

effected. The first whole day which Adam spent on earth was, by the divine blessing, a Sabbath day. The grand plea and sole necessity for this appointment must be sought for, not in the nature of the vegetable and animal creatures which were made anterior to the sixth day, not in any imperfection or requirement of the material cosmogony, but in the condition of man, who, though made in the likeness of God, was placed in circumstances in which a day of rest, recurring at brief intervals, would be of essential service to him.

The chief use of the Sabbath consists in its adaptation to our wants as intelligent and moral beings. It was in consideration of this nature, which peculiarly distinguishes man from all other creatures having their abode upon earth, that God gave to the seventh day the character it bears. The Sabbath is therefore an institution for all men as well as for all time. The reason of it is an inseparable characteristic of every human being. It is the universal right and privilege of humanity. It is independent of all subsequent specialties in the history of the race. It is not for one age or country more than another. It had an existence before Abraham was called, and before the Jewish commonwealth was formed. And now that there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ Jesus it still remains. It was made for man. It is his birthright and inheritance, not certainly that he may spend it as he pleases, but that he may devote it to his good according to his varied necessities, and thus gratefully glorify its author, of whose goodness and wisdom it is a most precious memorial. Man was not made for the Sabbath, to idolize it or place himself in bondage to it, which would be a profanation of its character and a subversion of its use. The chief end for which man was made is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever, and the Sabbath is a most valuable and useful means of enabling him to fulfil this duty and prepare for this destiny. It is to be a help and not a hindrance; a substantial blessing, and not an external form; a subservient instrumentality, and not an arbitrary ordinance; a provision to elevate and purify our enjoyments, and not a yoke to increase the burden and pain of our necessities, a pledge of freedom in the service of God, and not a badge of the curse and slavery of sin.

The whole history of the Sabbath strikingly corroborates this view. The illustrations already advanced as to its perpetuity might be repeated here, for they all show that, whether men love it or not, its preservation is to the advantage of the race. But it may be interesting to inquire more particularly how far the position of the Sabbath in the observances of the Jewish Church is in accordance with the design indicated by the relation of the first seventh day to the creation of man. This position has afforded to many a ground of objection against both the antiquity and the perpetuity of the Sabbath. It is alleged that the observance of this day began with the Mosaic dispensation and that it should be regarded as abrogated by the close thereof. This view if well founded would of course overturn much of what has been already said. Now we are not at present concerned with this objection any further than to show, that while there is a way of accounting for all that was temporarily distinctive of the day as known to the Jews, there are not wanting convincing evidences of the design we have been endeavouring to trace in the proximity of the first seventh day to the formation of Adam. To say nothing of the fact, which is much to the purpose, that there are several allusions in the course of the record in the Book of Genesis to the weekly period of seven days, and that in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus, previous to the giving of the ten commandments, mention is expressly made of the seventh day being a Sabbath—to say nothing of this, the manner in which the fourth commandment is presented in the decalogue ought to suffice for the settlement of the question, whether or not the first seventh day was the primitive Sabbath. Let us look at the reason annexed to that commandment:—"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Here is a brief recital of the six days creation and of what God did on and with the seventh day. He rested on the seventh day. But in Genesis we are told that he also blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. In the fourth commandment the subject of these acts is not the seventh day merely but the Sabbath day, plainly declaring that the seventh day is the Sabbath day and that it was so constituted by God blessing and sanctifying it. Hence this reason was given as the most appropriate that could be advanced; not let it be observed, for commencing the duty of observing the seventh day as a Sabbath, but for