

STATE OF THE HEATHEN  
AND THE  
SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

BY  
ROBERT HALDANE, ESQ.

A TREATISE INCLUDED AT THE END OF HIS  
COMMENTARY ON ROMANS.

EDINBURGH : WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND CO.  
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.  
1874.

Copyright (Public Domain)

[www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html](http://www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html)

(Reformed on the Web)

## SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT HALDANE.

---

*Robert Haldane* (28 February 1764 – 12 December 1842) was a religious writer and *Scottish* theologian. Author of *Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*, *On the Inspiration of Scripture* and *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*.

---

### Early life.

---

*Robert Haldane* 3rd of *Airthrey* was the son of *James Haldane* 2nd of *Airthrey*, and his wife, *Katherine Duncan*. *Robert* was born on 28 February 1764 in *Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square* in *London*.<sup>[1]</sup> *Robert* and his younger brother *James Alexander Haldane* were raised by their grandmother *Lady Lundie* and uncles.<sup>[1]</sup> *Robert* and *James* attended classes at *Dundee Grammar School*, the *Royal High School* in *Edinburgh*, and the *University of Edinburgh*.<sup>[1]</sup>

In 1780 *Robert* joined *HMS Monarch* as an officer, of which his maternal uncle, *Adam Duncan*, was in command. In 1781, he was transferred to *HMS Foudroyant*. He was on *HMS Foudroyant* under *John Jervis* during the night engagement in *April* 1782 with the *French* ship *Pegase* and greatly distinguished himself. *Haldane* was afterwards present at the relief of *Gibraltar* in *September* 1782. Some months later after the peace treaty of 1783, he left the *Royal Navy*.<sup>[2]</sup>

---

### Airthrey Estate.

---

Soon after leaving the *Navy*, he settled on his family estate *Airthrey*, near *Stirling* where he contacted the *Whites* of *Durham* to landscape the grounds. These estate improvements included the creation of a man-made loch, rolling lawns, several wooded plantations, a hermitage and a boundary wall which is nearly four miles in length.<sup>[3][4]</sup> In 1790 he commissioned the neoclassical architect *Robert Adam* to make a draft for the building of *Airthrey Castle* of which *Adam* created two designs.<sup>[4]</sup> *Haldane* picked his favorite design but chose to have *Thomas Russell* complete the works instead of *Robert Adam*.<sup>[4]</sup>

*Airthrey Castle* was completed in 1791 and as built corresponded largely to the final design by *Robert Adam* without the forecourt which was never built.  
[4] Although there were changes to the north facade in the late nineteenth century, the south facade is still essentially as designed by *Adam*.

---

### Evangelism.

---

*Robert's* tutor was *David Bogue* of *Gosport*. After reading about the start of the *French Revolution* he grew to disapprove strongly of the war with *France*. *Robert* resolved to devote himself to advancing Christianity.[2] In 1795 *Robert* converted to the evangelical church shortly after his brother *James* converted.[5] *Robert* became one of the first members of the *London Missionary Society* in 1795, the same year that he was converted. He offered the *British Government* and the *East India Company* to sell *Airthrey Estate* in order to set up a vast mission in *Bengal* but was turned down by the *East India Company*, and the mission was abandoned.[2][5]

In *December* 1797 he also joined his brother and some others in the formation of the “*Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home*,” in building chapels or “tabernacles”[6] for congregations, in supporting missionaries, and in maintaining institutions for the education of young men to carry on the work of evangelization. In 1798 he sold the *Airthrey Estate* to *Robert Abercromby* to obtain funding for his mission work and with the funds raised to set up the *Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home* in *Edinburgh*.[5] In 1799 *Robert* organized for *Plean Estate* to be sold and this was bought in 1800 by *Francis Simpson*.[7]

Over the next twelve years (1798–1810) he gave over £70,000; this was used to further the cause of the *Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home* by building chapels for congregations, supporting missionaries and helping to maintain institutions for young men to be educated to carry on the work of evangelization.[2] *Robert* was inspired by *George Whitefield's* two tabernacles in *London* and built preaching centers strategically placed throughout *Scotland*. These tabernacles were located in *Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Thurso, Wick, Edinburgh* and *Elgin*. His brother *James* took over the *Edinburgh* tabernacle until 1851.[5]

*Robert* funded *John Campbell's: Society for the Education of Africans* which

initially planned to evangelize in *Africa* by bringing over native children to be trained as Christian missionaries in *Edinburgh*. However, owing to an outbreak of smallpox, the group of children remained in the *London* area at what became known as the *African Academy* in *Clapham*.

From 1799 to 1807, *Robert* set up theological seminars in *Glasgow*, *Edinburgh* and *Dundee* to train young men with a passion for the gospel.<sup>[5]</sup> Young men would come and train for 2-3 years with all their expenses paid for. Over this time 300 men were trained and sent out to spread their teachings all over the world.<sup>[5]</sup>

In 1816 *Robert* published a work on the *Evidences and Authority of Divine Revelation*.<sup>[2]</sup> In the summer of 1816 *Robert Haldane* visited *Europe*, first at *Geneva* and afterwards in *Montauban*.<sup>[2]</sup> He lectured and interviewed large numbers of theological students with remarkable effect; among them were *César Malan*, *Frédéric Monod* and *Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné*.<sup>[5]</sup> This circle of men spread the revival of evangelical Protestant Christianity across the continent of *Europe* (*Le Réveil*), impacting *France*, *Germany* (*Die Erweckung*) and the *Netherlands* (*Het Reveil*). Through conversion and missionary impetus the effects of this revival were felt as far afield as *Italy* and *Hungary*.

---

### Later life.

---

In 1819, *Robert* had his theological prelections published in a *Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*.<sup>[2]</sup> He returned to *Scotland* in 1819 to live partly at the estate he had bought in 1809, *Auchengray*<sup>[8]</sup> and partly in *Edinburgh* at 10 *Duke Street*<sup>[9]</sup> (later renamed *Dublin Street*). Like his brother *James*, he took part in many of the religious controversies of the time, mainly through correspondence in the newspapers.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Robert's* later writing included a number of pamphlets on the *Apocrypha* controversy,<sup>[10][11][12]</sup> as well as a treatise *On the Inspiration of Scripture* which was published in 1828 and a later *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* published in 1835, which has been translated into *French* and *German*.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Robert* died on 12 *December* in 1842 in *Edinburgh* and was buried in *Glasgow Cathedral*.<sup>[1]</sup>

---

### Works by Haldane.

---

*Address to the public: concerning political opinions, and plans lately adopted to promote religion in Scotland*, 1800.<sup>[13]</sup>

*Letters to Mr. Ewing*, respecting the Tabernacle at *Glasgow*, 1809.<sup>[6]</sup>

*Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*, 1819.

*Review of the conduct of the directors of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, relative to the *Apocrypha*, 1825.<sup>[10]</sup>

*Second review of the conduct of the directors of the British & Foreign Bible Society*: containing an account of the religious state of the continent; in answer to a letter addressed to the author, by the Rev. Dr. *Steinkopff*, 1826.<sup>[11]</sup>

*Exposure of the Rev. Henry Grey's personal misrepresentations, doctrinal heresies, and important mis[s]tatements*, respecting the Bible Society, as contained in the letters of *Anglicanus*, 1828.

*On the Inspiration of Scripture*, 1828.

*The Books of the Old and New Testaments Proved to be Canonical, and their Verbal Inspiration Maintained and Established; with an Account of the Introduction and Character of the Apocrypha*, 1830.<sup>[12]</sup>

*Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, 1835.

*The duty of paying tribute enforced*; in letters to the Rev. Dr *John Brown*, 1838.

*The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation*, 1839.

*Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day*, 1842.

*Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*: with remarks on the commentaries of Dr. *Macknight*, Professor *Moses Stuart* and Professor *Tholuck*, 1842.

---

### Family.

---

*Robert Haldane* married *Catherine Cochrane Oswald*, daughter of *George Oswald* of *Scotstoun*, on 24 April 1785. They were married for 58 years and had one child, *Margaret Haldane*, during their marriage. *Margaret* married *James Farquhar Gordon* in 1805.

*Robert* died on 12 December 1842 (aged 78),<sup>[1]</sup> *Catherine* six months afterward. *Margaret* died on 29 September 1849.<sup>[8]</sup>

---

### Church and ministry.

---

Along with his brother, *James Haldane*, *Robert Haldane* established 85 churches in *Scotland* and *Ireland*. Churches planted by the *Haldanes* practiced baptism by immersion, weekly communion, and congregational polity (autonomous government). The *Haldanes* also operated a seminary, and were influenced in their principles by other independent thinkers such as *John Glas* and *Robert Sandeman*.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Haldane, Alexander* (1852). *Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his brother, James Alexander Haldane*. University of Stirling: Hamilton, Adams.

[2] *Chisholm, Hugh*, ed. (1911). “*Haldane, Robert*”. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 12 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

[3] “*Airthrey Castle*”.

[4] *Anderson, Iain* (1 May 2003). “*The History of Airthrey Castle and Estate*”. SCRAN.

[5] *Williams, Paul* (February 2014). “*Robert Haldane (1764-1842)*”. *Evangelical Times*.

[6] *Handle, Robert* (1809). *Letters to Mr. Ewing, respecting the Tabernacle at Glasgow*. University of Stirling Archives: J. Ritchie.

[7] “*Social History of Plean Estate*”. Plean Country Park. 11 April 2018.

[8] “peerage - Person Page 31097”. Retrieved 1 November 2010.

[9] *Edinburgh and Leith* Post Office Directory 1830-31.

[10] *Haldane, Robert* (1825). Review of the conduct of the directors of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, relative to the *Apocrypha*. *Leighton Library: William Oliphant*.

[11] *Haldane, Robert* (1826). Second review of the conduct of the directors of the *British & Foreign Bible Society*: containing an account of the religious state of the continent; in answer to a letter addressed to the author, by the Rev. Dr. *Steinkopff*. *Leighton Library*.

[12] *Haldane, Robert* (1830). *The Books of the Old and New Testaments Proved to be Canonical, and their Verbal Inspiration Maintained and Established; with an Account of the Introduction and Character of the Apocrypha*. *University of Stirling Archives: William Whyte*.

[13] *Haldane, Robert* (1800). *Address to the public: concerning political opinions, and plans lately adopted to promote religion in Scotland*. *University of Stirling Archives: J. Ritchie*.

Source: Wikipedia.



STATE OF THE HEATHEN  
AND THE  
SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

---

---

STATE OF THE HEATHEN.

---

---

IN the first and second chapters of this Epistle to the Romans, the deplorable state of the heathen world without the written law is pointed out. In the fourteenth chapter reference is made to certain days that may either be regarded or not, without a violation of the law of God, which it is necessary to show has no connection with the observance of the weekly Sabbath. Both of these subjects are of such practical importance, that a more enlarged consideration of each of them is here subjoined than could with propriety have been given in the exposition of these chapters. The condition of the nations destitute of Divine revelation, while it presents a most impressive view of the value of that Gospel by which life and immortality are brought to light, furnishes a powerful argument in favor of Christian missions, and a cogent reason for unfeigned gratitude to the sovereign Disposer of all events, who has cast our lot in an age and country in which the light of the Gospel shines. To every Christian, the permanent obligation of sanctifying the Sabbath is a subject of the deepest interest; and whatever tends to render this duty in the smallest degree doubtful, must be productive of the most pernicious consequences.

While it is on all hands admitted that the knowledge of the Gospel is highly beneficial, there are many who hold that it is not indispensable to salvation. This opinion is opposed to the whole testimony of the Scriptures, whether they refer to the way of salvation or to the condition of all who are strangers to the Gospel. From every part of the word of God, it is obvious that salvation comes to none of the human race in any other way than through the knowledge, more or less clear, of the Messiah, before or after His advent. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Multitudes, however, are unwilling to admit that salvation should be so limited in its extent, as to be confined to those who have enjoyed the advantage of a revelation with

respect to the Messiah. They have therefore endeavored to show that the benefits of Christ's death may be available to those whom they term the virtuous in all nations, even although they have heard nothing of the revelation of mercy. Some commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans, appear to have this object chiefly in view, and labor to prove that the faith through which a sinner is saved may be found in the heathen as well as in the Christian. Faith, they attempt to show, is not the belief of the truth respecting the Messiah, or the belief of any particular truth, but a general reliance on God, so far as He is known, and a desire to discover and to obey His will. Even were this a just account of saving faith, it would not avail one of all the heathen world. There is not, of all the sons of Adam, any one who naturally desires to know and to do the will of God. But this account of faith is utterly unscriptural and false. It is faith in God, as manifested in the Messiah, to which salvation is attached; and this is so clear from every part of Scripture, that he may run that readeth.

Some who reject with abhorrence the error for which Dr. Macknight contends, which represents saving faith as altogether abstracted from the belief of the Gospel, and as applicable to heathens as well as to Christians, are yet unwilling to abandon the idea of the salvation of Pagans. While they allow that this is not positively taught in the Scriptures, they allege that there is nothing said to the contrary. The extending or not extending of the salvation of Jesus to nations that have not heard of Him, is, as they think, a matter on which the Scriptures are silent — a deep, mysterious point, which the human mind cannot determine. But whatever may be the truth on this subject, it presents no mystery. It is a matter of Divine testimony, as simple as anything that can be testified. The mysterious doctrines of Scripture continue to be mysterious even after they are most clearly revealed. But in this point there is no mystery. If the Scriptures declare that some heathens may be saved without any knowledge of a Saviour, the truth is to be received on the Divine testimony. If they teach the contrary, they must be submitted to with humility. If nothing be either said or implied on the subject in the language of Scripture, then nothing can be decided, — not because the matter is mysterious, but because there is no evidence. But that the Scriptures are not silent on this subject, and that they declare the condemnation of unenlightened heathens in the most express terms, appears as clear as language can make it. To allege that the thing is undecided by the Divine testimony, is

to shut our eyes against the plainest revelation.

Immediately after the entrance of sin, animal sacrifices were instituted, as the principal type or representation of the way of salvation announced in the first promise, which was to be effected by Him who was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The history of Cain and Abel, the two men first born in the world, evidently proves that it was only in virtue of that great sacrifice, afterwards to be offered, that God holds communion with guilty man. Cain offered to God the fruits of the earth; but by not presenting an animal in sacrifice, he showed that he had no respect for that atonement which the sacrifice of animals was appointed to prefigure. This proved that he did not believe the truth exhibited in that institution, and his oblation was rejected. Abel, on the other hand, offered of the firstlings of his flock, thus solemnly acknowledging that he was a sinner, and approaching God in the way appointed to represent the atonement to be made for sin, Heb. 11:4; for 'it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul,' Lev. 17:11; 'and without shedding of blood is no remission,' Heb. 9:22. At the very opening of the Scriptures, then, the manner of deliverance from sin and Satan, and of acceptance by God, was indicated in a promise, and illustrated by an example.

All who believed in the first promise were justified by faith, as we see by various examples contained in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and became heirs *of the righteousness which is by faith*. By the covenant with Abram, and by means of the Mosaic dispensation, a further discovery was made respecting the accomplishment of that promise. But although the Israelites were bound to receive men of every nation who desired to unite with them, no command to this purpose was given to the Gentiles. If the Gentiles retained and believed the ancient tradition of the first promise, or believed in the righteousness of which Noah was a preacher, it was as efficacious for their salvation as these had been in the beginning. Melchisedec was a 'priest of the Most High God.' Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, although he did not join himself to Israel, was an accepted worshiper of God, as we learn by the communion which Moses and the princes of Israel had with him in sacrifice. Rahab was justified by faith, before being united to Israel. The Magi, who came from the East, adored the promised Messiah as soon as He appeared in the world, and were honored to be the first heralds of

His appearance to Israel.

In setting apart the nation of Israel, and conferring on that people peculiar privileges, it was not the design of God to exclude the rest of the world from communion with Himself, but to preserve the true light *‘till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.’* And it was always a truth that with God there is no respect of persons, but that in every nation he who feared Him and wrought righteousness was accepted of Him. For *‘in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.’* Of this truth the example of Abraham is recorded in the Scriptures as a proof, since he was justified by faith before he was circumcised.

In order to prove from the Scriptures that men may be saved without the knowledge of the revelation of mercy in the Gospel, communicated either orally or in writing before or after the coming of Christ, it is customary to appeal to the case of Cornelius. But to such an opinion no countenance is given by what is said of that centurion in the Acts of the Apostles, which is entirely consistent with every other part of Scripture. As, however, very mistaken notions of Cornelius are entertained by many, it is proper to consider at some length what is recorded concerning his history.

---

#### CASE OF CORNELIUS.

---

We are informed, Acts 10, that Cornelius lived in Cesarea, in the neighborhood of Jerusalem; that he was *a devout man, and one that feared God, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway; that his prayers and his alms came up for a memorial before God; that he was a just man, and of good report among all the nations of the Jews; and that he was acquainted with the word which God sent unto the children of Israel after the baptism of John, preaching peace by Jesus Christ.* — After all this, although Cornelius was a Gentile, and uncircumcised, it would be contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture had he not been accepted of God, who is equally the God of Jews and of Gentiles. But his acceptance with God is in perfect conformity to all that the Gospel declares concerning the salvation of men.

*1st*, Cornelius was a *devout man* (εὐσεβής), Acts 10:2, that is, godly, pious. This word is found only in three other passages in the New Testament — in

the same chapter, ver. 7, where it characterizes one of the servants of Cornelius; and again, in the Book of Acts, 22:12, where it is applied to Ananias, who is expressly called ‘a disciple,’ and who received from the Lord the singular honor of being charged with His first message to the Apostle Paul. Finally, this expression is employed in the Second Epistle of Peter 2:9, where that Apostle designates by this epithet the servants of God, whom he knows how to deliver out of temptations, and who are there opposed to the unrighteous. The application, therefore, of this epithet to Cornelius is of itself sufficient to determine his character as one who was justified by faith; for we know that all those who are justified are, till the moment of their justification (ἄσεβῆς) *ungodly*, Rom. 4:5, which is the opposite of (εὐσεβής) *godly*.<sup>[1]</sup> Here, then, we have full proof that Cornelius was a justified believer.

**2nd**, Cornelius was *one that feared God*. — When the Scriptures make use of this expression, it always respects the true God; Cornelius, therefore, is here represented as fearing Jehovah, the God of Israel. It is the character of all who are wicked, or in their unregenerated state, ‘*there is no fear of God before their eyes*.’ On the other hand, it is a promise made by God to all His people, that He will put His fear in their hearts, Jer. 32:40. It is declared to the praise of the churches in Judea, that they walked *in the fear of the Lord*, which is connected *with the comfort of the Holy Ghost*, Acts 9:31. It is by grace that the children of God *serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12:28. There is not a more definite characteristic of a believer than the *fear of God*.

**3rd**, Cornelius *gave much alms to the people*. — This declaration concerning him is made in connection with that of his fearing God; and immediately afterwards it is noted that this service was accepted of God, proving that it was good in His sight. But no work is recognized in Scripture as good and acceptable to God, except it proceeds from faith. The expressions *good works* and *well-doing* are not employed in the New Testament to signify any moral virtue practiced by those who do not believe the Gospel, nor any works but such as are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The only passage which appears an exception to this is Rom. 13:3. The children of God are saved by grace through faith. They are the workmanship of God, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them. In the same chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle

says that without faith it is impossible to please God, he refers to the memory of those who *through faith wrought righteousness*.

**4th**, Cornelius *prayed to God alway*. — Men may worship an unknown god, or a god of their own imagination, but they cannot pray to the true God without believing in Him as He hath revealed Himself to man. *Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*. And this last proposition no one can believe without express Divine testimony; for there is no other means of knowing this fact. Nor can we believe that God is what He really is, without the knowledge of that revelation of His character which He has vouchsafed. Faith is not a conjecture, or a doubtful opinion, but a persuasion and cordial reception of the truth of what God has declared. On this subject the wisest of the ancient philosophers were entirely ignorant.<sup>[2]</sup> *The world by wisdom knew not God*. — How a *sinner* could be justified, — a subject on which the works of creation and the work of the law written in the heart are silent, — how such an one could approach to God, who is holy, — what communion could be established with Him, — and, above all, on what foundation man could hope for a reward from God, — are questions which none but God could answer. *The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God*. How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Besides, in order to be heard, as was Cornelius, *a man must ask in faith nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea*, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. *But how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?* Rom. 10:14.

**5th**, The prayers and alms of Cornelius came up for a memorial before God. Did ever the prayers and the alms of an unbeliever go up before God for a memorial? Is not the sacrifice of the wicked an abomination in His sight?<sup>[3]</sup> Here, then, we have a proof that Cornelius worshiped in the faith of the promised Mediator; for no man can come to the Father but by Him. This is a solemn truth, declared by Jesus Christ Himself, and strikingly held forth in all the ceremonial observances of the Old Testament. But if Cornelius was accepted by God on account of his alms and prayers, without faith in the Messiah, then it follows that, *being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness*, he had attained to



righteousness by the works of the law, and not by faith, in direct opposition to all the Apostle Paul has declared in respect both to Jews and Gentiles. Besides, it is twice intimated that Cornelius, on praying to God, had respect to the instituted worship at Jerusalem. It is said that he prayed at the ninth hour, which was the hour of prayer in the temple, Acts 3:1, and the time of the evening sacrifice. What reason can be assigned for this, but his faith in the Messiah? The temple of Jerusalem was a remarkable type of the Redeemer, and the medium of communication between God and the people of Israel. There alone the appointed sacrifices could be offered, and the prescribed worship rendered to God. When the Jews were at a distance from the temple, they showed their respect for it, by lifting up their hands towards the holy oracle. At its dedication, Solomon besought the Lord to hear from heaven the prayers of His people when they spread forth their hands *towards that house*. Jonas said, in the belly of the fish, *‘I will look again toward Thy holy temple!’* Daniel in a distant land prayed, *his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem*; and when, during his prayer, a messenger was sent from heaven to make known to him that remarkable revelation concerning the birth of the Messiah, it was *‘about the time of the evening oblation.’*<sup>[4]</sup> It was also *at the ninth hour*, at the time of that oblation, while Cornelius prayed, that an angel brought to him a message from God. In the dedication prayer of Solomon, express mention is made of the stranger who shall pray towards that house. *‘Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake* (for they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and of Thy stretched-out arm), *when he shall come and pray towards this house, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for.’* The prayers and alms, then, of Cornelius came up before God, in the name of the same Mediator through whom the prayers and the alms of the people of Israel were accepted.

It is said, Acts 10:31, *‘Thy prayer is heard.’* This is conclusive. Not only did the prayers of Cornelius in general find acceptance with God, but the prayer that is here said to be heard must have concerned the Messiah. How otherwise could his vision have been an answer to his prayer? The direction to send for Peter to make known to him the actual appearance of the Messiah, is stated as the answer to that prayer. But it could not have been an answer to it, unless it had concerned the coming of the Messiah. *‘Thy prayer is heard.*

Send therefore to Joppa.’ The things which he learned by sending to Joppa were the things which had formed the subject of his supplications. The knowledge of the Messiah, as come in the flesh, was the answer to his prayer. It must then have been the object of it. As believing Jews were now everywhere looking for the redemption of Israel, what should prevent Cornelius from having the same expectation? What was there known to them that could be unknown to him? He lived among them, while many of the Jews themselves sojourned in distant countries. To suppose that Cornelius could not have been saved without hearing the words of Peter, and that he must have perished had he died previously, is to condemn all the Old Testament saints, without excepting Abraham himself. Had the salvation of Cornelius been the only object, this message, this journey of Peter, and his vision itself, were all unnecessary. The grand object of the vision and extraordinary message was to instruct the Apostle, and to reconcile the Jewish believers to the calling of the Gentiles.

**6th**, Cornelius, whom his servant calls ‘*a just man*,’<sup>[5]</sup> was ‘*of good report among all the nation of the Jews*.’ The same testimony is given to Ananias: he had ‘*a good report of all the Jews which dwelt*’ at Damascus. Another centurion, who was not an Israelite, was recommended to Jesus as one who loved their nation, and was worthy; of whom Jesus said ‘*unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel*.’ Here is a case parallel to that of Cornelius, decided by the Lord Himself. A just or righteous man is the most distinguishing descriptive appellation of a servant of God.

Finally, Peter addressed Cornelius as one who was acquainted with ‘*that word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ*.’ ‘*That word*,’ said he, ‘*YE KNOW, which was published throughout Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him*,’ Acts 10:37. On what ground, then, is it asserted that Cornelius was ignorant of the true God? Not only the whole tenor of Divine revelation, from beginning to end, forbids us to entertain such an idea, but we find in the narrative itself accumulated proofs which demonstrate the contrary.



And what is the foundation on which, in the face of all these proofs, the opposite opinion is built? Solely on the declaration of Peter, *‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him,’* Acts 10:34. We have already seen who are those that, according to the Scriptures, fear God, work righteousness, and are accepted by Him. That God is no respecter of persons is often repeated; Paul affirms it both of Jews and Gentiles. In spite, however, of all that had been said by the Prophets, and notwithstanding the express commandment given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to the Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, the prejudices of the latter were so strongly rooted as to render a new revelation to Peter necessary, in order that he might be convinced of the duty of announcing the Gospel to the Gentiles. A revelation, by the vision he saw, was for this purpose accordingly made; but even then the import of it was not understood by him. Nor did he comprehend it fully till informed by Cornelius of the revelation with which he had also been favored. Peter had then no further doubt concerning the meaning of the words uttered to him by the voice from heaven, *‘What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common;’* and he immediately exclaimed, *‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.’* Can words be more, decisive than these to demonstrate that Cornelius was a converted man before he saw Peter?

Peter here takes it for granted that God had before accepted Cornelius, and that if He had not accepted him it might be said He was a respecter of persons. If so, Cornelius must have been a believer in the Messiah. His faith must have been the same with that of Abraham and the believing Israelites. Destitute of faith in the Messiah, God's rejection of him would have shown no partiality, and the God of the whole earth could not have been said to be a respecter of persons. Cornelius must, in all respects, have been on a level with Jewish believers who had not heard the Gospel. Peter also here determines the import of the phrase *fearing God*. According to him, it belongs only to the person who is accepted of God. Such a person is accepted by God, to whatever nation he may belong. It must imply, then, the knowledge of God in His true character, as the just God and the Saviour. It is here necessarily implied, and was before expressly stated, that Cornelius was a *fearer of God*. Here, also, it is implied that Cornelius was a worker of

righteousness. But does this character belong to any unconverted man? Can any worker of righteousness perish? Here, also, Cornelius is said to be accepted of God before he hears a word from Peter. The news that Peter brought concerning the appearance of the Messiah was indeed glad tidings; but now, though the first time he knew it as an accomplished fact, yet he had previously known it, like Abraham, as a thing to be expected. If Cornelius was a man accepted of God before he saw Peter, he could not have been ignorant of the hope of Israel. What more could have been said of Abraham himself than that he was accepted of God? Did God ever accept any unconverted man?

Not only was Cornelius a man accepted by God before his interview with Peter, but, according to the necessary import of Peter's language, every man of any nation who fears God and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Salvation never was confined to the Jews, and those who were incorporated with their nation. To enjoy the ordinances of the Jewish religion, circumcision was absolutely necessary. But to have salvation through Abraham's seed, it was only necessary to believe the promise made to Abraham about the Messiah. This faith produces the fear of God and works of righteousness in all who receive it, Gentiles as well as Jews. But the true fear of God and works of righteousness are never produced without some knowledge of the grand promise made to our first parents, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.

In one word, Cornelius the centurion honored God, in the same manner as the elders did, who by faith '*obtained a good report.*' He was acquainted with the worship of the Jews, and was informed of the message which God had sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, although not hitherto addressed to uncircumcised Gentiles. Until Peter was sent to Cornelius, Jesus had not been announced to them as the Saviour. Before His advent it was only necessary to believe in the Messiah to come, the seed of the woman, the promised Deliverer; but after He appeared on earth, and was preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, it became indispensable for all who heard of His name, to believe that *Jesus was the Christ*, or Messiah. It is on this account that the Apostle John declares that 'whosoever believeth that *Jesus* is the Christ, is born of God,' 1 John 5:1.

This implies two things:

**First** a proper understanding of the character of the Messiah who was to come; and,

**Secondly**, that Jesus, whom the Apostles preached, was He.

This could not be known till after He appeared, and was pointed out as ‘the Son of God.’ Accordingly, Cornelius was informed by the angel that the person of whom he was directed to inquire would tell him ‘*words whereby he and all his house should be saved.*’ This did not prove that he was not till then accepted of God, any more than the apostolic commission proved that none were accepted in Jerusalem previously to their hearing and believing the proclamation concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, as God was about to afford to Cornelius new light, and to give him a new commandment — ‘*THIS is My beloved Son; hear Him*’ — it was requisite that he should attend to it; just as it is indispensably requisite for every Christian, who is ignorant of any part of the will of God, to obey it as soon as it is known to him.

It is only necessary to remark further, that when it is said, ‘*The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;*’ Acts 10:44, this does not refer to their first receiving the Holy Spirit, but to what Paul calls ‘*the manifestation of the Spirit,*’ 1 Cor. 12:7, for it is immediately added, that ‘*they spake with tongues.*’ It was in the same manner that, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Apostles, in His miraculous gifts, long after they were the subjects of His internal influence, and after they had received the Spirit from the Lord Jesus Christ by His breathing on them, John 20:22.

Cornelius, then, was a spiritual worshiper of God, under the old dispensation, who, like the Eastern Magi, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and many others, was waiting for that Messiah who, when He should come, ‘was to tell His people all things,’ and who was ‘set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.’ All in Israel, and others besides, professed to be looking and waiting for the Messiah. But His advent was to be the test of their sincerity. It was to show who should abide the day of His coming, and who should stand when He appeared; for He was to be like a refiner's fire. The case of Cornelius, therefore, forms no exception to that universal truth which the Scriptures declare of the way in which man shall ‘be just with God.’

It is an argument usually adduced in favor of the salvation of the heathen, that as no revelation of mercy has been vouchsafed to them, their condemnation would be unjust. This objection the Apostle Paul meets in the beginning of this Epistle to the Romans, and shows that, though they had not a revelation of mercy through a Mediator, they had, in the works of God, a revelation rendering them *inexcusable* in their guilt. 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest to them: for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.' Here the grounds of the just condemnation of the heathen are clearly expressed. Though they had not a revelation of mercy, they had a revelation of almighty power, and infinite wisdom, against which they transgressed. In all the heathen world, there was not one who worshiped and served God as manifested in creation. If this be so, they are as justly liable to condemnation, according to the light afforded them, as *they* who obey not the Gospel. There will indeed be a great difference in the degree of their punishment, as there is in the degree of their guilt. But all shall be punished according to the revelation afforded them. The heathens will not be condemned for not believing in Jesus, of whom they have not heard, but for not knowing and serving God as manifested in the works of creation and providence.

Nor can any of the sages of Greece and Rome be excepted from this condemnation. Not one of them knew as much of God as he might have known from His works, and not one of them served Him even to the extent of his knowledge. All of them conformed to the worship of their country, and were thus, without *a single exception*, IDOLATERS. Some of the best among them, as Trajan and Pliny, the latter of whom was distinguished as a devout frequenter of the temples of the gods, instead of receiving the Gospel, when proclaimed in their time, violently opposed it, thus proving their enmity against God, and cruelly persecuted the disciples of Jesus. The sages, whom human partiality views as not obnoxious to condemnation as guilty, are evidently exhibited by the Apostle as more deeply criminal than the most ignorant. 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations (or reasonings), and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' Here is the Divine testimony with respect to the wisdom of the

heathen philosophers which is still the admiration of the world. That wisdom, which has rendered them the admiration of ages, is reckoned by God as only a manifestation of their folly. While their wisdom and their virtue are of so much account in the estimation of many who profess Christianity, that these are deemed sufficient to give them a title to the favor of God, the Searcher of hearts Himself declares them to be fools. And what human vanity now calls the sublime speculations of the illustrious sages of antiquity, Divine wisdom designates as vain reasonings, the effusions of a foolish and darkened heart. There can be no doubt, from the most express as well as the implied testimony of Scripture, that the heathen philosophers, instead of being excepted from the condemnation denounced against the Pagan world, were the most guilty of all the heathens. Their greater light only rendered them the more inexcusable in their sin, and their service of false gods. It is the express testimony of God Himself, that they are '*without excuse*.'

That no part of the heathen world can be exempted from this condemnation, is clear from the fact that the Apostle in the passages quoted from the first chapter of this Epistle, is describing the character of all men of all nations; and his conclusion from the whole is, that all are guilty before God, Rom. 3:19. If any could be exempted from this character, this conclusion would be unsound. To say, then, that there may be an exception in favor of those called 'virtuous heathens,' is to make an assertion in opposition to the testimony of God. Whatever might be the virtue of individuals, as far as external conduct was concerned, that virtue had nothing in it that could meet the law and justice of God. They might have done many things good and acceptable to men, but these were not done from the motives that render human actions good in the estimation of God. Not one of their actions could be justly called good, while they are all condemned for not glorifying God as He was manifested in His works. All the heathen world were not equally flagitious in their conduct, but the character ascribed to them by the Apostle applies to them all.

'And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things,

disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.' Here is God's account of the character of the heathen world. This is a description of the persons that appear to many to be too good to be condemned by God, and whom they argue it would be unjust to condemn. They were, says the Apostle, '*haters of God.*'

It may be alleged that the benefits of the death of Christ might be extended to heathens. That this might have been the case, had it been the will of God, none should question. But it is a matter of testimony, and the Scriptures affirm most pointedly, that heathens are without excuse in their sin, and perish without remedy. God could have enlightened the heathens with respect to the way of mercy, as easily without the Scriptures as with them. But this has not been the good pleasure of His will. It is an undoubted matter of fact, that there is nothing to be found in any human records concerning the life of any man, who enjoyed no external testimony to the Messiah, in which we can discover the least resemblance to the holiness of the truth. The genius by whom Socrates pretended to be instructed taught him nothing about his lost and ruined condition, nothing about the way of mercy. In his virtue there is nothing like the obedience of a man born of God; and nothing that indicates spiritual life in any part of his character. Could that man have been born of God who died in the worship of idols, giving with his latest breath his public testimony in favor of the superstition of his country? Socrates, then, was not a fearer of God or a worker of righteousness. Instead of dying, as he is usually represented, as a martyr to the faith of the unity of God, he died an IDOLATER, doing homage to the devil, and not to Jehovah.

God has declared that the heathen world shall perish in their sins. This is expressed in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in the 12th verse, as clearly as language can convey a meaning. 'For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.' It might be objected that it would be unjust to condemn men who had sinned without the knowledge of the law which prohibits sin. To this objection the Apostle replies, in the 14th and 15th verses, that although the Gentiles had not the written law, they were not without a law. 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by

nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.’

On this 14th verse some have attempted to ground the salvation of those whom they call virtuous heathens. They insist that the language implies that some heathens fulfilled the law of nature. But this is altogether unfounded, and entirely at variance with the meaning of the passage. The words do not assert that the persons alluded to keep the law of nature in such a manner as thereby to obtain salvation; for this would be to conclude against what had before been so expressly asserted, and also against the whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning, which goes to prove the truth of what he had asserted in the 16th and 17th verses of the first chapter, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, because *therein is the righteousness of God revealed*. In order to confirm this declaration, Paul announces that the wrath of God is revealed against all *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness*, and then proceeds to show that man has no righteousness of his own, being both ungodly and unrighteous. This he proves in the first and second chapters respecting both Jews and Gentiles. And after having fully shown in the third chapter, where he includes them both together, that *there is none righteous, no, not one*, he arrives at the conclusion that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified. This conducts him back to the declaration with which he had commenced, respecting the manifestation of that righteousness or conformity to the law which God Himself had provided, in order to justification, which is received by faith. The doctrine, then, of the passage in question is, that the Gentiles prove by their conduct that they have the work of the law — that is, what the law teaches — written in their hearts, which renders them fit subjects of judgment. Every man in the world in this way does many of the things which the law teaches, though not one of them perfectly. There is no man so wicked as not to have done many things because he thought them right, and to have avoided many things because he thought them wrong. The most wicked man on earth will approve of certain things as right, and condemn other things as wrong. And this shows that all men are fit subjects of judgment, because they all have the knowledge of sin<sup>[6]</sup> — a standard of right and wrong in their minds, to which, however, no man acts up.



It is alleged that, although the Apostle's language shows that all the Gentiles are guilty before God, yet it does not imply that they will be condemned. They may be guilty, yet be saved by mercy through Jesus Christ. But the language of the Apostle entirely precludes the possibility of such a supposition. It is not said that they who have sinned without law are guilty without law, but that they shall '*perish without law*,' Rom. 2:12. The language, then, does not merely assert their guilt, but clearly asserts their condemnation. *They shall perish*. — No criticism can make this expression consistent with the salvation of the Gentiles who know not God.

The truth of that decisive passage above quoted, with which the Apostle opens his discussion, and on which he grounds all that follows in this Epistle to the Romans, should never be lost sight of. The Gospel 'is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.' Here it is asserted that the Gospel is the means by which God exerts His power for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles, because in it is revealed the righteousness He has provided for them, which is received by faith. This, according to Scripture, is the only way in which men are saved.

The condemnation of the heathen, the grounds of which are shown by Paul in this place, is also asserted or implied in many other parts of Scripture. There is the most abundant evidence, from the character given of the Gentile world in many passages, that in the state of nature men are universally under condemnation. This is implied, —

*First*, in the empire ascribed to Satan;

*Second*, in the character given to the Gentiles, and in the character given to believers from among the Gentiles before their conversion; and

*Third*, in the passages that declare the final doom of idolaters.

---

*First*, This is implied in the empire which the Scriptures ascribe to Satan. — He is called the prince of this world — the god of this world — the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; and he and his angels are called the rulers of the darkness of this world, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4;



Eph. 2:2, 6:12. All such passages imply that the world in general are the subjects and slaves of Satan. 'We know,' says the Apostle John, 'that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness,' — or in the evil one.

**Secondly,** *The same thing appears from the character given of the Gentiles, and the previous character of Gentile believers,* Matt. 6:32, 'For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' — Here the Gentiles are supposed to be unconcerned about the things of God, and to be solely intent about the things of this life. Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in Me.' Here the Gentiles are supposed not only to be in utter darkness, but to be totally blind, and under the tyranny of Satan, and in the guilt of their sins. 1 Cor. 10:20, 'But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils (or demons), and not to God.' Here the devil is declared to be the god worshiped by the Gentiles. 1 Cor. 12:2, 'Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.' Here the Gentiles, instead of being the worshipers of the true God, are represented as the worshipers of dumb idols. 2 Cor. 6:16, 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' There is an utter inconsistency between idolatry and the service of God. Gal. 4:8, 'Howbeit, then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.' Before these persons were called by the Gospel, they were not serving God according to the light of nature, but doing service to them which by nature are not gods. Eph. 2:2, 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Here sin is designated as the course of this world; and all the Christians addressed are declared to have been previously walking in this course. There was not among them one servant of God, even according to the light of nature. The devil is here spoken of as the spirit that works in the hearts of all till they are made acquainted with the Messiah. Every Christian, not only among the Ephesians, but every Christian to the end of time, till he knows the truth, is thus represented as having his conversation among the children of disobedience, living in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires

of the flesh and of the mind. Where, then, are the virtuous heathens, living in such a manner as to obtain salvation by their walk according to the light of nature? Eph. 2:11, 12, 'Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' Here all Gentiles unacquainted with the Messiah are supposed to be without Christ. They are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise. And that this implies not merely that they were excluded from communion with the Church of Israel, but from the whole Church of God, is evident from the 19th verse: 'Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' At the time the Apostle wrote, they were no more strangers and foreigners, but they were still equally strangers and foreigners to the Jewish Church and system. In this passage, also, they are represented as having been formerly without hope and without God. This is not the character of any who are living in such a manner as to be saved. What can more clearly express the state of all the Gentile nations than Eph. 4:17-19? 'This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (hardness) of their heart: who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.' Believers are here warned not to walk as other Gentiles in the vanity of their mind. This implies that all unenlightened Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind. Their understanding is said to be darkened, and themselves to be alienated from the life of God, through their ignorance, occasioned by the hardness of their hearts. Can men be in the way of salvation, yet be alienated from the life of God, past feeling, and working all uncleanness with greediness? 1 Thess. 1:9, 'For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.' These believers were all formerly the worshipers of idols. None of them were walking according to the light of nature. 1 Thess. 2:16, 'Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved.' Here it is implied that, in order to be saved, the

Gentiles must hear the Gospel. 1 Thess. 4:5, 'Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.' Here it is implied that all unenlightened Gentiles live in the lust of concupiscence. This is ascribed to their not knowing God, and it is implied that nothing but the knowledge of God can deliver from this state. 1 Pet. 4:3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lust, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' Here all the unenlightened Gentiles are supposed to be living in a course of sin. No such characters are to be found among them as persons serving the true God according to the light of nature.

*Thirdly, The condemnation of the heathen world is implied in the denunciations of wrath against all idolaters.* — In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, it is declared that idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If this be one of the true sayings of God, how can Socrates, or any other heathen, enter the heavenly Jerusalem? Idolatry, although a species of worship, is declared, Gal. 5:19, 20, to be one of the works of the flesh that excludes from heaven. This shows that idolatry does not originate in want of evidence of the God of creation, but in the corruption of the heart. It is then without excuse. It is asserted, 2 Thess. 2:8, that the Lord Jesus will be revealed to take vengeance on all them that know not God, as well as on them who believe not the Gospel. This implies the condemnation of all, in every age, who did not know God as revealed in the promise of the Messiah. It is to be observed, however, that many in the early ages of the world were acquainted with the original promise made to our first parents, who were not acquainted with the Scriptures. And many in every age might have been acquainted with the coming of the Messiah, who had no communion with Israel. All idolaters are said, Rev. 21:8, to have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And in Rev. 22:15, idolaters are declared to be 'without' the city. Since, then, all heathen nations have been idolaters, and not *one* exception among their wise men is to be found who did not conform to the worship of idols, and since all idolaters are to be condemned, every hope that is entertained in their favor is a hope in rebellion against the will and the truth of God.

The same awful truths are declared throughout the whole Old Testament Scriptures respecting idolaters and those who know not God. Ps. 74:20,

‘Have respect unto the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty;’ Ps. 97:7, ‘Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols;’ Ps. 79:6, ‘Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy name.’ In Jeremiah, 10:25, the same threatening is repeated. Job 18:21, ‘Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.’ Prov. 29:18, ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish.’ The same representations as those contained in the above passages, of all who are ignorant of God's way of salvation, is uniformly given throughout the Scriptures. It is held forth in the whole Mosaic dispensation, and in all that is said to Israel respecting the surrounding nations.

Upon the whole, nothing can be more clearly taught in the Bible, than that, since the entrance of sin into the world, there never has been any real religion or any saving relation formed between God and man, except by the revelation, more or less distinct, oral or written, of mercy through the atonement of the only-begotten Son of God. Jesus Christ is the *Way*, and the *Truth*, and the *Life*; no man cometh to the Father but by Him. ‘No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.’ All *immediate* friendly intercourse between God and man has since the fall been cut off; and it is only through faith in the one Mediator that it is restored. The efficacy of the obedience of the Son of God unto death, reached back to the period when, according to the first annunciation of mercy, it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.<sup>[7]</sup> The meaning of this promise, as well as of the threatened punishment of transgressors, was afterwards unfolded with increasing clearness. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. 2:5, — of the everlasting righteousness of God to be wrought by the Messiah, which is received by faith; so that, at the renovation of the world after the flood, the way in which man should be ‘just with God’ was proclaimed by the second parent of the human race, as it had been intimated to Adam at the beginning. If, therefore, in any age or nation this great truth has been forgotten and lost, it has been owing to the ungodliness of mankind rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. The wisest among the heathen, as has been already remarked, are described by the Apostle as ‘HATERS OF GOD,’ who ‘*did not like to retain God in their knowledge,*’ and who not only were ‘*filled with all unrighteousness,*’ and

guilty of the greatest immoralities, but had arrived at the very last limits of wickedness and moral degradation — *‘having pleasure in them that do them.’*

In the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Larger Catechism, Question 60, it is asked, *‘Can they who have never heard the Gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in Him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?’* Answer — ‘They who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in Him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of His body the Church.’

The 18th Article of the Church of England is as follows: — ‘They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.’

It may appear to some that, though the above doctrine is true, as it is very offensive to the world, and even not quite agreeable to many Christians themselves, it would be more prudent to pass it over in silence. It may seem a curious question rather than a doctrine which is for edification. But this, as it respects any part of the word of God, is a most ungodly sentiment. It is the wisdom of man opposed to the wisdom of God. It blasphemously supposes that God teaches what His people should not learn — it charges the Scriptures with inconsistency.

But it is not a question of curiosity, — it is a truth calculated to produce the most powerful influence on the mind of every believer. It strikes down man to the dust, and exhibits God as a sovereign. This doctrine, which the carnal heart of man cannot bear, meets us in the Scriptures at every step, and accompanies the whole procedure of Jehovah, both in His providence and in His grace. What God in so many ways teaches concerning Himself, Christians ought not to hide in their representations of His character. The wisdom that conceals any part of the Divine character, with a view to recommend it, is akin to that blasphemy which charges God with the same, as a blemish. Christians ought to take their views of God from His own revelation of Himself, and not from the conceptions which their depraved minds would suggest. To hide what God is, or to represent Him in any point

of view as what He is not, is to deny Jehovah, to be ashamed of Christ, and to form to ourselves an idol of our own imagination. Let it be remembered that this is a part of the Divine testimony of which Christians are not to be ashamed. Jesus Christ has declared not only that He will be ashamed of that man who is ashamed of Him, but of all who are ashamed of His word. It is at our peril, then, if we are ashamed of any part of the Divine testimony, as far as we know it. Let it further be remembered, that *every doctrine contained in the Scripture is of a practical nature, and of practical importance.*

The human mind is fruitful in the invention of excuses for the heathen, while God most unequivocally declares that they are *without excuse*. Is this a light matter? Is it safe to join issue in a cause against the Most High? That we should feel for the condemned heathen, is highly proper. If the misery of any creature occasion us no pain, we are deficient in love, and guilty before God. Nor does it appear that acquiescence in the Divine will implies that in this life at least we should not have a wish that all men might be happy. This seems to be clearly intimated in the conduct of Paul before Agrippa. ‘I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.’ He had no reason to believe any such thing. But it would have given him great satisfaction had it been true. Jesus Christ also, who in the highest degree possessed all the sympathies of our nature without sin, wept over Jerusalem when He announced its impending fate. But while Christians ought to feel for the misery of every fellow-creature, they should beware of manifesting their love to them by calling in question the word or the justice of Jehovah. It is enough to know that, although we are unable to fathom the Divine counsels, the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Those, however, who contend for the truth as declared in the Scriptures on the subject in question, are often considered to be deficient in charity. The heathens in the same way charged the Christians in the first ages as haters of mankind, because they would not grant that all religions were equally safe and good. The same spirit often manifests itself in the disapprobation of the conduct of those who faithfully declare doctrines that are generally offensive. But it is not a Christian spirit that would induce us, out of complaisance to men, to hide or avoid anything taught by the Spirit of God; or to express hopes, or at least to suppress fears, respecting those whom the Scriptures



condemn. Charity or love does not require us to believe, contrary to evidence, that all is well with our neighbors, or to say that it is so; but it prompts us to neglect no means in our power to do them good. The spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of love and of a sound mind, and these ought never to be separated. We should speak the truth in love; but love without truth, like faith without works, is dead. Spurious charity<sup>[8]</sup> aims at extending the empire of the Gospel, by hiding some of its characteristic features, and hopes to make it agreeable to the world, by suppressing part of its testimony. This is injurious to the character of Divine revelation, and ought to be loudly denounced as one of the means by which Satan, under the appearance of an angel of light, endeavors to turn men from the truth. The spirit that dictates such a course may dignify itself with the appellation of a Christian spirit, and may be hailed and admired as such by the world, but will for ever find its condemnation in the example of our Lord and His Apostles. The Apostle John, who speaks so much of the importance of charity, and who was himself so bright an example of that heavenly grace, employs the strongest expressions to show the hatefulness and the danger of error. And what is his definition of charity? ‘This is love, that we walk after His commandments.’ Had the truth respecting the condition of heathens not been kept so much in the background, from a fear of giving offence; had not Christians shut their eyes to the doctrine of Scripture on the subject, they would not have satisfied themselves without making earlier and more vigorous efforts to proclaim in the benighted regions of the world the unsearchable riches of Christ.

This doctrine is calculated greatly to enhance the value of the Gospel in the esteem of Christians, reminding them that the knowledge of it is indispensable in order to their being saved, and exciting within them the most lively gratitude. When so many millions of the human race are suffered to live in ignorance of the way of salvation, what thanks are due to God on the part of those whose lot has been cast in a land of light! It is likewise calculated to awaken the most ardent zeal for the dissemination of the Gospel. If men might be saved through Christ by the law of nature, what encouragement would there be for any extraordinary exertions for this object? The view, then, which is here given of the subject is the only one which stimulates zeal for the spreading of the glad news of salvation. If the Gospel is the only medium of communicating to men the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, let Christians do all that lies in their power for its diffusion, till

the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

---

### SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

---

The general attention which has of late years been drawn to the observance of the Sabbath, cannot fail to be a subject of congratulation with every Christian. The importance of the institution is fully perceived only by those who tremble at the word of God; yet every reflecting mind is compelled to acknowledge that, whether as regards mental or physical exertion, some such interval of rest is necessary for the well-being of society.<sup>[9]</sup> But no argument, however cogent, unless immediately derived from the Scriptures of truth, is sufficient to establish the obligation to sanctify the seventh day, which must always be rested on the authority of God. It is therefore of great moment that the Divine character of the sabbatical institution should be distinctly understood; and the more so, because many have been led to imagine that it is a mere Jewish ordinance, unrecognized in the New Testament, and even set aside, or in a measure superseded, by our Lord and His Apostles, as in ch. 14:5, 6, of the Epistle to the Romans. This is a most pernicious error, — an error exhibiting great ignorance of spiritual things, and one highly calculated to retard the progress of the Christian in the Divine life. The Apostles, when speaking of days which might or might not be observed without sin, obviously alluded to holy days peculiar to the Jewish economy, and with it about to vanish away; but the Sabbath was set apart from the beginning of the world, and was therefore intended to be held equally holy under the patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian dispensations.

In proving the duty of Christians to hallow the Lord's day, it is necessary to show that there is nothing in this duty peculiar to the law of Moses, but that it rests on the permanent obligation of the original institution, afterwards embodied in the Decalogue, and also recognized by our Lord and His Apostles. It is necessary, also, to prove that the change of the day from the last to the first day of the week has not made void the import of the primary institution or of the fourth commandment, whose binding and permanent authority is by no means affected by that change. If it could be ascertained that the Sabbath is not appointed to be observed on the first day of the week, the consequence would be, not that we should be freed from its obligation,



but that we ought to sanctify it on the original day. This would be incumbent on all the posterity of Adam to the end of the world.

We are taught that it is the reasonable service of every intelligent creature to hold all that he possesses at the disposal of 'Him in whom we live and move, and have our being.' In paradise a grant was made to man of the fruits of the earth, with one reservation; after the flood this grant was renewed and extended; and without such a grant it would have been an act of robbery for man to seize upon any one of the productions of his Maker. The same is true in regard to our time. Every minute belongs to God, and it is for the Almighty to determine in what manner we are to number and employ our days. On this subject He has not left mankind in ignorance, but has instituted the ordinance of the weekly rest, and commanded it to be observed according to His appointment.

---

**THE SABBATH ANTERIOR TO THE  
MOSAIC DISPENSATION.**

---

The Sabbath neither originated nor ceased with the law of Moses. It was instituted immediately after the creation, before man had sinned, and for a reason that has no dependence on that economy. *'And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made,'* Gen. 2:2. Here a reason is given for the sanctification of the seventh day, unconnected with anything local or temporary; and the blessing pronounced on it, as well as its sanctification, imply that it is blessed and sanctified for man. All the days of creation were good. None of them was cursed or unholy, — the seventh day, therefore, was not blessed and sanctified on account of possessing any natural superiority or preeminence. It was sanctified by a command to Adam, and through him to all his posterity, to keep it holy as a day set apart and blessed by the Creator, on which He rested from His work; and this is the reason given in the fourth commandment, more than two thousand years afterwards, for sanctifying this day. If, then, on a certain account, one day of the week is declared to be blessed and sanctified, it must be distinguished from the other days, and a peculiar blessing must rest upon it. Are, then, the Jews alone concerned in this? What

exclusive connection has such a Sabbath with Jewish institutions of a mere temporary nature? Are not all men in all ages equally interested in it? If, even in a state of innocence, the Sabbath was a blessing to man, how much more is it necessary for him in a state of sin, degradation, and toil?

Two great laws were delivered to man at the beginning, in both of which God asserted His sovereignty. The first was the appointment of the Sabbath, or a seventh day's rest. The second was the law of marriage. These two ordinances were instituted as the basis of that relation which was to subsist between God and man, and of every relative connection among men. They were ordinances coeval in their appointment with the existence of the human race upon earth, and must subsist while man has a being upon it.

Notwithstanding the proof from the words of the institution, Gen. 2:2, that the Sabbath was to be universally observed, it has been urged by those who impugn its authority, that no mention is made of it during the patriarchal ages, and therefore that it cannot then have been in force. But, considering the nature and brevity of the Scripture history, even were it true that no intimation is given respecting the Sabbath in that period, this would furnish no valid argument against its existence. In several books of the Old Testament, even in those where the omission was hardly to have been anticipated, the Sabbath is not mentioned, although, in the periods in which they were written, it continued to be regularly observed. Numerous allusions, however, are from the beginning, and all along, to be found to the Sabbath. Besides many others, the division of time into weeks of seven days may be noticed; and the frequent introduction of the number seven, as even in the short account of the flood, Gen. 7:2, 3, 4, 10, 8:10, 12, relating both to casual occurrences and to the worship of God. The number seven is expressed in Hebrew by a word signifying fullness, perfection, or completion; and to this number, it may be further observed, a sacred character has been attached from the earliest ages, among all nations, whether idolaters or worshipers of the true God. But even if no mention had been made of the observance of the Sabbath, and no allusion to it had been found during the patriarchal ages, or at any other period, its binding obligation would remain unimpaired, since the institution itself, and the ground on which it rests, are so fully declared at the commencement of the Scriptures as to render any recurrence to the subject in the way of authority unnecessary.

In the account of the gathering of the manna, Ex. 16:4, before the law was delivered from Sinai, we have satisfactory evidence of the obligation to observe the Sabbath day. 'Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no. And it shall come to pass that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.' Here is direct reference to a 'law,' previously existing, by which God was to prove the obedience of the Israelites; and here also is a clear intimation that the law referred to required the separation of the seventh from the other days of the week. On the Sabbath they were to rest; on the Sabbath they were not to gather the manna, and, in the providence of God, it was declared that this should not be necessary, for God would give them as much on the sixth day as would also suffice for the seventh. Accordingly, it is said, verse 22, 'And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.' When, notwithstanding this injunction, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather the manna, 'the Lord,' it is added, verse 28, 'said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and My laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.' Here is express mention of the seventh day, and of the Sabbath, and reference to God's *laws* and *commandments*, previously given, respecting it. The Sabbath, it is to be observed, too, is spoken of in the past time — the Lord *hath given*; and the manna in the present — He *giveth*; while the Sabbath, formerly given, is declared to be the reason why there was twice as much manna on the sixth day. 'The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, *therefore* He giveth you in the

sixth day the bread of two days.’ In all this we have clear proof of the previous existence of a ‘LAW,’ namely, ‘*the rest of the holy Sabbath.*’ This law was imposed on Adam when he stood as the representative of the whole human race, and is consequently binding on all his posterity. We may here observe that three miracles in honor of the Sabbath, and to secure it against desecration, were wrought every week before the promulgation of the law. Double the quantity of manna fell every sixth day. None fell on the Sabbath. The manna preserved for that day did not corrupt. We have thus seen that the duty of the sanctification of the Sabbath was enjoined before the existence of the Mosaic dispensation; it shall now be proved that it remains in force since that dispensation has passed away.

---

**THE SABBATH BINDING ALIKE UNDER  
THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN  
DISPENSATIONS.**

---

The duty of the observance of the Sabbath, resting on the original institution, forms a part of the ten commandments, and on this account also is of permanent and universal obligation. It is most erroneous to suppose that because these commandments were delivered to the Israelites, that for them they were exclusively intended. To the Jews were committed the oracles of God, and they were appointed His witnesses to all nations, Isa. 43:10, 12. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the general laws delivered to Israel as a testimony for all mankind, and those national laws — the statutes and the judgments — which were peculiar to that people. All the other nations had fallen into idolatry, because ‘they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.’ From these the Israelites were separated, in order that by them the worship of the true Jehovah might be maintained; and, above all, that from among them the Messiah should spring. For the purpose of continuing this separation, as well as of rendering it subservient to the future dispensation, the law in its various parts, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, was delivered to Israel. The moral law, contained in the ten commandments, was, from its nature, of universal and permanent obligation; while the laws that were political, ritual, or ceremonial had previously no existence, and were to be abrogated when their destined end was accomplished. But the Decalogue, on which these other laws were grounded, the sum of which is the love of

God and of our neighbor, containing the eternal rule of right and wrong, had been in force from the beginning, and must for ever continue immutable. It was accordingly distinguished from the other laws in a very remarkable manner, both in its promulgation and in its preservation.

---

**THE MANNER OF THE PROMULGATION  
OF THE DECALOGUE.**

---

The ten commandments alone were *promulgated* by the voice of God, amidst the most manifest tokens of the Divine presence and majesty. They were delivered to a whole nation, who trembled when they heard them, and solemnly promised obedience. When they were proclaimed, Moses and Aaron were only present on the mount, which the people and the priests were forbidden even to touch. And as these commandments had been pronounced by the voice of God, in the hearing of all the people, they were also written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, while the other laws were delivered to Moses only, and written by him in a book. ‘These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more: and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me,’ Deut. 5:22. Such were the striking peculiarities of the promulgation of the ten commandments.

The two tables of the law were given to Moses on the mount, but before he returned to the people they had violated and trampled on its great commandment. Moses, in consequence, cast the tables out of his hand and brake them, thus significantly indicating that the law given to man had been broken, and that, if committed to his keeping, by him it could not be fulfilled. With man this was impossible, but with God all things are possible. It was His eternal purpose, purposed in Christ Jesus, that His law should notwithstanding be fulfilled, and that by His own power this fulfillment should be accomplished. Moses was therefore commanded to prepare two new tables, on which God again wrote ‘the words that were in the first tables,’ Ex. 34:1, which He delivered once more into the hand of Moses; but in doing so not even Aaron, and no man but Moses, representing on that occasion the one Mediator between God and man, was allowed to go up, or to be seen throughout all the mount. ‘And the Lord passed by before him, and

proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty,' Ex. 34:3, 6. It was thus declared that through the goodness and mercy of God, sin, the transgression of the law, should be pardoned, but that this should be effected in consistency with His holiness and justice; that the sinner should be forgiven, but sin should not go unpunished.

---

**THE MANNER OF THE PRESERVATION  
OF THE DECALOGUE, AND THE  
LESSONS THEREBY TAUGHT.**

---

In the manner of their *preservation*, the ten commandments were as much distinguished from all the other laws given to Israel, as they had been in the mode of their promulgation. A tabernacle was prepared for their reception, by the special direction of God, and within it an ark placed, in which the two tables of the law were to be deposited. The ark, formed of the most durable wood, was overlaid with gold within and without. It was called the ark of the covenant, and over it was placed the mercy-seat, that eminent type of the Mediator of the new covenant. On this mercy-seat the Divine glory was to descend, and thence as from a throne Jehovah was to hold communication with His people. When the tabernacle was 'set up,' the ark, covered with a veil, was placed in it, and Aaron and his sons were consecrated. When this was done, Moses 'took and put the testimony (the two tables of the law) into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses,' Ex. 40:20, 21.

Similar solemnities were observed when the ark was transferred from the tabernacle to the temple. 'And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark, and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without; and there they are unto this day. There was nothing in the ark

save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt,' 1 Kings 8:6-9.

Into the holy of holies, in which were the ark and the mercy-seat, the high priest alone entered, and that only once every year, after offering a solemn sacrifice of atonement for himself and all the people, and the punishment of death was denounced against him if he entered at any other time; and at no time was any other man allowed to enter. Even in the tabernacle there was to be no man when he made the atonement, Lev. 16:17. When the tabernacle was to be removed, Aaron and his sons were to take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the testimony with it, and to put two more coverings over it. 'After that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing lest they die,' Num. 4:5, 15. It was death to touch the ark. Uzzah was smitten with death for putting his hand to it, 2 Sam. 6:7. It was death to look into it. 'And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men,' 1 Sam. 6:19. Both these examples contain most salutary instruction to those who have fled to Christ for refuge, and to all who are yet in their sins. To this hour it is death to look, in a spirit of self-righteousness, on that law which the ark contained. It is death to look on it, except through Him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The importance attached to the tabernacle and the ark containing the ten commandments, and *these alone*, demands particular attention. While the history of the creation of the universe — of the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars — is related by the sacred historian in *one* short chapter, the account of the construction of the tabernacle and the ark is detailed in *thirteen*. In his account of the creation of the universe, Moses is brief and general; in that of the construction of the tabernacle and the ark, he is copious, and records the smallest peculiarities. The world was created in order that God should be glorified by the Church, and that by it His manifold wisdom might be made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. 3:10. In the tabernacle and the ark His law was to be deposited, till by the coming of His Son it should be fulfilled for the redemption of His people from its curse;



and accordingly the construction of the tabernacle and the ark is spoken of more amply and more particularly than the formation of all the elements and all the universe.

The remarkable prominence thus given to the construction of the tabernacle, and the extraordinary precautions regarding the ark, as subservient to the conservation of the holy law, prove its importance in the sight of God, — of that everlasting law by which He governs the world, which is holy, and just, and good, and which in its substance must be eternally binding on all intelligent creatures, both men and angels. This law had been broken by man. But though broken and dishonored, its authority was in due time to be vindicated, not merely by the infliction of its awful penalty, but also by the fulfillment of its holy precepts, and that, too, upon earth, which had been the scene of its violation. Had not this been the purpose of God, we may be assured that the law would never again have been promulgated to man. Nothing would have remained but a fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation to consume its transgressors. But God, in the midst of wrath, remembered mercy. Glory to God in the highest was at length, through the fulfilling of this law, to be proclaimed, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

In the renewal of the tables of the law, accompanied with the proclamation of the mercy of God, and their being placed in the ark covered with the mercy-seat, intimation was given of that future fulfillment of the law, and the removal of its curse. In other words, it was intimated that a righteousness adequate to all its demands, which could not be performed by man, should be provided by God. And this solemn transaction, and the purposed fulfillment of its import, were, in the 40th Psalm, prophetically declared of Him who alone could bring in this righteousness, where He Himself announces His coming to do His father's will. 'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within My heart.' Here we are made acquainted with the reason why the holy law was promulgated by the voice of Jehovah Himself with the sound of a trumpet, amidst thunderings and lightnings from the mountain that burned with fire, and proclaimed in this awful manner as a testimony to all nations

and every age of the world; why, after being broken, the tables of the law were renewed, and deposited in the tabernacle and the ark; why such importance was attached to them for its preservation; and why such solemn prohibitions respecting them were added, backed by the sanction of instant death. This ‘fiery law,’ thus covered from the eye of man, was like the book sealed with seven seals, which no man in heaven nor on earth was found worthy to open, neither to look thereon. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who alone could look upon that book, alone could fulfill that holy law. He only could magnify and make it honorable. He only could ‘bring in everlasting righteousness,’ — a righteousness performed in time, but to endure throughout eternity, — consisting at once in suffering the penalty which man by transgression had incurred, and in the fulfillment of the precept which he had failed to obey. His obedience in this double respect reaches infinitely beyond the power of all created beings, and furnishes of itself incontestible proof, were none besides to be found in the book of God, that Jesus Christ was ‘*God manifest in the flesh,*’ ‘*Emmanuel, God with us,*’ ‘*Jehovah our righteousness.*’

That there was no other way in which God's law could be fulfilled, after it had been broken, is certain, since God does nothing in vain. If in any other way this could have been accomplished, the highest of all means, as the incarnation of His Son must appear in the eye of every one who believes that He is ‘over all, God blessed for ever,’ would not have been employed. The language of our Lord Himself was, ‘O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.’ It did not pass from Him; and this demonstrates that by no other *possible* means could the law have been fulfilled, and the work of man's salvation accomplished. The truth and the faithfulness of God required that the honor of His violated law should be vindicated by the infliction of its penalty, according to His express declaration to the first man, if it should be transgressed. Sin, therefore, must have been punished either in the person of the sinner or of a surety in his place; and as it was impossible that any mere creature, even of the highest possible order, could be such a surety, either the incarnation of the Son of God, or the punishment of the transgressor, was inevitable. The fulfillment of the law, however, by His Son, did not leave it to be afterwards abrogated or trampled on by those who should receive the benefit of His vicarious obedience, while its nature forbade its being changed or relaxed in the smallest degree, which would render it neither holy nor just,

and consequently unworthy of God. There are many, notwithstanding, who maintain that, under the new covenant, the requirements of this holy law are modified or lowered, so as to be adapted to that degree of obedience which can be yielded by fallen man. This most destructive error, degrading to the character of God, utterly at variance with His holiness and justice, supposing the introduction of one evil to remedy another, gives an entirely false view of the plan of redemption. It is subversive of the law; for not only, if it failed to require perfect holiness, would it cease to be a holy law, but it would cease to be in any sense a law. Could that be called a law which did not demand obedience to its own requirements, and which would not be violated when they were disobeyed? Did ever such a law exist? Does not every law, whether Divine or human, even respecting things of the least value, require implicit and perfect obedience? Can any one show what are the requirements of that mitigated law, of which some so ignorantly speak, or where it is to be found?

In the plan of salvation, it is true, provision is made for God's acceptance of the services of His children, although as coming from them they are imperfect, — in other words, alloyed with sin, and so falling short of the Divine requirements. But on what ground are they accepted? Is it on their own account? If so, it would indeed be at the expense of the perfection of the law. But it is far otherwise. As the high priest of Israel made atonement for the uncleanness of the people, so the services of believers are presented to God by their great High Priest, through whose atonement and intercession the sin that cleaves to them is entirely removed. 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon those whom I reserve.' Washed in that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, they are presented faultless by Him who is their surety; in other words, as entirely conformed to the perfect standard of God's holy law. The duty of believers is to be perfect, even as their Father which is in heaven is perfect; but as in all things, and in every moment, they come short, their imperfections are not set aside by lowering the requirements of the law of God, or by expunging any part of it, but are altogether removed in a way that to the utmost honors that law, satisfying its highest demands by Him with whom they are one. God, then, is 'a just God and a Saviour;' but this He could not be, if, in the plan of salvation, He either abrogated or lowered His law, or dispensed with the perfect obedience to it of those who are saved, or

pardoned their sins without an atonement, or accepted their persons or services in any other way than that in which the law is 'fulfilled' in them, Rom. 8:4. Well might the Apostle say, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.'

---

**PROOF OF THE PERMANENCE OF  
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT  
DERIVED FROM THE FORE-  
GOING STATEMENTS.**

---

It having been the purpose of God, that the dishonor done to His law in its violation should be repaired in a way in which it is exhibited as more glorious and more highly valued by Him than ever it had been before, ought not means to have been used forcibly to impress this on the minds of men, till that reparation should take place? The precautions, therefore, employed for the preservation of the two tables of the law, after the first had been broken, which in any other view would, from their strictness and minuteness, be altogether unaccountable, were admirably adapted to the end for which they were appointed. Here, then, we have a demonstration of the permanent obligation of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, since it constitutes a part of that law which was so signally distinguished in its promulgation, and so carefully deposited for its preservation — of that law which the Redeemer fulfilled for the justification of His people; and that law by which they are justified, they must be bound in all its parts to obey. How, then, shall it ever be supposed that the ten commandments belonged only to Israel, and are not of everlasting and universal obligation? Or on what ground can it be affirmed that the fourth commandment is to be separated from the rest, so that one is blotted out of their number, and that they are now reduced to nine?

Here let us for a moment pause, and consider how God, in the redemption of His people, and the forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ, has abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence. The manner in which these blessings are provided is at once most humbling and most consolatory. Their communion with their heavenly Father is secured; but the way in which it is obtained lays them low in the dust. All the glory redounds to God, while the richest benefits are conferred on man. Here, too, the conclusion to which the Apostle conducts his argument, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is strikingly

applicable. There he had established the superiority of the new covenant over that first covenant, which made nothing perfect, and had vanished away — during which ‘the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest;’ and he sums up the whole in the following consolatory exhortation: — ‘Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.’

On the whole, it is evident that the ten commandments in no respect exclusively belonged, like the other laws, to the nation of Israel. These *laws*, written in a book, Deut. 31:9, 24, 26, were *delivered to them for their keeping*, and placed at the side of the ark. But after the first tables on which the ten commandments had been inscribed were broken, the renewed tables, guarded by the most awful sanctions, were put *within* the ark, and *covered even from their sight*. They were deposited beneath the mercy-seat, in the tabernacle, the ‘habitation’ of the Lord, and afterwards in the temple, and brought ‘into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place.’ Nor was this holy sanctuary laid open and exposed to view until He who had fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law said, IT IS FINISHED. The veil of the temple was then rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The mystery of the ark and the ten commandments deposited in it was unfolded, and the way into the holiest of all made manifest. These commandments are moral in their nature, requiring what is applicable to men in every age; and in the heart of this universal and eternal law the fourth commandment is embodied. We are thus taught that the Sabbath is not a mere ceremonial institution; that it is, on the contrary, a command of moral obligation, regulating by Divine authority the disposal of our time, teaching us how much we may devote to the world, and how much we are to reserve for God. Those who imagine that such a commandment is of a transient or ceremonial character, have very ill considered the words in which it is couched, the duty which it is designed to inculcate, or the sanction by which it is enforced.

---

**INTERNAL EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT  
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS  
OF UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION.**

---

The fourth commandment contains in itself sufficient proof that it did not exclusively belong to the Mosaic dispensation, but that the duty it enjoins was at all times binding on man from the period of his creation. This is evident from the reason by which the duty of its observance is enforced. It contains not a word peculiar to the nation of Israel, but founds on the fact common to all mankind, that God rested on the seventh day from the work of creation, and blessed and sanctified it, repeating the very words of the original institution, and thus recognizing and enforcing its universal and permanent authority. From this it is manifest that the duty to sanctify the Sabbath is not confined to any particular age or nation, but that, while God has given to man what are called by the Prophet Ezekiel, 46:1, ‘the six working days,’ He has reserved the seventh for His own immediate service. It may likewise be remarked that Israel was called on in the fourth commandment to *remember* the Sabbath day. This supposes antecedent knowledge, and implies that it was no new institution delivered for them, but one of a former period, of which they needed to be put in remembrance.

In the same way, Nehemiah, 9:13, speaks of the Sabbath as not newly appointed when promulgated to the Jews. ‘Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant.’ Here we observe the difference of expression with regard to the Sabbath from that used respecting the judgments and precepts and statutes. These He *gave* and *commanded*, but His holy Sabbath He *made known* to them. This shows that the Sabbath, so remarkably distinguished as God's holy Sabbath, had been previously promulgated, and that God then restored the full knowledge of it.

The fourth commandment is closely connected with the other commandments; but so far from having any Jewish origin, it is the first and only commandment announced in the opening of the sacred record, and was imposed on our first parents in their state of uprightness and innocence. It

thus stands in a peculiar manner at the head of all the commandments, and involves in its breach the abandonment equally of the first and second tables of the Decalogue. It is placed at the end of the first table, as the tenth is at the end of the second, as the safeguard of all the rest. It stands between the two tables of our duty to God and our duty to man, as the great foundation and cornerstone binding both together — its observance supporting and conducing to our obedience to the whole. It is placed as the guardian of the first and second commandments, in which the Lord is asserted to be our God, and of the third, which prohibits the profanation of His holy name. This connection with the first and second commandments is recognized, Lev. 26:1, 2, ‘Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord your God. Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.’ In like manner it is said, Ezek. 20:18, ‘Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols; I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths.’ The fourth commandment is likewise introduced to enforce the other commandments, both of the first and second table. In the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, which opens with this general exhortation to holiness, ‘Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy,’ obedience to the fifth commandment is immediately after enjoined and enforced by the fourth. ‘Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths.’ Other commandments, both of the first and second tables, are in the same chapter likewise specified. ‘Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another; and ye shall not swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God,’ vers. 11, 12. And after referring to various laws of the second table, and giving the summary of the whole of it, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self,’ ver. 18, the fourth commandment, as connected with them all, is again brought into view, ‘Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord,’ ver. 30. In this chapter, as Archdeacon Stopford, in his Scripture account of the Sabbath, observes, ‘we find the Sabbath in connection with the first, second, and third commandments of the first table, and with the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth of the second. The tenth is not mentioned, being itself a guard or



fence round the other commandments of the second table.’

---

**OBJECTIONS TO THE PERMANENT OBLIGATION  
OF THE SABBATH CONSIDERED.**

---

In contending against the obligation of the Sabbath as a duty universally binding, it has been urged that the preface to the ten commandments shows that they were incumbent only on the Jews. ‘I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’ This is no proof that these commandments were intended exclusively for the Israelites; but it shows a peculiar reason why they, above all men, should observe them, since God had given them deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. In addition, then, to the commemoration of the rest from the work of creation, there was to the Israelites this other reason, that they had obtained rest from slavery. And as their slavery in Egypt and deliverance from bondage were typical of the slavery of sin and deliverance by Christ, so the Sabbath to the Israelites, besides being binding on them according to the original and universal institution, was a type of the rest that was to come.

It has likewise been alleged, in opposition to the universally binding obligation of the Sabbath, that its sanctions prove that it was a Jewish institution. The Israelites were commanded to keep it by the sanction of death, Ex. 31:14; Num. 15:35, etc. This has no necessary connection with the Sabbath. The Sabbath was incorporated with the Mosaic law, and in that situation it partook of the nature of that dispensation. The law was a yoke added because of transgressions. The sanction, then, of the Sabbath, when incorporated with the law, was agreeable to the nature of the law, and not a part of its original institution. The sanction of death, which, in the Mosaic law, was likewise added to some of the other commandments, on account of which no one pleads that they have become void, was not originally annexed to the breach of the Sabbath, nor any other peculiarity that related to the Israelites, to whom, besides its institution in the general law, it was also ‘a sign’ of their special relation to God, Ex. 31:13-17; Ezek. 20:12-20; and therefore this sanction, belonging to their peculiar laws, is not to be identified with the originally instituted Sabbath. Marriage was an ordinance of God from the beginning, coeval with that of the sanctification of the seventh day; but marriage had some peculiarities among the Jews, such as the marrying

the brother's wife, which is done away. Shall we say, because these peculiarities are done away, that the ordinance of marriage, which was established in the garden of Eden, is done away with the law of Moses?

Objections to the permanent obligation of the Sabbath have been drawn from certain expressions in the New Testament, as, for example, from what is said, Col. 2:16. But in that place the Apostle is cautioning those whom he addresses against returning to the observance of Jewish ordinances, declaring that they were 'a shadow of things to come.' He guards them against these as 'the rudiments of the world;' and directs them to Christ, in whom believers are 'complete' without the addition of those ordinances which only prefigured Him. After declaring that Christ had blotted out 'the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross,' he adds, in the verse from which the objection is taken, '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 sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come.'<sup>[10]</sup> Here he connects the days of which he speaks with abstinence from certain meats, just as he does in Rom. 14:5, 6, all the distinctions respecting which were done away. The word, too, rendered *sabbaths* is often applied to the days of the week. Besides the weekly Sabbath, it means also the Jewish sabbaths which accompanied the feasts. The word rendered 'holy day' signifies a feast day — one of the Jewish festivals. This word is in the singular, although sabbaths is plural, and the meaning is a feast day with its accompanying sabbaths.<sup>[11]</sup>

In the Epistle to the Galatians, 4:10, Paul employs language respecting the observance of particular days, similar to that in Romans, 14, and Colossians, 2, 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years;' and calls them the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desired again to be in bondage. But that among these 'days' he did not include the weekly Sabbath, which never could be so characterized, we have the most unquestionable proof; for in another Epistle, 1 Cor. 16:1, he commands that the first day of the week should be particularly distinguished and observed, and intimates that he had enjoined the same on the churches of the Galatians, whom, as we see, he had reprehended on account of their observance of particular days.

Those passages in the New Testament, then, which speak of setting aside the observance of certain days, or of all days being alike, refer to the sabbaths

that were observed by the Jews, distinct from the weekly Sabbath. These were a shadow; and when that which they prefigured was accomplished, they were done away. But the observance of the Sabbath itself, is, like all the other commandments, of moral and permanent obligation.

It has been objected to the permanent obligation of the fourth commandment, that the Lord Jesus Christ has relaxed or modified its requirements; but for this there is no foundation. He came, as He Himself declares, not to destroy but fulfill the law and the Prophets. All the types and shadows, and ritual observances, as well as the testimony of the Prophets, found in Him their accomplishment. But the grand object of His coming into the world, to which these were subservient, was to magnify and make honorable the law of everlasting obligation, and thus He was to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Accordingly He fulfilled that law, summed up in the ten commandments, promulgated by the voice of God, and preserved in a manner so peculiar. Of that law, the sanctifying of one day in seven to the service of God is a part, and, as we have seen, not only a constituent, but a very prominent part, and, like all its other parts, was for ever to remain in force.

The Lord Jesus honored the Sabbath on all occasions, by attending the institutions of public worship, and on that day working many of His most distinguished miracles, while He vindicated it from unauthorized traditions contrary to its real design. When charged with breaking the Sabbath, He justified His conduct, not by speaking of it as a temporary observance, or one that was to be abolished or modified, but in a way in which its permanency was assumed, and to show that its obligation was to remain unimpaired. His explanations respecting it were entirely consistent with the requirements of the fourth commandment. If, in expounding these, and setting aside the false glosses annexed to them, He had intended to teach that the Sabbath was not to be observed with such strictness in His kingdom as the law demanded, He would not have vindicated His conduct by proving that He was acting in conformity to its precepts from the beginning. When the Pharisees charged Him with doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath day, instead of showing any disposition to set aside or relax its obligations, He referred them to their own practice of loosing their ox from the stall and leading it away to watering; and asked whether, if it had fallen into a pit, they would not

straightway pull it out on the Sabbath day. He inquired if they did not know what David did when he was an hungered; and again, if they had not read in the law that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath and were blameless. By justifying His own conduct in this manner, and referring to what had all along been practiced under the law, He showed that it was not His purpose to set aside the obligation of the Sabbath, or in any degree to change it, but to refer them to its true import, according to which those very acts of necessity and mercy were allowed on account of which the Jews upbraided Him and His disciples. In doing, then, what had formerly been practiced without any infraction of the law, He was not interfering with its ancient and acknowledged obligation.

That the Lord did not purpose to abolish the Sabbath day, is evident from His referring to the continuance of the Sabbath when all obligation to observe it as a Jewish institution had ceased. In foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and referring to the flight, not of Jews, but of His disciples, at a time when everything peculiar to the Jewish dispensation would be abrogated, He directs them to pray that it might not be in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day, Matt. 24:20, which, from the nature of the season and their sense of the obligation of the fourth commandment, would impede their flight. Henry, in his note on this passage, observes, ‘This intimates Christ's design that a weekly Sabbath should be observed in His Church, after the preaching of the Gospel to all the world. We read not of any of the ordinances of the Jewish Church which were purely ceremonial that Christ ever expressed any care about, because they were all to vanish; but for the Sabbath He often showed a concern. It intimates, likewise, that the Sabbath is ordinarily to be observed as a day of rest from travel and worldly labor; but that, according to His own explication of the fourth commandment, works of necessity were lawful on the Sabbath day, as that of fleeing from an enemy to save our lives. But it intimates, likewise, that it is very uneasy and uncomfortable to a good man to be taken off by any work of necessity from the solemn service and worship of God on the Sabbath day. We should pray that we may have quiet and undisturbed Sabbaths, and may have no other work than Sabbath work to do on the Sabbath days, that we may attend upon the Lord without distraction. To flee in the winter is uncomfortable to the body; but to flee on the Sabbath day is so to the soul, and the more so when it remembers former Sabbaths, as Ps. 42:4.’

While nothing in the discourses or conduct of our Lord tends to set aside or relax the duty of obedience to the fourth commandment, He has confirmed its permanent obligation by frequently appealing to the authority of the Decalogue, by which He established every part of it. When asked what was the first of all the commandments, Mark 12:28, He gave the substance of the first table as Moses had given it, Deut. 6:4, 5, and that of the second in the words which Moses had used when summing up various duties arising out of it, Lev. 19:18. On another occasion, when he put the question to a certain lawyer, ‘What is written in the law? how readest thou?’ Luke 10:26, the reply was the same as Jesus Himself had given in the case just referred to, and was approved of by Him. ‘And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.’ From this it follows that, by adopting the same summaries of the law with Moses whom He quoted, and with the other Jews, our Lord referred to the same commandments, even the moral law contained in the ten commandments. And lest any one might suppose that He spoke only of the Mosaic dispensation, He added to the summary He had just given, Matt. 22:40, ‘On these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets;’ that is, on these two commandments, or summaries of the two tables, depend not only the Mosaic dispensation, but also the Prophets, or that dispensation which was to come, which is the subject of the prophecies. When asked by the rich young man what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus answered, ‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He thus showed that it was not to anything peculiar to the law of Moses, but to the *commandments*, He referred, by distinguishing them by that name, and specifying those of the second table, which, on the occasion above quoted, He had said was like unto the first.

As the Lord Himself sanctioned the permanent obligation of the law of the Decalogue, His Apostles likewise maintained its authority. The Apostle James, in quoting two of the commandments, refers to the whole law. Paul quotes the fifth, calling it the first commandment with promise, Eph. 6:2. In thus referring to one of these commandments as binding on Christians, and as known by them to be so, and thereby enforcing what he enjoins, he establishes the authority of the whole of them. It is also to be remarked, that by thus calling the attention of the Gentile Christians at Ephesus to the

promised blessing, he shows that this promise was not designed to apply exclusively to the land of Canaan, or the children of Israel. In the same way, in the Epistle to the Romans, 13:9, he enjoins the duty of love to our neighbor, by quoting those commandments of the second table which relate to that duty. And in the Epistle to the Galatians, 5:14, he gives the same summary of the second table as Moses and our Lord had given: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' It is to the law contained in the ten commandments that Paul declares believers to be dead by the body of Christ, and to which he everywhere alludes as the rule of duty on which he and the other Apostles found their exhortations to the churches. To this law he refers, when expressly quoting one of its commandments, in saying, 'Except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet,' Rom. 7:7, he declares that it was ordained to life. According, then, to our Lord's answer to the lawyer regarding the law of the Decalogue, '*This do*, and thou shalt live,' and His answer to the rich young man, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the *commandments*,' and to this declaration of the Apostle to the same effect, that the commandment was *ordained to life*, it is for the keeping of the ten commandments, which contain in substance the whole law of God, that the blessing of eternal life is to be awarded, Jesus declared that one jot or tittle of the law should not pass till all was fulfilled. He did fulfill it; and, being fulfilled by Him, it is fulfilled by all who are in Him, Rom. 8:4, who is 'the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' If, then, any man shall ever 'enter into life,' he will enter it by having thus fulfilled the *commandments*, without the exception of one jot or tittle belonging to any one of the ten.

It is these ten commandments, well nigh effaced from the heart of man, that were republished with such solemnity at Mount Sinai, written on the tables of stone, and deposited in the ark. These commandments were connected with the everlasting covenant given to Abraham, and confirmed in Christ. They were proclaimed to Israel *before* the laws peculiar to that people were made; and they equally belong to all nations. It is these commandments which it is the gracious promise of the new covenant shall be written by God in the hearts of His people. 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For

this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.' Now this is not a fact respecting those statutes and judgments peculiar to Israel, which are not thus written, but regarding only the moral law of the commandments, and all that results from it. And to this writing of the commandments of the two tables of the law on the hearts of God's people, the Apostle particularly refers in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart.' By this allusion, we learn that the commandments, which had been written on the two tables of stone, are now written on the heart of every Christian. And what Christian is there who does not thank God that He has appointed for him the Sabbath day as a day of rest? and who does not feel the benefit of it when he is enabled to sanctify it as he ought?

---

**THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH UNDER  
THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION IS FULLY  
RECOGNISED BY THE PROPHETS.**

---

In the prophecies referring to the times of the Gospel, the observance of a weekly Sabbath, so far from being classed among those shadowy ordinances that were to be abolished, is spoken of as a duty highly acceptable to God. The Prophet Isaiah, although he had said nothing respecting the observance of the Sabbath, when denouncing threatenings against the Jews, and exhorting them to obedience, beautifully enlarges on it when he comes to speak of the kingdom of the Messiah. After predicting, in the forty-ninth and following chapters, the establishment of that kingdom, and the calling of the Gentiles, he proclaims, in the beginning of the fifty-sixth chapter, that the *righteousness of God*, which he there and in so many other places connects with *salvation*, was near to be revealed. 'Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.' Immediately after which, speaking both of the Gentiles and the eunuchs, when the distinction respecting the



former and the exclusion of the latter from the congregation of the Lord should by the Gospel be abolished, the Prophet adds, 'Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep My Sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant; even unto them will I give in Mine house, and within My walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.'

In the above passages, the importance of keeping the Sabbath is introduced no fewer than three times, and in relation to each of the three characters there specified. And while, on the one hand, polluting it is conjoined with doing evil, on the other, its observance is connected with doing judgment and justice — all that we owe to God and our neighbor — with giving ourselves to the Lord, loving His name, and being His servants. It is also connected with taking hold of His covenant, — the covenant of peace spoken of, Isa. 54:10, Ezek. 34:25, that is, the Gospel, — and with receiving the Gentiles into that covenant, of whom it is said, Isa. 56:8, 'The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, besides those that are gathered unto Him,' The duty, then, of observing the Sabbath, and the blessings connected with it, are here represented as belonging to that period when the name of God shall be great among the Gentiles; when Christ shall be God's *salvation* unto the ends of the earth, Isa. 49:6, predicted to be near to come; and when His *righteousness* shall be *revealed*, namely, in the Gospel, Rom. 1:17, 3:21; when the eunuchs and the sons of the stranger shall come to God's holy mountain; when His house shall be called an house of prayer for *all people*, in which they shall be joyful; and when their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon His altar. In this and in similar passages, the Prophets, in speaking of the times of the Gospel, employ expressions relating to the services of that dispensation during the

continuance of which they wrote.

At the conclusion of his book of prophecy, in the end of the sixty-sixth chapter, where Isaiah once more declares the bringing in of the Gentiles and the introduction of the Gospel dispensation, he again announces the perpetuity and never-ceasing solemnization of the Sabbath. 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her (to Zion) like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles as a flowing stream,' ver. 12; 'I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory,' ver. 18. 'For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord,' vers. 22, 23. In that period, then, during the reign of the Messiah, whose 'name shall be continued as long as the sun, and shall endure for ever,' the observance of the Sabbath shall be as constant and as regular as the revolutions of the moon in the heavens.

By the importance thus attached to the keeping of the Sabbath, so often brought into view, and so intimately connected with the service of God, we learn that, under the Christian dispensation, and as forming a part of that law which is holy, and just, and good, the least commandment of which we are warned not to break, or to teach others to do so, the Sabbath was to be considered as the grand support of the worship and service of God. This is particularly marked in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, where the Prophet, after exposing the hypocrisy of the Jews, urges them to act in a manner that would be acceptable to God, and then proceeds to enlarge on the duty of sanctifying the Sabbath. Far from referring to it as a part of that yoke which was too heavy to be borne, or the handwriting of an ordinance that was to be blotted out, or taken out of the way, he represents it as God's 'holy day, a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable,' on which His people, when they observe it as He commands, should find their delight in the Lord, and should be highly rewarded by Him. Can an institution like this, characterized in this manner by Jehovah, to the observance of which He annexes His choicest blessings, be classed among the shadows that were to be abolished — with the sacrifices, and offerings, and burnt-offerings for sin, in which God declared that He had no pleasure, and with the meats, and drinks, and divers

washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation, all for ever to be done away with that covenant which made nothing perfect?

We have thus accumulated and demonstrative proof that the institution of the weekly Sabbath, announced at the beginning, and embodied in the Decalogue, has ever been, and continues to be, equally binding with all the other parts of the law of everlasting obligation. In that law, the fourth commandment occupies a very distinguished place, essentially contributing to obedience to all the rest; while no other commandment has been so frequently enforced in the Scriptures. It is the only one of the ten in which the duty it enjoins is expressed both positively ‘keep it holy’ — and negatively, — ‘In it thou shalt not do any work;’ — all the other commandments being either solely prohibitory, or solely preceptive. It is the only one of them all whose original institution is declared in Scripture.<sup>[12]</sup>

---

**THE CHANGE FROM THE LAST TO THE  
FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK HAS NOT  
INVALIDATED THE OBLIGATION  
OF THE SABBATH.**

---

Having now proved that the duty of the sanctification of the Sabbath has nothing in it peculiar to the law of Moses, or to any former dispensation, it remains to be shown that the change from the last to the first day of the week has neither made void the primary institution nor the fourth commandment, whose binding and permanent authority, enjoining the consecration of a seventh part of our time to God, continues unalterably the same.

‘The Sabbath,’ said our Lord, ‘was made for man.’ It was made for his good, a day of rest from worldly business, for the special acknowledgment of God, and for the enjoyment of peculiar communion with Him. If the Sabbath was made for man, it was not a Jewish burden. It was for the good of man, not merely for the Jew. Yet He who is the Lord of the Sabbath may change the day of its observance. This, in fact, He has done; and in this passage there is not an obscure intimation of such a purpose. Of this change, as everything belonging to the new dispensation was shadowed forth under the old, we find in the Old Testament various typical and significant notices.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and when the foundations of the earth

were laid, and the cornerstone thereof, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But God hath magnified His word above all His name, and a still more glorious display of His character and perfections has been given in the work of redemption than in that of the first creation. In the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, where the Prophet is referring to the kingdom of Christ and the New Testament dispensation, that work is spoken of in the 17th verse as the creation of new heavens and a new earth, when Jerusalem — the Church of God — should be a cause of rejoicing, and when, in comparison with that new creation, the glory of the former should not be remembered. ‘Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.’ That God purposed to appoint the day of His resting from the work of this new creation as the Sabbath which He was afterwards to bless and hallow in remembrance of it, in place of that day which He had formerly consecrated to the memory of His resting from the first creation, appears from His commanding the Israelites to observe the Sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. That deliverance was an eminent type of the redemption of His people by Christ from the bondage of Satan. But if the Israelites were commanded, in commemoration of this shadow, to sanctify one day in the week, which is the reason given for their doing so in the recapitulation of the fourth commandment, Deut. 5:15, instead of that formerly given to them at its first announcement respecting the creation, Gen. 2:2, Ex. 20:11, this was an intimation that the great and glorious work of which that deliverance was a shadow, was afterwards to be the object of weekly commemoration. ‘Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. . . . 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.’

The 118th Psalm, vers. 19-24, clearly indicates the day in which the servants of God are, by His appointment, to enter into His sanctuary, to offer to Him praise, and to rejoice in commemoration of the resurrection of their Lord from the dead. ‘Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord: this gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall

enter. I will praise Thee: for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' These words are prophetic; and the 22d and 23d verses are again and again quoted in the New Testament, and applied by the Lord Jesus to Himself. When He lay in the grave, He was as a stone which the builders had rejected, but when He arose from the dead, having vanquished all His enemies, He became the head stone of the spiritual temple of which His members are living stones, 1 Pet. 2:4-8. At the period of the old creation, God 'rested on the seventh day from all His work which God created and made,' and all 'the sons of God shouted for joy.' In the same way, at the finishing of the new creation, the sons of God are here said to rejoice. This the disciples did at the resurrection of our Lord, as His people have done on that day ever since. That day, therefore, in which He rested from His work, they are to regard as 'the day which the Lord hath made' properly and emphatically 'the Lord's day.'

The change of the day of weekly rest from the last to the first day of the week — that is, from the seventh to the eighth day — is indicated in various places throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. The work of creation was finished in six days, and on the seventh day God rested from His work, which completed a week, or the first series of time. The eighth day, then, was the first of a new series, and on this, the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus rested from the work of the new creation. The eighth day is accordingly signalized in the Old Testament, pointing in a manner the most express to the day when Jesus entered into His rest, and when, in commemoration thereof, His people are to rest. Of this the following are examples: —

Circumcision was to be administered to children on the EIGHTH day, Gen. 17:12; and till the *eighth* day the mother was ceremonially unclean, Lev. 12:2, 3. Circumcision was the token of the covenant which God made with Abraham. 'And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised,' Rom. 4:11. Circumcision was not a seal of Abraham's faith, or that he possessed righteousness, or was justified, as it is almost constantly explained. It was a seal, pledge, or assurance of the reality of that RIGHTEOUSNESS which is received by the faith which Abraham had, in virtue of which, though not then

existing except in the purpose of God, he was justified; and that it should in its appointed time be introduced. This was the ‘everlasting righteousness,’ even the righteousness of God, on account of which the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Circumcision, then, being such a seal to Abraham, from whom Christ was to spring, it was to be impressed on himself and his posterity, and to be performed on the EIGHTH DAY, — the day on which that righteousness was, by the resurrection of the Messiah, to be ‘brought in.’ As soon as the pledge was thus redeemed, the rite of circumcision ceased. At that early period, then, we find a clear indication of the high distinction which, in a distant age, was to be conferred on the eighth day. The same intimation strikingly pervades the Jewish dispensation in its various typical and shadowy institutions.

Until the EIGHTH day of their age, the firstborn of cattle, which belonged to the Lord, were not offered or received by Him. ‘On the eighth day thou shalt give it Me,’ Ex. 22:30.

On the EIGHTH day, but not before, animals were accepted in sacrifice. ‘When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam; and from the eighth day and thence forth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord,’ Lev. 22:27.

On the EIGHTH day the consecration of Aaron as high priest, and his sons, after various ceremonies, was completed, Lev. 9:1.

On the EIGHTH day the cleansing of the leprosy, which was typical of cleansing from sin, took place, Lev. 14:10.

On the EIGHTH day the cleansing from issues, emblematical also of sin, was effected, Lev. 15:14-29.

On the EIGHTH day atonement was made for the Nazarite who was defiled, Num. 6:10.

The EIGHTH day corresponds with the first day of the week, on which, according to all these typical appointments, Jesus was *received* as the first-born from the dead, His sacrifice was *accepted*, and on which, as the great High Priest, He was ‘*consecrated* for evermore,’ and when He made atonement for His people, by which they are *cleansed from sin*.

The EIGHTH day was sanctified when the dedication of the temple — that

illustrious type of the body of the Redeemer — was completed, and the ark of the covenant placed in it. ‘Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly,’ 2 Chron. 7:8, — on that day when the Lord was afterwards to create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.

In sanctifying the temple in the time of Hezekiah, ‘they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord: so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and in the sixteenth day’ (the second eighth day) ‘of the first month they made an end,’ when the whole was terminated by the offering of sacrifice, and the solemn worship of God, 2 Chron. 29:17-20.

Ezekiel, in his vision of the city and temple, which appears to give figuratively, and in Old Testament language, a description of the Redeemer's kingdom and Church, says, 43:26, ‘Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings: and I will accept you, saith the Lord.’

The feast of tabernacles was to be celebrated on the *fifteenth*, which corresponds with the eighth day. ‘Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work therein.’ ‘Also, in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath,’ Lev. 23:34-39.

The feast of tabernacles, which thus terminated on the EIGHTH day, furnishes a remarkable representation of the vanishing of the legal sacrifices, when their consummation took place by the offering of the one Sacrifice. On the first day of this feast, thirteen bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs



were offered. On the following six days, the number of bullocks was decreased by one each day, so that, on the seventh day, only seven were offered, and two rams and fourteen lambs. But on the *eighth* day the number was reduced to one bullock, when these sacrifices were ended. ‘On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year, without blemish,’ Num. 29:35. Thus the offering of only ONE bullock, ONE ram, and SEVEN lambs (the number denoting perfection) on the EIGHTH day, although many had been offered on the preceding days, but gradually diminishing in number, was strikingly emblematical of the ONE offering by which Jesus Christ, on the eighth day, the first day of the week, made an end of sins, and by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified. At this feast, in the time of Ezra, when he read the book of the law to the people, a solemn assembly was held on the EIGHTH day. Neh. 8:18, ‘Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God: and they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner,’ — *viz.*, the manner prescribed, Lev. 23:39.

When the sheaf of the first-fruits was to be brought to the priest, it was to be accepted on the EIGHTH day, ‘And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an he-lamb without blemish, of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the Lord,’ Lev. 23:11. This was a distinguished type of the resurrection of Him who was ‘the first-fruits of them that slept,’ who arose from the dead on the morrow after the Sabbath, that is, the eighth day, or the first day of the week.

Not only was the eighth day signalized in so remarkable a manner in connection with various typical appointments, the FIFTIETH day, the first day after seven times seven days, or seven weeks, corresponding with the eighth day after seven days, and both with the first day of the week, was in like manner distinguished.

At the reaping and gathering in of the harvest, two wave loaves were to be presented on the FIFTIETH day after presenting the sheaf of the first-fruits. ‘And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath from the day

that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord. . . . And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein,' Lev. 23:15-21.

The year of jubilee was the FIFTIETH year, and not the forty-ninth, which was the last of the sabbatical years. 'Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. . . . And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you: and ye shall return every man into his possession,' Lev. 25:8-10. This fiftieth year, the first year after the sabbatical year of seven weeks, corresponds with the *eighth* day, the first day of the week.

Can it be supposed that the eighth day, thus signalized from so early a period before the legal dispensation, and in so many ways during its continuance, and by one of the latest of the Prophets, comprising in all more than thirteen hundred years — can it be imagined that the EIGHTH, the FIFTEENTH, and the FIFTIETH day, all of the same import, were thus distinguished without a special purpose, and that in the wisdom of God they were not expressly specified for some very important end? Connected as they were with the most solemn services of God's ancient people, and in a manner so conspicuous with the most remarkable typical observances, they held forth a striking notification of the future change from that day which had been appointed to commemorate God's resting from the work of creation, to the day on which the Son of God rested from the work of redemption. This purpose is fully developed in the New Testament, where He who is the Lord of the Sabbath, without in the smallest degree impairing, relaxing, or changing the obligation to observe a *seventh* day's rest, appropriated to Himself the eighth day — the first instead of the last day of the week — and by recording His name upon it, calling it *the Lord's day*, has blessed and sanctified it for the use of His people. It may here be remarked, that by the early Christians the Sabbath was

also denominated the *eighth* day. Barnabas, the companion of the Apostle Paul, calls this the eighth day, in distinction from the seventh-day Sabbath, which he says 'is the beginning of another world; and therefore we keep the eighth day joyfully, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and being manifested ascended into heaven.' It was known, too, by the fathers by the name of the eighth day, as by Ignatius, Irenaeus, Origen, and others. 'Every eighth day,' says Tertullian, 'is the Christian's festival.'

The duty of sanctifying the first day of the week is taught in the New Testament, not by direct precept, but in the way of approved example or reference, in which several other institutions are there enjoined. Instruction as to anything further respecting the duty or the manner of discharging it, besides the change from the last to the first day of the week, was unnecessary, since all things else remain the same as formerly, and are so solemnly enjoined and enforced in the Old Testament.<sup>[13]</sup> Nothing more than this fact of the change of the day needed afterwards to be made known. This change we learn,

***First***, by the honor conferred on that day by the Lord, in repeatedly appearing on it to His disciples after His resurrection;

***Secondly***, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost;

***Thirdly***, by the practice of the Apostles, to whom the keys of the kingdom were delivered, and also by that of the first churches under their immediate guidance; and,

***Finally***, we are taught this change by the distinctive appellation it received of 'the Lord's day,' when our Lord appeared to His disciple John.

On the first day of the week, being the day on which the Lord rose from the dead, and rested from the work of the new creation, He appeared at different times to His disciples. 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst,' John 20:19. It is here proper to remark that the literal translation of the original, rendered the first day of the week, is the first of the Sabbaths. The rendering, however, in this place is proper, as well as in other places in the New Testament where the

same phrase occurs, as, Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2-9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1-19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2, since the word in the original for Sabbath also signifies week.

On the same day, in the following week, when the disciples were again assembled, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, John 20:26. ‘And after eight days,’<sup>[14]</sup> again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’

The day of Pentecost, which signifies the *fiftieth* day, was eminently honored. It was the first day of the week; the day of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in His abundant and miraculous gifts; the day of the promulgation of the Gospel in the presence of men from all nations; and of the conversion of ‘about three thousand souls.’ Here we have the explanation of the mystery in the Old Testament of the FIFTIETH day, connected, as we have seen, with remarkable events and ordinances. On the fiftieth day after the departure from Egypt, the law was delivered from Mount Sinai, which, corresponding with the first day of the week, was 1500 years afterwards fulfilled on that day. That law was delivered, accompanied with thunderings and lightnings; and now, on the corresponding day, came a ‘sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind,’ and ‘cloven tongues, like as of fire,’ sat upon each of the disciples. The day of Pentecost, too, was the fiftieth day from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when He ‘became the first-fruits of them that slept,’ and the day of the first-fruits of the Christian Church. The fiftieth year of jubilee, when every man returned into His own possession, which he had sold or forfeited, also corresponded with that fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost, on which so remarkable a proof was given that the price of the redemption of Christ's people had been paid, and that for them He had entered into the possession of His and their eternal inheritance. The giving of the Holy Ghost — the coming of the promised Comforter — being thus vouchsafed on the first day of the week, confirmed the newly instituted season, which was henceforth to be the Christian Sabbath. And on this day not merely the Apostles, but all the disciples, Acts 1:15, and 2:1, were with one accord, — as being the day of their stated meeting, — in one place.

The first churches under the guidance of the Apostles assembled on the first day of the week. The Apostle Paul, and those who accompanied him, abode

seven days at Troas. 'And, upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,' Acts 20:7. Here we learn that it was their common custom to meet on this day for holding their religious assemblies, and observing the stated ordinances of worship. The time appointed, too, to collect the contributions for the poor was the first day of the week. 'Now, 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. 16:2. It was not then on account of anything peculiar to the church at Corinth that Paul commanded that this duty should be performed on the first day of the week, since he had enjoined the same on the distant churches of Galatia; and the Apostle elsewhere declares that he taught the same things everywhere in all the churches, 1 Cor. 4:17, 7:17.

The first day of the week was further distinguished and honored in a very remarkable manner by the Lord Himself, in His glorious appearance in the Isle of Patmos, and by the prophetic vision which He vouchsafed to His servant John, of all that was to take place respecting His Church to the end of time.

In the relation of this vision, the Apostle, writing by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, calls the day on which He was favored with it, the LORD'S DAY. This term being here introduced without any remark or explanation, must have been well understood by all who read and heard the words of this prophecy, ch. 1:3, — that is, by all Christians, as well as by the seven churches whom the Apostle specially addressed. This establishes, beyond contradiction, that under the Christian dispensation there is a Lord's day. All days are His. If, then, one of them is called the Lord's day, in distinction from the rest, it must be His day in a peculiar sense. It must be devoted to His honor. It must be His as the Lord's Supper is His. As, then, the Lord's Supper distinguishes and separates the holy communion of the bread and wine from an ordinary social meal, so the Lord's day distinguishes and separates one day from the rest in the week. This was the day of His triumph over all the powers of darkness. It is the Lord's *day* — not a part of a day, but a whole day, and not our day, but His day — in the same way as the Lord's Supper is His supper, and not our supper. It should likewise be observed, that the

reason given in the fourth commandment for abstaining from work, and for hallowing the seventh day, is, 'Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.' And therefore the same obligation must follow as to the 'Lord's day,' because it is the day of the Lord. In the Lord's Supper we have a symbolical representation of the death of Christ, and in the Lord's day we have a commemoration of His resurrection every week.

If any one hesitates to admit that the observance of the first day of the week is commanded in the New Testament, because not enjoined by direct precept, he has not attended to the manner in which the various parts of our duty are there taught; and he should ask himself on what ground he observes the first day of the week. Is it because all Christians agree in doing so? In this there is nothing valid. The consent or practice of all the Christians and of all the churches on earth cannot add to or take from or change one iota of the law of God. What that law is, must be learned from the Scriptures, either by direct precept, or from the approved practice recorded in them of Christians or churches under the guidance of the Apostles, and thus stamped with their authority. *To the Apostles alone were the keys of the kingdom of heaven delivered by their Divine Master*, first to Peter, Matt. 16:19, and afterwards to all the rest, 18:18; who, in order that they might be His *witnesses*, had all seen Him *after His resurrection*; who all had 'the signs of an Apostle;' *who have no successors in office*, and whose doctrine, being infallible, binds in heaven and on earth. Christians have nothing to do but to repeat and to obey the laws, in whatever manner enjoined by our Lord and His Apostles. Why are churches formed? why do they assemble on the first day of the week? why are they to consist of persons only of a certain character? For none of these, and certain other things that are practiced by Christians, is there any direct precept. But all of them, of which we have approved examples in the word of God, are, notwithstanding, equally binding, as if in direct terms they had been commanded. To the practice of the first churches under his direction, and to his own practice, the Apostle Paul appeals as of equal authority with his express injunctions. 'If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God,' 1 Cor. 11:16. The approved customs of the first churches were fixed by the Apostles, and are therefore equally binding as their commands; and their commands, as speaking by the Holy Ghost, are equally obligatory as those of the Lord. 'He

that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me,' Luke 10:16. By the words which He hath spoken, and those of His Apostles, whose words bind and loose in heaven and on earth, all shall be judged at the last day. If any man shall add to these words or take from them, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.

Although the first day of the week was appointed to be observed as the Sabbath under the Christian dispensation, yet the observance of the last day, that had been sanctified from the beginning, was likewise permitted during the continuance of the Jewish state. This was analogous to allowing the temple service and the Sacrifices, although rendered inefficacious by the offering of the one great sacrifice, to continue till the whole of them was put an end to by the destruction of Jerusalem. Giving unnecessary offence to the Jews was thus avoided, while an opportunity was furnished, during all that period, of preaching the Gospel in the synagogues where they assembled every Sabbath day, of which the Apostles regularly availed themselves. But in the Book of Revelation, as we have now seen, written after the Jewish state and polity were finally overthrown, the first day of the week, as that which the Son of God had appropriated for His peculiar service, of which from the first sufficient intimation had been given, so that His disciples had observed it all along after His resurrection, was, in a manner still more marked, exclusively designated in His word as the *Lord's day* — the name by which it has been known and recognized by all Christians ever since.

The day of rest enjoined to be observed by Christians, although now transferred from the last to the first day of the week, or the eighth day from the creation, is still the *seventh day*, 'after the six working days,' as was the Sabbath of the first institution, and of the fourth commandment. Thus all the change is only a change of the beginning and the ending of the days of labor, the number of which continue as before. The words, therefore, of the fourth commandment, 'Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,' form no objection to the Christian Sabbath, as if it changed or discontinued the duty enjoined in that commandment, since these words retain the same force as before. Neither can any objection be drawn from the words that follow: 'For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh



day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' These words have not become insignificant by the establishment of the first-day Sabbath; they remain, as to their principal object, in full force. Their object was to present a motive to rest on the seventh day after laboring six days successively; because of this God hath given the example. And on this account, as well as from the examples of the sanctification of the first day of the week, Christians are to rest, not on every eighth, or ninth, or tenth day, but on every *seventh* day. God wrought six days and rested on the seventh day, and called it the Sabbath, or rest of the Lord. Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, in like manner rested from the work of the new creation on the first day of the week, and has now appropriated it as His day. And not only was it appointed to commemorate the great event of His resurrection, but as it is to be observed on one day in seven, it is so instituted as likewise to commemorate that first creation, when, after the work of six days, God rested on the seventh. Without reference to this, no reason can be given why the resurrection should be celebrated once in seven days, and not at any other fixed period. The fourth commandment, then, in everything essential, remains unchanged. In substance it continues precisely as before, commanding us to sanctify the *seventh* day; and the reason of enjoining this continues the same, with the difference only of God's having rested from the work of the new, as He formerly did from that of the old creation; on which account man is still to rest on the seventh day, after six days of labor. It is a part of that law which cannot be broken. Strict obedience to it continues to be the duty of every Christian; and in order to understand its proper and spiritual import, the inspired commentary of the Prophet Isaiah, 58:13, on the obligation and observance of the Sabbath, referring to the times of the Gospel, should be attentively considered. Some have scrupled to denominate the first day of the week the Sabbath day. But it should be remembered that this is the name by which it is so often designated in the New Testament, according to the literal rendering of the passage quoted in p. 919.

---

The Sabbath, instituted for man both in a state of innocence and of sin, displays in a remarkable manner the goodness of God, and forms a distinguished part of that law which is the law of love. It was appointed before the curse was pronounced, that in the sweat of his face man should eat bread; yet after he had sinned, it was not abolished, but continued as a

permanent mitigation of that sentence. The fourth commandment is not a burden, like those institutions that were peculiar to the Jews. They were a yoke, Acts 15:10, but this is a blessing. And man does not suffer by it, but is benefited. By our fall in Adam we became slaves to Satan, and God might have condemned us to labor all the days of the week. But He has given us a reprieve for one day. His providence so orders it, that men in all conditions shall participate in the curse, and eat the fruit of the earth in the sweat of their face. Is it not then a blessing when He gives us one day of rest? Had He required us to labor the whole seven days, there would not have been more food than there is now. There is not more in those countries where the Sabbath is not observed, than where it is observed. Nor is any country benefited by its neglect. On the contrary, it would be political wisdom to give the full benefit of the Sabbath in every country to man and to beast. We see that, if the Israelites did not gather the manna on the seventh day, they gathered as much on the day preceding as supplied them on the Sabbath; and in allowing, in the sabbatical year, the land to rest, it produced for them as much in the sixth as sufficed them both in that year and in the seventh.

This respite from toil ought, then, to be thankfully acknowledged as a high privilege bestowed on man, doomed to labor on account of sin. But the institution of the Sabbath confers on him a nobler privilege. It is set apart for our use, to be the means of calling our attention from interests merely temporal, to those that are spiritual and eternal. It is a day appointed for special communion with God; and the bodily rest is chiefly to be prized as subservient to this end. Bodily rest is necessary on that day for its spiritual improvement; and its spiritual improvement is necessary in order that we may not abuse it by indulging in sloth and idleness, and thus exposing ourselves to the seductions of Satan. The Sabbath, then, is a day to be devoted to the service of the Lord, and to our own spiritual edification in all those exercises connected with and contributing to these ends. It is a day of the greatest enjoyment that Christians have on earth; and God, in its institution, has shown His love for His Church. A great part of the vigor of the spiritual life, and of aptitude for the duty of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, depends on our sanctifying this day, as well as our enjoyment of the manifestations of His love, exciting our longing and ardent desires for a better, that is, an heavenly country.

Thanks be to God for the institution of the Sabbath, of binding obligation in every period of the world since its creation, and on all men, although so often and so much neglected. In the Old Testament, we see, by its being so frequently and solemnly enjoined, as well as by the gracious promises annexed to its observance, the fearful threatenings pronounced, and the punishments inflicted in case of its infraction, how great was the importance which God attached to the Sabbath. Nehemiah imputes all the calamities which befell the Jews to their profanation of that day, and represents this as one of the principal causes which had brought on them the wrath of God. ‘In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath,’ Neh. 13:15. The observance of the sabbatical years having been neglected by the Jews, their captivity in Babylon endured seventy years, to ‘fulfill,’ it is said, ‘the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years,’ 2 Chron. 36:21; Lev. 26:32, 43. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, ch. 17, we observe, on the one hand, the signal blessings annexed to the sanctification of the Sabbath, while, on the other, the following awful threatenings, in case of its desecration, are subjoined: — ‘But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.’ We find, too, as stated in the preceding pages, that the observance of the holy Sabbath stands connected with, and is the grand support of, our obedience to all the other commandments, both of the first and second table of the law, which enjoin our duty to God and man.

Works of necessity that cannot be done on the day before, nor left undone till the day following, as well as works of mercy, are permitted on the Sabbath.

But for a man on that day to employ himself in his ordinary labors, to speak of them, or even to allow them to occupy his thoughts, is to oppose the beneficent purpose of the Lawgiver in appointing it, and to condemn His authority; and if the business of the world, which on other days of the week is not only permitted, but enjoined as a duty, be on this day criminal, how much must it be profaned by those frivolous amusements and recreations which are often resorted to on this sacred day, or by spending it in sloth and idleness! 'He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul.'

The day of rest is a weekly and solemn recognition of the authority of God. It ought to be employed in religious exercises, both public and private, for which it is set apart; and these exercises should be accounted the repose and refreshment of the soul. That which should occupy us on the Sabbath is the grand concern of our life. To serve and honor God is the end for which we were created; and with joy we should dedicate the seventh part of our time to His immediate and uninterrupted service, and so rest on 'the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.'

As the day of rest is peculiarly destined to religious services, so it is the day in which they who seek God may expect His peculiar benediction, and the Divine communications of His grace. The ordinances of God are the means of grace; and in the observance of these ordinances He has promised His special blessing. This is the LORD'S DAY, which bears His name, and He has said, 'In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.' If on this day God has specially commanded us to seek Him, we may with confidence conclude that in a special manner on this day He will be found of us. The purpose of God to vouchsafe His blessing to those who observe the day of rest, is included in the declaration that 'the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' Not only, then, hath He sanctified that day, but He has blessed it. God has from the beginning given it His blessing, which He will bestow on all who consecrate it to His service. But if, on account of finishing the work of the creation of the world, the seventh day was blessed, how much more is it blessed because of the completion of the work of redemption? On that day the Lord Jesus ceased from His work, and entered into His rest. It was the day on which He was delivered from the chains of death, when He was declared to be the Son of God, in which the promises to Him of His Father were accomplished, and all power was given

to Him in heaven and in earth. How much, then, may God be expected to honor this day, and to bless His people in the observance of it with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord!

The Sabbath, then, the day of rest, the forerunner of the eternal rest, ought to be gratefully recognized and fondly cherished; and the manner in which it should be observed is fully declared in the Scriptures. The Prophet Isaiah, 58:13, referring to Gospel times, and instructing the servants of God to act so that their light may break forth as the morning, and their righteousness go before them, and the glory of the Lord be their reward, adds, '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, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

The Sabbath is a day which beautifully sets forth the long-suffering, goodness, and enduring mercy of JEHOVAH. Most of the Divine institutions under the law, and some of the ordinances of the Gospel, are peculiarly intended to bring to our remembrance the guilt or the consequences of sin. The Sabbath, on the contrary, traces its origin to a time when man walked in innocence, and to a place which was hallowed by the immediate presence of the Lord. The children of Israel were not commanded to observe a day which neither they nor their fathers had known, but rather to 'remember' an institution which they had forgotten in the cruel bondage of Egypt, and to keep holy a day which their God still continued to claim as His inalienable property. Jesus Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law and the Prophets; and having Himself declared the Sabbath to be *His own*, so by His inspired Apostles He has left the impress of His name upon one day of seven.

Amidst the joys of Eden, man delighted to walk with God, and hailed the privilege of communion with his Creator. Amidst the cares and trials of a troubled and sinful world, the Christian, too, delights to hallow the Lord's day, and thus to participate in its present benefits, and its emblematic happiness. He sees in it the loving-kindness of his Lord, at once providing for Him a retreat from labor, and a fountain at which to refresh his weary soul. He feels it to be in itself a comfort, and in its enjoyment he describes by faith

the rest which remains to the people of God.

---

### CONCLUSION.

---

WE are now arrived at the conclusion of this most instructive Epistle, in which our attention is so forcibly drawn to the consideration of ‘the deep things of God.’ On the one hand, the unbending justice of the infinitely holy God is awfully displayed, appearing like the flaming cherubim which guarded the way to the tree of life, and barred every avenue of hope to man as a transgressor. On the other hand, we behold the Divine compassion abounding in all wisdom and prudence, to the praise of the glory of God’s grace, providing the glorious plan of redemption, in which mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. The righteousness of God, like the rainbow that was round about the throne, reveals all the glorious attributes of Jehovah, blended, but not confounded, in one harmonious exhibition of unrivaled majesty.

The doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, is established by the Apostle in the former part of this Epistle. But it is a doctrine which has in all ages been offensive to the carnal heart. It is equally obnoxious to the profligate and the virtuous, to the fanatic and the rationalist, to the devotee and the philosopher. It lays the pride of man in the dust, pouring contempt upon his boasted strength, and casting down all the lofty imaginations of his own excellence and good works. Therefore it is that with one voice they all cry out, ‘This doctrine leads to licentiousness, and makes no sufficient provision for the security of morality and practical religion.’ Far different from this was the judgment of the Apostle Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, whose language he uttered. In this Epistle, the grace of the Gospel is reckoned the only safe and sure foundation for every practical virtue; and from a view of the love of GOD in the gift of His SON, and of the work of Christ in redemption, believers are urged to every duty. ‘I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,’ is the language of Paul at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, ‘that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’ Here he does not for a moment entertain the idea that the mercies of God, displayed in the grand doctrines of the Gospel which he had been exhibiting

and unfolding, could in any way tend to encourage a continuance in sin. On the contrary, they are the very grounds on which he urges the believing Romans to surrender themselves wholly to the Lord. Paul is often ignorantly accused of teaching principles subversive of morality; but in the latter part of this Epistle he is as fervent in establishing the necessity of holiness of life and conduct as he had previously been earnest in establishing the great doctrine of justification by faith.

The attributes of God, especially His holiness and justice, when viewed through any other medium than that of the Gospel, strike terror into the heart of man, and lead him, like Adam, to hide himself among the trees of the garden. But these attributes, in themselves so terrible to the guilty, are through the merciful appointment of the mediation of our heavenly Surety, pledged for the deliverance of the Christian, and for his eternal salvation.

According to the acknowledged constitution of man, love and gratitude are much more effective principles of obedience than the servile spirit of self-righteousness, craving the wages of merit. It consequently happens that all who receive the grace of God in truth are found careful to maintain good works, while the advocates of salvation by works notoriously fail in practice, and frequently indulge the lusts of the flesh. They boast much of practical as opposed to doctrinal religion, and talk of morality and virtue; but their conduct and pursuits for the most part declare them to be men of this world, living to themselves and not to Christ, delighting in the follies of the world, and actuated by its motives. But the grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches believers to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Even among the people of God many are prejudiced against some of the doctrines exhibited in the preceding part of this Epistle. But their prejudices are to be traced to the remains of ignorance and alienation from God, which, through the power of indwelling sin and the busy suggestions of the prince of darkness, still continue to obscure the views of those in whose heart the Spirit of truth has begun to shine. If, however, we appeal to the experience of believers in every age and in every country, it will be found that the more

unreservedly and the more simply the Apostle's doctrines are received in all their fullness, the more will they produce of self-abasement, of trust in God, and resignation to His will. What can be more calculated to humble the believer under a sense of his own unworthiness, than the awful picture of the depravity and ruined condition of man presented in the first three chapters; and what more productive of joy and peace, than the way of recovery disclosed in the fourth, and the contrast presented in the fifth, between the entrance of sin, condemnation, and death, and the free gifts of righteousness, justification, and life? What more suited to allay fear and distrust, as well as to kindle the liveliest gratitude to God, than the assurance held out in the sixth chapter, that the believer, by union with Christ, is 'dead to sin,' — for ever freed from *guilt* by the death of his Savior, and with Him made partaker of a new and immortal life, and that sin shall not have dominion over him? The same encouragement he derives from the seventh chapter. There the grand truth taught in the sixth, of his being *dead to sin*, is illustrated and enforced by the declaration that by the sacrifice of Christ he has 'become dead to the law.' By the law, consequently, he can no longer be condemned; and the period will shortly arrive, when, from the *pollution* of sin, under which he still groans, the Lord will deliver him.

What can be more fitted to beget confidence in God than the accumulated and ineffable mercies to His people, exhibited in the eighth chapter, in the opening of which, as a corollary from all that had gone before, is announced the assurance that there is 'now *no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*;' that *in them* the righteousness which the law demands has been, by the Son of God Himself fulfilled; that they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in them; and that, although their bodies, because of sin, of which they have been the instruments, must *die*, their souls, because of the righteousness of their Savior, now made theirs, are *life*, — not merely alive, but secured in immortal life, to which even their now mortal bodies shall be raised. The spirit of bondage they have exchanged for the spirit of adoption, calling God their Father, while the Spirit Himself beareth witness with their spirits that they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. If they now suffer with Him, they shall also be glorified together, while the sufferings they are called to endure are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. They groan, indeed, at present, waiting for the redemption of their bodies, for as yet they are only saved in hope; but



they wait with patience for the full enjoyment of their salvation, the Holy Spirit Himself helping their infirmities, and making intercession in their hearts, which, being conformable to the will of God, must always prevail. Having been called according to God's purpose, all things are working together for their good. By Him they were foreknown as the objects of His everlasting love, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son; and being thus predestinated, they were called by Him and justified, and finally shall be glorified. For them God spared not His own Son, having delivered Him up for them all; and with Him He will also freely gave them all things. Who, then, shall lay anything to the charge of those who are God's elect? If it is God that justifies, who shall condemn? If Christ *died*, if He be *risen* again, if He is *seated* at the right hand of God, and if He makes *intercession* for them, no power in heaven, or earth, or hell, shall ever separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.

The unspeakable value of these mercies, is, in the ninth chapter, enhanced by a solemn and practical view of the sovereignty of God in bestowing them, connected with incontrovertible proof that His promises to His people had never failed in their accomplishment. The Divine sovereignty in the choice of the subjects of salvation, is strikingly illustrated in the case of Jacob, whom God loved before he was born. And, on the other hand, His just judgment in punishing those whom He leaves in that sinful state into which all men have fallen, is with equal clearness displayed in His hating Esau before his birth. God, it is asserted, hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. All men are in His hand as clay in the hand of the potter; and while He endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, He makes known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. The conduct of Israel, and God's particular dealings with His ancient people, are in the tenth chapter next described, while the freeness of salvation by Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, together with God's purpose that the Gospel shall be preached to the Gentiles, is fully brought into view. In the eleventh chapter, it is proved, in consistency with what had been said in the ninth, that a remnant of Israel, according to the election of grace, were saved, while the rest were blinded. But still, as a nation, Israel is not cast off. As the root was holy, so are the branches, although some were broken off; and the time is approaching when all Israel with the fullness of

the Gentiles shall together abundantly experience the mercy of God.

In what prominence and strength of expression is the sovereignty of God exhibited in the above ninth chapter? Is the Apostle ashamed of this view of God? Does he cover it with a veil in treating of the rejection of the Jews? No; in the strongest terms that could be selected, he conspicuously displays it, while both there and in the eleventh chapter he represents the glory of God as the principal object in all things that exist, 'For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.' The wisdom of this world finds the chief end of the existence of all created beings to be the benevolent design of communicating happiness. But the Apostle gives another view of the subject. He declares the glory of God — that is, the manifestation of His perfections — to be the end of creation. Let Christians, then, not be ashamed of this display of the Divine character. Let them rather be ashamed of modifying their views of God by the systems of human science. Let them return to the strong and scriptural statements of the Reformers on the subject, and as little children believe God's account of Himself.

The attentive reader of the preceding part of this Epistle, who is willing to submit to receive in all things the true and obvious meaning of Scripture, cannot fail to perceive that all the doctrines which are there brought before us ascribe the whole glory of everything to God. Jehovah is seen to be glorified in His judgments as well as in His grace, in His wrath as well as in His mercy, in those who are lost as well as in those who are saved. However disagreeable this may be to the natural mind of man, it is truly reasonable. Can there be a higher end than the glory of the Divine character? And can man, who is a fallen and lost creature, share with his offended Sovereign in the glory of his recovery? Such a thought is as incongruous as it is palpably unscriptural. If there be hope for the guilty, if there be recovery to any from the ruins of the fall, it is the voice of reason properly exercised, as well as of the Divine word, that it must come from God Himself.

How astonishing, then, is it that men should be so averse to the doctrines of the Scripture which hold forth this view. So offensive are they to the mind of man, that every effort of ingenuity has been employed by those who understand not the Gospel, to eject them from the Scriptures; and many even of the people of God themselves labor to modify and bring them to a nearer

conformity to the wisdom of the world, or, at least, to make them less offensive to human prejudices. This wisdom is foolishness, and is highly dishonorable to God, as well as pernicious to themselves. When God has brought salvation nigh as entirely His gift, and has exhibited Christ as a Savior, through faith, to the chief of sinners, how injurious is it to the honor of His truth, and to the interests of sinners, to put the salvation of the Gospel at a distance, and, as it were in defiance of the Apostle, to send men to heaven to bring Christ down from above, or to the deep to bring Him up from the grave! What folly appears in that wisdom that sees greater security for the believer's final happiness in making him the author of his own destiny, than in resting the security of his salvation on the power and love of his almighty Savior. How vain is that wisdom which considers the performance of good works to be better secured by resting them on the resolutions and faithfulness of the believer himself, than on the fact of his *oneness* with Christ in His death and resurrection!

All who acknowledge regeneration by the Spirit of God, virtually concede the things which they are unwilling to confess in plain and direct statement. If men are by nature dead in sin, surely their new life is not in any sense produced by themselves. If their change from sin to holiness be a new birth, how contradictory to suppose that they have any share in this great change! Yet how many will acknowledge that everything good in us is of God, who will yet labor to show that still there is some remaining moral ability in man to turn himself to God Is not this to sacrifice to their own wisdom? Will they proudly refuse submission to the declarations of God's word, till they are able to fathom the depths of the Divine counsels?

Many Christians, who admit the truth of all those doctrines which are most offensive to the world, act on the principle that it is wise to conceal their views on these points, or at least to keep them as much as possible in the background. They think in this way to be more useful to the world. But is it wisdom 'is it duty, is it consistent with our allegiance to Christ, to keep in abeyance doctrines which so much glorify God, and are so prominently held forth in the Scriptures? Christians should recollect that, although the avoiding of certain offensive doctrines may lessen the prejudice of the world against the professors of Christianity, yet that to turn a sinner to God is in all cases the work of God Himself. How can we then expect a blessing on our efforts if

we seek to conceal what He exhibits in a blaze of light? Better, much better in all things, to exhibit the truths of the Divine word just as that word itself exhibits them, and leave the success of our efforts to Him who alone can make them effectual. We cannot by all we can do bring one soul to Christ. We cannot make one sinner alive by the Gospel, more than we can raise the dead out of their graves. Let us then renounce our own wisdom, and our own plans, and let us teach Divine truth as it is taught in the Scriptures.

All religions but that of the Bible divide the glory of recovering men to happiness between God and the sinner. All false views of the Gospel do the same. The Bible alone makes the salvation of guilty men to originate solely with God, and to terminate in His glory as its chief end. This doctrine is peculiar to right views of the Christian religion. Can there, then, be more convincing evidence that the Bible is from God? If such a feature is peculiar to the Christian religion, yet offensive to most who bear the Christian name, it is the most demonstrative evidence that this revelation is not from man. How solid, then, are the foundations of the Christian religion, when the very things belonging to it most offensive to the world afford the most satisfactory evidence that it is from God!

If it be objected that the doctrines which are taught in the first part of this Epistle, while they display God's mercies in those who are saved, also exhibit His severity in condemning those who perish, this, it must be affirmed, cannot derogate from the mercy extended to those on whom He will have mercy. On the contrary, it is enhanced by the consideration of the just punishment which all men would have suffered but for the intervention of that mercy. Thus, in the 136th Psalm, where the mercy of God is so highly celebrated, it is held forth in striking contrast with the destruction of the objects of God's displeasure. 'God delighteth in mercy.' 'His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation.' 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.' And when these ineffable blessings, freely bestowed on believers, are surveyed by them, in connection with Jehovah's awful displeasure against sin, as manifested in His unalterable determination to punish with everlasting destruction from His presence those who were not more guilty than themselves, but to whom, in His unsearchable counsels, He never purposed to extend that sovereign grace which has snatched them like brands from the

burning, what a foundation do they lay for their love and gratitude to God! They demonstrate, too, their entire dependence upon God, and constrain them, in the utter abandonment of self-confidence, to embrace Him as their covenant God. But if it be inquired, Why has such a distinction been made, involving consequences of such unspeakable and eternal moment? — the only proper answer that can be given is that of our Lord Himself, — 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' Believers, then, are called, in the contemplation of the goodness and severity of God, humbly and thankfully to acknowledge His goodness to themselves. As to others, the answer given to Peter when he asked, What shall this man do? Is to them equally apposite, — '*What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.*' Let them be content with the assurance that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

On the mercies of God to His people, displayed in the doctrines taught in the preceding part of the Epistle, the Apostle grounds his exhortations to holiness in the remaining chapters. The intense and burning zeal which Paul there exhibits for the manifestation of holiness in the character and conduct of believers, when viewed in connection with his great doctrine of justification by faith in the atonement of the Son of God, furnishes the strongest evidence of the truth of revelation. No man ever forged this Epistle. It carries its own credentials on the face of it, and shows the broad seal of heaven stamped upon it, as clearly as the heavens and the earth declare that creation is the work of God, and not of an impostor. Who could have forged such a work as this Epistle? For what end could it have been forged? If Antinomians could be supposed to forge the doctrine of justification through the sacrifice of Christ, who was then to forge the precepts which so urgently inculcate all good works? No man could be suspected of writing this Epistle with a view to please the bulk of mankind, or indeed any one considerable class of men. It is as much opposed to the spirit of the multitude, as it is to the pride of the enlightened few. It pleases nobody, and therefore can never be justly suspected of having been originally written in order to please, or in order to effect any sinister purpose.

It is peremptory in its doctrine of obedience to the civil magistrates, and enjoins submission to the higher powers on a footing to which the world was previously a stranger. Yet this cannot be suspected of being a contrivance of magistrates. For while it urges subjection in civil matters to those authorities

whom God in His providence has appointed, it condemns as without excuse that idolatry which the existing rulers, at the time when it was written, professed, and for the support of which they persecuted Christians to the death. This can no more be a forgery of the rulers than of the subjects.

There is another peculiarity in the latter part of this Epistle, which evinces admirable wisdom, but a wisdom far removed from the wisdom of man. It contains, in the short compass of a few chapters, an amazing variety of precepts, expressed perspicuously, yet briefly, respecting conduct in domestic life, in society, and in church fellowship. Had uninspired men been discoursing on these various subjects, they would have produced a series of distinct treatises, formally handled, and largely illustrated. In the writings of the Apostle, a single sentence embraces a volume, while this peculiarity differs so widely from any procedure of human wisdom, that it proclaims itself to be the wisdom of God. It is thus that the Scriptures are contained in a comparatively short book, which is addressed to the great body of mankind, and whose contents are inexhaustible.

Yet amidst such careful parsimony of words, amidst such a condensation of matter, the Apostle closes the Epistle with what might seem a most prodigal waste, by sending so many salutations, and expressing, in such a variety of terms, ceremonious attentions to his fellow-Christians at Rome. Here, however, as in other cases, wisdom is justified of her children; for this, also, is one of those characteristics by which God stamps His image on all His productions. The Christian will be at no loss to discover, on reflection, that this part of the Epistle is not without its use; and, in the exposition of the last chapter, it has been a peculiar object to point out how we may reap instruction, from what human wisdom, in its folly, will scarcely admit to be reckoned as a part of that Book, which is nothing less than THE WORD OF GOD.

The doctrines unfolded in this Epistle reveal to us the mighty plan of redemption, by which our powerful spiritual enemies are overcome, and all the strong and deeply-rooted evils lodged within our bosoms shall finally be subdued. The whole leads believers to exclaim, — ‘The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about.

The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil; He preserveth the souls of His saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.’ These emphatic words of the Psalmist, though recorded more than a thousand years before the age of the Apostle, most graphically delineate the leading features of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, and portray in vivid colors those emotions in the minds of believers which the consideration of them is so well fitted to produce. And those who have never perused this astonishing portion of the Divine word with a holy relish, and have not entered into its meaning, have never experienced the fullness of that joy and peace which it is calculated to produce in the heart of every true worshiper of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE END.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] See Tit. 2:12, ἀσέβεια, ungodliness, in opposition to which the gospel teaches to live εὐσεβῶς, godly; and see 2 Tim. 3:12.

[2] ‘I think,’ says Seneca, ‘we are not only blind to true wisdom, but are very dull and slow of apprehension in those things which seem to be discerned and understood.’

[3] ‘Until Christ's righteousness be imputed to you by faith,’ says Mr. Romaine, vol. vi. 175, ‘your prayers are an abomination, and your fancied good works are nothing but sin.’ After quoting the 13th Article of the Church of England, he proceeds: ‘We doubt not but the best of them — works done before the grace of Christ — are only so many splendid sins. They may adorn a man's outward conversation, may gain him the honour of men, but in the eyes of God they are of no price, because they flow from an unregenerate heart. So that works done before we receive Christ's righteousness can do nothing towards meriting it, and works done after receiving it can add nothing to it. It is a free gift, therefore; works done before cannot merit it. It waits for no qualification, no condition in the receiver, because it is given to the most unworthy, and is given to supply the want of all qualifications and conditions — it is given to the unrighteous and to the ungodly. And it wants no works done after receiving to add to it, because it is infinitely perfect. It is the righteousness of God, and will prove itself to be from God by its fruits, which fruits evidence us to be righteous, but do not make us so; for if they were to make us righteous but in part, that would be going about to establish our own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God.’

[4] It was at the same hour that Elijah offered his prayer and sacrifice, 1 Kings 18:36. And at the same hour Jesus Christ gave up the ghost, Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:44. So exact in this respect was the correspondence between the type and what it represented. There is a remarkable coincidence, too, between the seventy years at the end of which the temporal deliverance of the Jews was to take place, and the seventy weeks of years when the great deliverance was to come. That space of time — 490 years — includes ten jubilees, at the last of which, not one nation only, but all the nations of the world, should hear the sound of the Gospel trumpet.

[5] Besides the Lord Jesus, who is the Just One, there are in Scripture nine



other persons called just or righteous: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Simeon, Joseph, John the Baptist, and Joseph of Arimathea, and Cornelius.

[6] Were it granted for a moment that this passage teaches that the Gentiles might keep the law of nature in such a way as to have salvation by it, even this view of the matter would contradict the scheme of salvation invented for them by some commentators on this Epistle, through the principle of faith. If they can keep the law of nature so as to have salvation by it, there is no need of salvation by faith, in whatever sense faith is understood.

[7] In this annunciation the human race was divided into two companies, — the one called the seed of the woman, the other the seed of the serpent.

[8] Charity, taken in its true sense, renders the duties of Christians at once clear, intelligible, and compatible with one another. If we take it in a different acceptation, we shall immediately perceive a constant opposition between it and zeal for the service of God; and in the same measure in which we abound in the one, in the same degree shall we be necessarily restrained in the other. But if we view Christian charity in its true light, as meaning sincere love for its object, instead of there remaining any opposition, we shall perceive the most complete harmony betwixt these duties. Far from opposing or limiting each other in their exercises, they will reciprocally fortify and mutually direct in their application. In order to possess just ideas of different duties, we must always consider the relations they bear to each other.

[9] Mr. Burke, in his celebrated letter to a member of the National Assembly of France, attributes much of the terrible mischiefs occasioned by that body to their continuing their sittings on the Sabbath. ‘They who always labour,’ he observes, ‘can have no true judgment. You never give yourselves time to cool; and when men are thus engaged in unremitting labour, they exhaust their attention, burn out their candles, and are left in the dark.’

[10] The holy days, and new moons, and sabbaths connected with these, which were enjoined to be observed, were among the number of those ordinances that were shadows of things to come, which the Apostle here shows were abolished. But the weekly Sabbath cannot come under this description. It is a part of the law of eternal obligation, which, as we have seen, was laid up in the ark with the other commandments to be fulfilled by the Redeemer for the justification of His people, and is written in their hearts. ‘Is the Sabbath,’ asks

Mr. Stopford, ‘a shadow? Is the spiritual delight of man — that which is holy of the Lord and honourable, Isa. 58:13 — is this a shadow ? If the Sabbath be a shadow, or type or representation of anything, it is of the *rest*, signifying a Sabbath keeping, which remaineth to the people of God, and that perpetual *Sabbath keeping* is to be in heaven.’

[11] ‘In the passage in question, the word (sabbaths) is plural, without the article. It is sometimes used in the plural to signify the weekly Sabbath, but never without the article. Whenever given by the Evangelists, as contained in any saying of our Lord, it is given in the singular, except where it means the sabbaths in general, because our Lord intended to abolish, or rather displace by fulfilling, the plural sabbaths attending the feasts, along with the feasts themselves, but to preserve the single weekly Sabbath. In John's Gospel, who wrote after the cessation of the Jewish polity and laws, the word is never used except in the singular, for a like reason. . . . Our Lord corrected those errors alone which had disfigured the pure maxims of the law of universal obligation; we find no corrections made by Him of temporary or national ordinances.’ — STOPFORD, pp. 132, 162.

[12] In proving the duty of the sanctification of the Sabbath, I have not quoted, as is frequently done, what is said by the Apostle in the fourth chapter of the Hebrews, of entering into rest. The evidence of the obligation to observe the Lord's day is sufficiently strong, and it only injures it, as well as perverts the Scriptures, to assert that, because in that chapter the present tense is used in verse 3d, *do enter* into rest, the Apostle refers to the rest or peace in believing which immediately follows the belief of the truth. But the rest there spoken of is future, and not enjoyed in this world. The present time is often used with a future effect. The rest is future, because God is represented as swearing that the Israelites should not enter into it. It cannot, therefore, refer to a rest already enjoyed. Neither the rest instituted at the creation, which was then entered into, nor that in Canaan, is the true rest which believers seek. The Apostle denies that Joshua gave rest to the Israelites; but as he gave them the rest of Canaan, this must signify that it had a future meaning, and was to be fulfilled in the heavenly rest, otherwise God would not afterwards have spoken of another day. At the 9th verse, the conclusion is drawn from all the preceding premises. The result is, that there is still a rest remaining, into which believers are urged to enter. The rest of the Sabbath was for all men,

and is a present rest; the rest of Canaan was for the Israelites, the typical people of God; but the rest that remaineth is the rest of heaven reserved for believers, who are His true people. From the change of the word rest into sabbatism in verse 9th, some infer that the rest spoken of is the Christian Sabbath. But this is not necessary from the change of the word, and would be entirely at variance with the whole of the Apostle's reasoning.

[13] A re-enactment in the New Testament, it has been properly observed, would be a denial, by implication, of its previous institution and authority. Nothing is reenacted in the Gospel. The moral law, the essential duties of religion, the relations of man to his Maker, the necessity of a season for Divine worship, the proportion of time destined for it from the creation — all the precepts of the Decalogue, remain unchanged.

[14] After eight days, that is, on the next first day of the week, or after another week. The Jews used to express a week by eight days. The day on which Christ rose and appeared to Mary Magdalene and His disciples, and the day on which He now appeared to the disciples with Thomas, made eight days. See Luke 9:28, compared with Matt. 17:1.