

character, from the grandeur and beneficence of his works. Thus, whether we look upon the great deep or the winding stream, the towering mountain or luxuriant landscape, the Sabbath teaches us to recognise in such an evidence not only of the being but of the glory of God, not only of his wisdom and power, but of his beneficence and love. Thus the institution of the Sabbath, as the festival of creation, naturally calls us to holy contemplation, and thanksgiving, and praise; and its appointed ordinances are meant to direct and stimulate us in these exercises. And thus, by releasing us from all worldly pursuits, and making it a duty to forget them, and leading us into close contact with God, into solemn meditation on our own origin and destiny, our present condition and future prospects, the Sabbath is calculated to exercise the most beneficial effect on the moral and spiritual nature of man.

But the Sabbath serves now as a memorial not only of the work of creation, but of the work of redemption. It is the festival of our Saviour's resurrection, when he rested from the finished work of the new creation. Well, then, might the Psalmist say, in looking forward to this day in the spirit of prophecy, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It is a day not for the exhibition of gloom, but of holy joy; for celebrating the goodness of God in the work of redemption; for praising the Father, in that he spared not his Son—the Son, in that he spared not himself—and the Holy Spirit, in that he applies to the diseased souls of men the grand remedy which the Saviour provided.

Second, The Sabbath was appointed as a memorial of God's sovereignty. As he granted to Adam all the trees of Paradise for his use, but reserved one as a token of his own sovereignty and man's dependence, so he granted him six days of the week for his own purposes, and reserved one to himself, that it might be devoted exclusively to his service. Thus we are taught that we hold our time, as well as our possessions, by special grant from God. If, then, we devote any part of the Sabbath to our own purposes, whether of pleasure or of profit, we rob God of his time, and so are no less guilty of sacrilege than they who rob his temple of its furniture; we set his sovereignty at defiance, and are guilty of a sin similar to that of Adam when he ate the forbidden fruit.

THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN'S ADVANTAGE.

It was made to promote our permanent welfare, both bodily and spiritual, both temporal and eternal. And here we see a beautiful illustration of the inseparable connexion which God has established between the performance of duty and the enjoyment of happiness. What a blessing even in a physical point of view, what a source of comfort and enjoyment and healthful advantage, is the rest of the Sabbath to the children of labour, whether mental or manual! But great as is the blessing of Sabbath rest, this is the least of its advantages. It affords us the most precious opportunities of spiritual improvement. It not only furnishes us with leisure for meditation, but with ordinances of Divine appointment, which, whilst they are primarily meant to glorify God, are calculated also to enlighten the understanding, and purify and comfort the heart. He blesses his ordinances, and honours his house with his presence, there waiting especially to be gracious, inasmuch

that oftentimes the devout worshipper feels as if the distance between heaven and earth were annihilated, and its joys begun in his heart, from the presence of God there. Thus it is that God blesses the Sabbath, giving us not only the means of spiritual improvement, but blessing these means, so as to render them effectual to the conversion and sanctification of the soul. And thus the sanctification of the Sabbath infuses happiness into the hearts of devout worshippers, dignifies their character here, and fits them for glory hereafter.

It is alleged by some that the Sabbath was an exclusively Jewish institution, and never meant for this more advanced dispensation. This statement is most discreditable to those who make it, clearly proving, as it does, either their dishonesty, or ignorance, or inability to comprehend a very plain and simple subject. The Sabbath was instituted at the creation, more than 2,500 years before the Jewish economy was set up, and therefore it has nothing peculiarly Jewish about it. From the measurement of time by weeks in the days of Noah and Jacob, the Sabbath must then have been observed. Again, before the giving of the law, and establishment of the peculiar economy of the Jews, in connexion with the withholding of manna on the Sabbath, Moses speaks of it as an institution with which the Israelites were familiar. And, above all, from the Sabbath law being enshrined in that short sum of indispensable duties contained in the ten commandments, written with the finger of God himself to command universal respect, and on two tables of stone, indicating their perpetual obligation—from this we conclude that the institution of the Sabbath is meant for all men, and binding throughout all time. It is important to observe, that whilst strangers resident among the Jews were not subject to the ceremonial law, they are expressly mentioned in the fourth commandment as bound by its authority. By not distinguishing between the judicial law, which was peculiar to the Jews, and the moral law, which is common to the human race, an unnecessary prejudice has been raised in the minds of some against the due sanctification of the Sabbath. Thus, for instance, the Jews were forbidden to kindle a fire in their houses on Sabbath, and the open violation of it was punished with death; but this was according to their judicial law, which was never binding upon us, and therefore it is most unreasonable and injurious to argue from these enactments in carrying out the principle of the Sabbath law in modern times.

With respect to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, there is ample evidence to satisfy any reasonable inquirer that the apostles, by whom it was introduced, acted under the authority of Christ. There is no special enactment in the New Testament regarding this change, but there are several circumstances which, taken together, clearly show that it was of Divine appointment.

1. This seems to have been the day on which Christ ordinarily met with his disciples (John xx. 19–26), after his resurrection.

2. It was on the first day of the week that the Holy Ghost was poured on the disciples* (Acts ii. 1), when they were all with one ac-

* That the day of Pentecost happened on the first day of the week, is evident from Lev xxiii, 15, 16.

cord in one place; i. e., met for the purpose of worshipping God. And thus both by Christ's meeting with the apostles on the first day of the week, and the Holy Ghost's being poured out upon them on that day, an especial honour was put upon it.

3. On that day the primitive Christians met to hear the gospel preached, and celebrate the sacrament of the supper. (Acts xx. 7.) It is important to observe, that, though Paul abode seven days at Troas, we read of him preaching only on the first day of the week. He seems to have waited for that day, and then preached, ready to depart on the morrow.

4. On the first day of the week collections seem to have been made for the poor saints, just as is often the case in churches at the present time. (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.)

5. It is undoubtedly the first day of the week which is by St. John termed the Lord's day, when he was favoured with the special influences of the Holy Spirit. (Rev. i. 10.) It is most appropriately called the Lord's day, because Christ claims it as exclusively his own, just as God originally claimed the seventh day, when he sanctified it; i. e., set it apart to his own service.

It is not the keeping holy of a particular day which constitutes the essence of the Sabbath, but the hallowing of that portion of time which God has specified. And the change of the day is evidently contemplated in the fourth commandment. It is not said, "Remember the seventh day, to keep it holy;" but, "Remember the SABBATH day." Again, when it is said, towards the close, "And rested the seventh day"—it is added, very remarkably, "Wherefore the Lord blessed" (not the seventh day, but) "the SABBATH day, and hallowed it."

Miserably, then, do those pervert and degrade the Sabbath, and with awful presumption sin against God, who would convert it into a day of amusement or healthful recreation. The Sabbath is not ours, but God's, and therefore we are not at liberty to spend it as we please, but as he directs. He allows us six days of the week for our own purposes; he claims only one for himself, when he might have claimed the whole; and gratitude should constrain us to improve it diligently for the promotion of his glory and our own spiritual interests. It ought to be spent in acts of worship, and such exercises as are calculated to fit us for the service and enjoyment of God both here and hereafter. How should we value Sabbath-time above all time, and consider every hour lost that is not spent in exercises fitted to glorify God and exalt our own spiritual nature! If men are careful to gather up the filings of gold and silver, how much more careful should we be to gather up the fragments of Sabbath time, that none of it be lost! Time has been compared to a gold ring, and the Sabbath to a diamond in its centre. (CASE. See *Sup. to Cripple Gate Lectures*.) Let us set its due value on the ring, but let us especially prize the diamond of the Sabbath. O delightful day, meet emblem of, and preparative for, the eternal rest which remains for the people of God, when Christ still meets with his own people, and manifests himself to their hearts, as he did to the senses of the apostles when met after his resurrection in the upper room at Jerusalem! If the Sabbath was needful for man in Paradise, how indispensable for him now! for what else could prevent his spiritual nature from being overlaid and stupified by the bu-