

planted on the coast of Africa, and is constantly affecting, civilizing, and evangelizing the tribes of the interior. God has promised that Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to him; has prepared the wicked cupidity of man; has transported these agents to the field, and is there giving them a constant blessing.

Fire-side Reading.

Christ's teaching with respect to the Sabbath.

Principal CANDLISH thus lucidly expounds the teaching of Christ with regard to the fourth commandment. The agitation of last year is over, but the enemy of the Sabbath only slumbers; and it is well that our people should be thoroughly versed in the truth respecting the Decalogue and the Lord's day:—

I suppose I may assume, as what will not now be called in question, that in all his teaching with regard to it he is interpreting and not modifying the existing Sabbath law. He is vindicating it, as he vindicated other commandments, as for instance the third, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, against the false glosses put upon it and the misapplication made of it by the Pharisees. He is not altering or releasing it. As the Messiah, the Son of Man, he had no commission, no authority—to speak with reverence—no right to do so. He does indeed, in that character, claim to be Lord of the Sabbath; but not in any other sense than that which David was lord of the Shewbread when he used it from necessity for common food, and the priests were lords of the Sabbath when for the higher services of the temple they did work that in ordinary circumstances would have been accounted a profanation of the holy day.—The Lord claims for himself, and for all men, a lordship over the Sabbath to the effect of being entitled, and indeed bound, to make what is matter of positive institution about it give way, when a more paramount duty of the same sort—still more when a duty of a purely moral nature, or the duty of meeting a case of necessity—comes into collision with it. There is here no setting aside of the Sabbath law, but a magnifying of it and making it honourable. And it is with the Mosaic law that he deals, the law of the fourth commandment; placing it on its right footing; expanding its true meaning. For one thing, he negatives the idea of there being any virtue or sanctity in mere bodily resting on the Sabbath; thus cutting away the ground, as I think,

from under Calvin and others who held that to be one element of the Jewish Sabbath. The rest enjoyed he shows to be compatible with activity in serving God and doing good to men.

But I do not dwell on the Lord's teaching as to what the Sabbath of the fourth commandment really was, and how it was to be kept. Nor do I insist on the argument for the universality of the Sabbath, founded on the great maxim, the charter of moral liberty—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."—Notwithstanding the objection that that is not the precise point of the Lord's teaching, since it is simply the relation between the Sabbath and whoever may be bound to keep it, I still think his putting his pithy apothegm so widely and generally means something. Otherwise, why might he not have said—"The Sabbath was made for you, and not you for the Sabbath?" I consider him to have the whole human family in his view when he utters his wide and broad proclamation—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." I wish to point out again another noticeable fact about his teaching.—Often as He is obliged to speak of the Sabbath, He never once drops a hint as to its being abolished or superseded. On the contrary, he assures its continuance; at least his language is far more easily reconcilable with that idea than with the other. And this argument will be greatly strengthened if we look at his teaching on another subject.

He has occasion to speak of the place of worship—the temple—not so often as the day of worship—the Sabbath—but yet more than once. In conversing with the Samaritan woman he does so. And how does he do so? First, He states and applies the existing law about the place of worship.—But immediately after he takes care to announce the coming change, the abrogation of the ordinance conferring sanctity on one place more than on another. How much pains also does he take to prepare the minds of the disciples for the destruction of the Temple, virtually in his death, and really some time after, and the substitution of himself when risen as coming instead of it and of all its services? Does not this anxious plain speaking about the superseding of the place of worship contrast strangely with the entire silence about the superseding of the day of worship? Does it not give to that silence a meaning and force not to be resisted? He very especially and very earnestly announces that the ordinance of the place of worship is to be superseded; but, often as he is called to explain the ordinance of the day of worship, he never once utters a single syllable pointing in the direction of its ceasing or being superseded. In any teacher, aware of the Mosaic Sabbath