died under the Law. The curse of the Law was exhausted when Christ was made curse by hanging on a tree (Deut. 21:23). Whatever God’s purposes were with the Law, they were all accomplished when the promised Seed died on the Cross? Since that event even the Jew is no longer a man under Law, for by no amount of law keeping can he now secure the promised blessings of the Promised Land. The old covenant is entirely at an end (2 Cor. 3:7- 11; Heb. 7:13). The words on the Cross-, “It is finished” (in the original it is the single word “accomplished”) included the purpose of the Law, which thereupon came to an end.

The temporary character of the Law as a Divine institution is further set forth, with great clearness, in verses 23-25. “Before faith came,” says the Apostle, “we [Jews] were kept [or guarded] under Law, having been shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed. Wherefore the Law has been our pedagogue [tutor] up to Christ in order that out of faith we might be justified. But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor.” By noting the tenses of the verbs, as given in the above renderings, the sense will be readily and clearly apprehended. It is very clear indeed that these statements apply only to Israelites. The Gentiles were not kept under Law, but were left without Law. They were not “shut up” in any way, but allowed to follow the devices of their own hearts. They were not under a pedagogue, or under tutors and governors

(4:2), for God had no dealings with them. God has called Israel His “Son” (Hosea 11:1; see Amos 3:2); and of Israel alone, of all the peoples of the earth, can it be said that they were under tutors waiting the time appointed of the Father.

After speaking in the first person of the Jews, the Apostle, addressing the Gentile Galatians, says by way of contrast: “For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek.” The contrast between the “we” of verses 24,25 and the “you” of verse 26 is very significant.

Some of the statements (in Galatians 4) are broad enough to embrace both Jews and Gentiles, for both were, before conversion, in bondage to the elements of the world; but the special bondage of the Jew - the yoke of the Law and the penalty of its curse - is also specifically mentioned. As the heir is “under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those that were under the

Law, that we [Jews] might receive the status of sons. But because you [Gentiles] are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba Father.’” (4:2-6) The defective reading of verse 6 in the A.V. “And because you are sons,” instead of “But,” as it is in the original, hides the contrast between the case of the believing Israelite and that of the believing Gentile. The former needed to be redeemed from under the Law before he could receive the status of a son (“adoption of sons”); whereas for the latter there was no such need. The bondage of the Gentiles was a different kind of bondage. They, not knowing God at all, were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods (4:8); but the point we wish

to examine is that they were not under Law at any time, and this point is very clearly presented in the passage we have been examining. (Editor's note: Randall Seiver has presented a better explanation of this passage in his book on Galatians "The Fullness of Time" available from Sound of Grace, Webster N.Y. The Believer's State Is Not One Of Lawlessness

In emphasizing the important truth that the believer is not under the Law, because, if a Jew he was delivered from the yoke of the Law by the death of Christ, and if a Gentile he was never under the Law at all, must not obscure the important fact that the state of the believer is not one of lawlessness - far from it. What is spoken of in Romans 7, as "the Law" is the Law given to the Israelites through Moses? That Law was by no means a complete statement of God's requirements, though it was quite sufficient for the purpose of revealing the presence of sin in the flesh, for demonstrating the utter corruption of human nature, and for making manifest the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The teachings of Jesus Christ showed that the full requirements of God's holiness and righteousness are far above those of the Law of Moses. "You have heard that it was said by (or to) them of old, you shall not kill...But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, etc." (Matt. 5:21-48).

The believer of this dispensation is not living under the Law of Moses. That law was given for the regulation of the conduct of men in the flesh. The believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." (Rom. 8:9). He is not, therefore, in the sphere in which the Law of Moses was effective.

The child of God, though not under the Law of Moses, is "not without Law to God, but in-law to Christ" (ennomous Christou, 1 Cor. 9:21). He owns the risen Christ as His Lord, and judges that his entire life in the body is to be lived no longer unto himself, but unto Him who died for him and rose

again (2 Cor. 5:15). Being in the Spirit he is to be governed by “the law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2). Being in Christ he is to “fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). This is a condition very different from that of the Israelite under the Law of Moses, and on a much higher plane. The life of the child of God is not a life hedged about by constraints and prohibitions, but a life of liberty in which he is free to follow all the leading of the Spirit, and all the inclinations of the new nature, which the Spirit imparts, to those whom He quickens. It is a life of freedom - not freedom to sin, but freedom not to sin. He who practices sin is the slave of sin; only the free man can refuse obedience to the demands of sin, and yield himself to God as one who is alive from the dead. The Word of God abounds in directions addressed to the children of God, by which their walk, while yet in the body, is to be guided and controlled. These directions are found in the commandments of Christ, and in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, whom the risen Lord empowered to be the channel for the revelation of His special communications to and concerning the Church. And these directions are illustrated by all the Holy Scriptures, the things which happened to the Israelites having been written, not for our imitation, but for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:11).

The believer has been called into liberty; and he is exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free (Gal. 5:1). Yet he is not to use his liberty so as to furnish occasions for gratifying the desires of his old nature (Gal. 5:13). Having been brought, through the resurrection of Christ, into the sphere of the Spirit, the believer is commanded to remain there; that is, to be occupied with and interested in the things of the Spirit. While so engaged he cannot at the same time be fulfilling the desires of the flesh. “This I say then, walk in [or by] the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the desires of the

flesh” (Gal. 5:16). “If you be led of the Spirit you are not under the Law” (Gal. 5:18).

Ephesians, which especially reveals the position of believers as quickened together with Christ, raised up (i.e. ascended) together with Him, and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ, abounds in practical directions for the believer’s guidance in all his earthly relations. We...call attention to them in order to guard against the supposition that, because the believer of this dispensation is not under the Law of Moses, he is therefore in a state of lawlessness.

The main points, then, of the teaching we have been examining are these:

That the sufferings of Christ were incurred for the sins of His people, that is to say, the sins of those whom God justifies upon the principle of faith.

That the death of Christ delivers the believing sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, from the servitude of sin.

That the death of Christ also brought the economy of the Law to an end, and delivered all converted Israelites from the yoke of the Law.

That the resurrection of Christ brings all believers into the sphere of a new humanity, where there is a new life, whose Source is the risen Christ, which life is imparted by the Spirit of God to the believer while the later is yet in the mortal body.

That believers, though not under the Law of Moses, are governed by the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and are required to “fulfill the law of Christ.”

The Sabbath

By Gilbert Beebe

January 1, 1855

There is much said at the present day on the subject of a Sabbath day, as being of perpetual obligatory force on all mankind throughout all time. But in what part of the Scriptures they find a precept to that effect we are not informed. They certainly but seldom, if ever, refer us to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue; and we have supposed their reasons for not doing so were obvious. Because we are expressly informed by Moses himself that, that very covenant, or law, was made exclusively with those Israelites who were all of them then present, and alive on the day that the ten commandments were presented to them from the Mount of God. It was a law which, had not been given even to the patriarchs, (See Deut. 5:1-4).

Because the fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given, to observe the seventh, and not the first day of the week, as the Sabbath of their God—because that God had rested from the work of creation on the seventh, and not on the first day of the week

Because the children of Israel were by the fourth commandment required to observe the seventh day altogether differently from the manner in which professed Christians pretend to observe the first day. The children of Israel were to totally abstain from all labor, themselves, their wives, their children, their servants, and even their cattle; no fires were allowed to be kindled, no horses to be harnessed, no meetings to be attended, no Sabbath Schools to be kept, no collections for mission or other purposes, to be taken up on that day.

Because the penalty for a transgression of that precept, was altogether different from that inflicted by modern Sabbatarians for a breach of the Sunday laws of our own, or any other lands. That provided in the Jewish law, being death by stoning, and the laws of men only requiring fines and imprisonments.

The fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given to labor six days, including the first day, and the Sunday laws of our land forbid our obedience to that part of the fourth commandment which requires us to labor on the first day of the week.

We know of no partial obligation to keep the law. If the Sinai covenant, which was given exclusively to the children of Israel, is binding on the Gentiles to any extent, it must be binding in its full extent. An inspired apostle has settled this question beyond all reasonable dispute, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," (Jam. 2:10). And Paul to the Galatians, 5:3, shows who are debtors to keep the law. He says, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." But in searching the Scriptures, we can find none who are obligated to obey part of the law, or partly obligated to do the whole law. "Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law," and they are of course bound to go according to the letter of the commandment. The grand question then is, whether the whole Sinai law is binding on all men, and throughout all time? If so, then all are involved in the curse, and the salvation of any of the human family is impossible. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for all have sinned; and consequently by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.

The doctrine of redemption is very prominently set forth in the gospel; and Christ has not only redeemed his people from the curse, but also from the dominion of the law; and the apostle has made the emphatic proclamation to the saints, "Ye are no more under the law, but under grace." The inquiry then is reduced to this; How far are we obligated to keep a law that we are not under? When Paul found some of the brethren inclining to the works of the law, he was afraid of them, lest he

had bestowed on them labor in vain, for they observed days, and months, and times, and years. In his allegory, (Gal. 4:21-27), Paul sets forth the old Sinai covenant, by the person of Hagar, the bondwoman, who could not be the mother of a free child. For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which Jerusalem he affirms, is the mother of all those saints, who, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. In the second chapter to the Colossians, we are informed that Christ has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took them out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an 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. This language would seem to be plain enough for an ordinary Christian, taught of God. These ordinances of the old covenant were a shadow of things, which are realized in the body of Christ, or in the gospel church, which is his body, his flesh and his bones. We trace the shadowy import of the Sinai Sabbath to the body of Christ, or to the gospel church, and there we enter into that rest which was shadowed forth by the legal Sabbaths of the old covenant. The antitypical Sabbath, being found alone in that rest which remaineth for the children of God, and into which all those who, with a true and vital faith, believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, have entered, is clearly set forth in the New Testament, particularly in the third and fourth chapters to the Hebrews. This gospel Sabbath we understand to be the whole gospel dispensation; in distinction from the old covenant dispensation, and it begins severally with each believer in Christ, as soon as they truly believe in

our Lord Jesus Christ; and are enabled to rest alone on him for their justification before God. We have neither the time nor the space necessary to show the analogy, which the typical Sabbath of the law bears to the rest, which is enjoyed by the saints in the gospel. A very few particulars must for the present suffice, and, the old covenant Sabbath was given exclusively to the circumcised children of Israel, and to no other people; so the gospel Sabbath, or Rest, is given exclusively to the spiritual Israel, who are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

The children of the old Sinai covenant were often charged with the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and that sin, with them, consisted in their performing on the seventh day, such labor as was only lawful for them to perform in the six days in which they were commanded to do all their labor. So under the gospel dispensation, the saints, by adhering to the abrogated institutions of the old working dispensation, observing days, and months, and times, and years; or by looking for justification before God by anything short of the blood and righteousness of Christ, do violence to the holy Sabbath of the gospel. As in the types, many of the children of Israel could not enter into rest, because of unbelief, so we find that our doubts and unbelief, which often press us down, render it impossible for us to enter into that rest which remaineth for the children of God.

Our own experience teaches us that when we doubt the reality of our interest in Christ, or the application of his promises to us, we are like the troubled ocean that cannot rest: we labor, and toil to do something ourselves, to reinstate ourselves in the favor of the Lord. When we feel cold, we are prone to kindle fires of our own, and to comfort ourselves with sparks of our kindling, and endeavor to walk in the light of our

fire; but if we are truly the children of God, we shall for all this lie down in sorrow; for this Sabbath-breaking. No fires were to be kindled by the Israelites on that day. Nor will the Lord suffer us to warm or enlighten ourselves by any fires that we can make. Christians are commanded to forsake not the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, and for their mutual edification. To obey the command, suitable times must be appointed for such meetings; the first, or any other day of the week, may be designated, provided that we attach no special sanctity to the time; and the first day of the week is as suitable as any other day. The apostles met frequently on the first day, and also on all the other days of the week, they were daily in the temple praising God, &c. So we conclude that the Christian church is at liberty to make her own appointments, as to time—provided that she allows no man, or set of men, to judge her in regard to the time, and when she makes such appointments, each member is in duty bound to attend the appointment, unless providentially detained.

As Christians we have no right to observe any day religiously in obedience to human legislation; either Sabbaths, first days, or thanksgiving days; because God has forbidden that we should allow any man to judge us in these things. We require no human legislation on the subject. The order and decision of the church is more effectual with the saints than all the pains, penalties and fines, ever imposed by the rulers of the darkness of this world. Let us observe the admonition of the apostle, and “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The Sabbath of the Jews required no grace in the heart, no spiritual emotion of the new man, to qualify those to whom it was given, to observe it. Their service was in the oldness of the letter, and theirs was a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances. Any circumcised Jew, whether a

believer or an infidel could abstain from labors on the seventh day, and that was all that was required of them. But the antitypical, or gospel Sabbath, requires faith in Christ; for none but believers can enter into that rest which remains, for the people of God. The hour has is come and the true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. Not only the Scriptures of the New Testament declare it, but the testimony is corroborated by every Christian's experience. Christians know that they cannot believe only as the Lord gives them faith; and equally well do they know that they cannot rest unless they believe. When faith, which is of the operation of God, is given, the recipient requires neither the thunder of Sinai, nor the arm of secular legislation, to incline him to keep the christian sabbath of Gospel Rest. The starving soul requires no coercion to incline him to eat, nor does the weary, heavy-laden soul require legal enactments to drive him to his rest. As the Sinai Sabbath required the carnal Israelite to abstain totally from servile labor, so the gospel Sabbath requires the spiritual Israelite to cease from his work, and trust, and rest alone on Christ, for his justification and acceptance with God. As the Sabbath-breaker under the law was to be stoned to death, by all the children of Israel, so the legalist who would attempt to drag the ceremonies of the legal dispensation into the gospel church, or to justify himself before God by the works of the law, is to be stoned, (not with stones literally, but with the smooth stones from the brook of gospel truth), by all his brethren, until his legal spirit yields up the ghost.

Those who have no higher conception of a gospel Sabbath than to suppose it consists in the literal observance of one day out of seven, have yet to learn that "Whom the Son makes free, are free indeed."

Old Testament Sabbath

William Huntington

The old Testament Sabbath Day prefigured the gospel day, in which the believer rests from impious rebellion and war with his Maker, from legal labour for life, and from the intolerable burden of sin; as well as an eternal rest from the indwelling of sin in heaven."

(William Huntington)

The Law of Faith

It is Christ that died to expiate my crimes; and is risen again to see me justified, and to plead my cause and revenge my wrongs. I am in Christ, and there is no condemnation to them that are in Him; I have the law of faith (by which I am to live) written on the tables of my heart, and that law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin, which is in my members, and from the law of death engraven on tables of stone."

(William Huntington)

Dead To The Law

"I think that the saint's deliverance from the law is expressed in terms as strong as words can make them, that we may be joyful in, and thankful for, our glorious liberty by Christ; for it is said that we are become dead to the law, (Romans 7:4); redeemed from the law, (Galatians 3:13); delivered from the law, Romans 7:6; and not under the law, (Romans 6:14). And that the new covenant hath made the law old, and that it is done away, (II Corinthians 3:11); and abolished, (II Corinthians 3:13)."

(William Huntington)

Further Consideration

Conclusion

We cannot say to the unregenerate man he must keep the Christian Sabbath⁶² because he cannot rest in Christ and the gospel of Christ is not a legal duty to any man. The rest that believers are directed too is an exercise of faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and they are directions to the new man of grace.

The Lord's Day or Christian rest day is not the Mosaic Sabbath for the commandment to remember Sabbath day was a legal duty for all who were under that covenant and a duty to regenerate and unregenerate men alike. Under the Law the regenerate man would have to look beyond the Law and to the spirituality of the law to find rest. This is because the law was a legal rule not to be broken and was typical or a shadow of good things to come and pointed to gospel rest and hidden from the unregenerate man.

Colossians 2:16-23 King James Version (KJV)

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an 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.

(David Clarke)

⁶² I use the term for want of a better word