

analogy is perfect and forcible. The very reading of the words renders the conclusion so simple as to be irresistible. As when God ceased from his work of creation, the day of his resting was hallowed as a Sabbath, or a day of commemorative rest and religious celebration; so, when Jesus finished his work—the work of redemption, and rested from it in his reception to the right hand of God, that blessed day was, in all time coming, to be the day of Sabbatical rest and celebration. In the ordinary interpretation, the spirit of this allusion, and of the analogy suggested by it, is entirely lost. There is not a vestige of it left. But, interpreted as above, so completely is it preserved, that the language of God in Gen. ii. 1—3, might, in the full spirit of it, be accommodated to the work of Jesus when he rose from the dead, and the consequent sanctification of the first day of the week: “Thus the work of redemption was finished, and all its glorious ends secured.—And on the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the grave, and finally rested from the work he had done:—wherefore the ascended Lord blessed the FIRST DAY, and sanctified it.”

2. The “*For*” in verse 10, is plainly designed as assigning a reason for what had been stated in the verse preceding. But according to the ordinary interpretation of the passage, it neither assigns a reason, nor adduces a proof, of what is there affirmed. The supposed affirmation is—“there remaineth a rest”—the heavenly rest—“for the people of God;” and what seems to be assigned as a reason, or adduced as a proof, of this is—“*for* he that is entered into his rest”—the believer, namely, who dies and goes to heaven—he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Now, apart from the *unnaturalness* of any such analogy as that between the believer’s ceasing from his works on earth and God’s ceasing from the six days work of creation,—and, we think we might add, the *presumption* involved in it,—we have to ask—how the believer’s ceasing from his works on his entering the heavenly rest can be a reason why that rest remaineth for him—or how it can be a proof that it does remain for him? What kind of argument is imputed to the inspired writer, when he is made to say—“There remaineth, therefore, the heavenly and everlasting rest to the people of God; for the believer who enters into that rest ceaseth from his own works, as God did from his?” Surely, there is here neither reason nor proof. There is an unnatural and (to say the least of it) sufficiently bold analogy; and to the illative particle “*for*” there is left no meaning whatever:—whereas, on the other view, the analogy—between God ceasing from the work of creation, and the Son of God ceasing from the work of redemption—is beautiful and striking,—and the reason thence arising—for a new Sabbathism to the people of God—is pertinent and satisfactory.—Then—

3. All other considerations are in full harmony with this interpretation. The change of the word—from that signifying *rest* to that which the Hebrews could hardly fail to understand as meaning *the keeping of a Sabbath*—has been already adverted to.—So too has the reasonableness of expecting that in such an epistle—an epistle addressed to Hebrews, and for the express purpose of showing the harmony between the old state of things and the new, and reconciling their minds the more fully to the latter—some notice should be found of the transition, in the worship of the

New Testament Church, from the seventh day to the first,—a notice which is nowhere in the epistle, unless here—We now add—that the view which we consider the passage as giving of the First Sabbath is one which accords precisely with the fact as to its real nature and design. For what is that Sabbath? Is it not exactly what our explanation of the passage intimates,—a commemoration of the finished work of Jesus,—of his triumphantly “ceasing from that work, and entering into his rest?” Is it not just a solemn and delightful celebration of this?—a rest of the believing soul in the completed redemption?—in Jehovah’s perfect and eternal satisfaction in it,—his “smelling a savour of rest” in the accepted sacrifice of his Son? Is it not a day of personal and social jubilee, of spiritual joy and praise, in memory of Him who was “delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification?” And did not the Spirit, by the inspired Psalmist, anticipate the celebration of this day, when he dictated the prophecy—“The stone which the Builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes. THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE: WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT?”

There is one objection to the view given which naturally occurs to the English reader,—but which a single word or two of explanation will be sufficient to set aside. In the verse immediately subsequent to those on which we have been commenting, the Apostles add—“Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest.” How—it is naturally enough asked—can believers be exhorted to labour to enter into the keeping of a Sabbath? Certainly they cannot. And were the only reference of the *rest* in verse 11th to the Sabbathism in verse 9th, this would be fatal to our interpretation. But it is not so. The objection proceeds on a misapprehension. The admonition to “labour to enter into that rest” has reference, not at all to the Sabbathism in the 9th verse, but to the rest in the 10th,—the rest into which “He who has ceased from his work” has entered; a rest which his people are all destined to share with Him; and of which our Sabbath on earth, in commemoration of his work, are at once the prebition and the pledge.—*Dr. Wardlaw.*

THE SABBATH IN GOSPEL TIMES, SPOKEN OF BY THE PROPHETS.

“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 as 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.”

And again, in another verse, express mention is made of the keeping of the Sabbath, as a characteristic mark of godliness, on the part of the strangers generally; that is, the Gentiles who should join themselves to the Lord. Now that this

prophecy could not refer to Jewish, and must refer to Gospel times, is evident, not only from the place it occupies in the chain of prophecy, of which it is a part, but also from certain notices occurring in itself, and not admitting of any other interpretation. For it is connected, first of all, with the revelation of “God’s righteousness,” and the “coming night of his salvation;” which can only be understood of Gospel times, as is admitted by all sound interpreters, and proved, in particular, by the learned Vittinga. There the duty and blessedness of observing the Sabbath are spoken of as belonging to the eunuch, who, under the Mosaic dispensation, was excluded from the congregation of the Lord; and also to the sons of the stranger, who might also be said as a body to be excluded; the calling of the Gentiles, and the removal of all outward personal disabilities in God’s service, are unquestionably marks of a New Testament Church; and yet, of such a Church it is expressly predicted, that the observance of the Sabbath was to form a distinguishing peculiarity. And finally, not only is the observance of the Sabbath three times repeated with singular emphasis—which alone might sufficiently distinguish it from a mere ceremonial institution—but it is coupled with the greater things of the law, with laying hold of the covenant, doing justice, and loving the name of the Lord; clearly importing that its place was with the more important and permanent appointments of God’s kingdom.

The only possible objection, to which the application of this prophecy to the continuance of a Sabbath in gospel times may seem liable, is, that in verse 7, it is said of those to whom the prophecy refers, “Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar”. From which it may be thought, that if the prophecy does indeed point to gospel times, yet as the things predicted are couched in language derived from the Jewish worship, no certain conclusion can be drawn from the express mention of a Sabbath. For, if the offering of sacrifices must be understood spiritually, why may not the observance of the Sabbath also be understood of that spiritual rest which believers in Christ enjoy under the gospel? If, in the one place, by outward institutions and services, practised under the Jewish religion, the prophet intends inward spiritual acts, is it not natural to infer that he does so in the other also? There is the appearance of truth in this objection, but nothing more than the appearance. For the way in which the sacrifices in question are mentioned is such as necessarily to imply, that not outward and carnal, but inward and spiritual, exercises are meant—being spoken of as oblations that were to be offered by eunuchs and Gentiles—that is, by their personal ministry; for the word *serve*, in verse 6, used of the con-