

CHAPTER 10

THE SABBATH DURING THE LAST OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

Mission of the Saviour - His qualifications as a judge of Sabbatic observance - State of the institution at his advent - The Saviour at Nazareth - At Capernaum - His discourse in the corn - field - Case of the man with a withered arm - The Saviour among his relatives - Case of the impotent man - Of the man born blind - Of the woman bound by Satan - Of the man who had the dropsy - Object of our Lord's teaching and miracles relative to the Sabbath - Unfairness of many anti Sabbatarians - Examination of Matt.24:20 - The Sabbath not abrogated at the crucifixion - Fourth commandment after that event - Sabbath not changed at the resurrection of Christ - Examination of John 20:26 - Of Acts 2:1,2 - Redemption furnishes no argument for the change of the Sabbath - Examination of Ps. 118:22 - 24 - The Sabbath neither abolished nor changed as late as the close of the Seventy weeks.

In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son to be the Saviour of the world. He who fulfilled this mission of infinite benevolence was both the Son of God and the Son of man. He was with the Father before the world was, and by him God created all things.¹ The Sabbath being ordained at the close of that great work as a memorial to keep it in lasting remembrance, the Son of God, by whom all things were created, could not be otherwise than a perfect judge of its true design, and of its proper observance. The sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy being accomplished, the Redeemer began to preach, saying, "The time is fulfilled."² The ministry of the Saviour was at a time when the Sabbath of the Lord had become utterly perverted from its gracious design, by the teaching of the Jewish doctors. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it was to the people no longer a source of refreshment and delight, but a cause of suffering and distress. It had been loaded down with traditions by the doctors of the law until its merciful and beneficent design was utterly hidden beneath the rubbish of men's inventions. It being impracticable for Satan, after the Babylonish captivity, to cause the Jewish people, even by bloody edicts, to relinquish the Sabbath and openly to profane it as before that time, he turned their doctors so to pervert it, that its real character should be utterly changed and its observance entirely unlike that which would please God. We shall find that the Saviour never missed an opportunity to correct their false notions respecting the Sabbath; and that he selected, with evident design, the Sabbath as the day on which to perform many of his merciful works. It will be found that no small share of his teaching through his whole ministry was devoted to a determination of what was lawful on the Sabbath, a singular fact for those to explain who think that he designed its abrogation. At the opening of our Lord's ministry, we read thus:

"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."³

Such was the manner of the Saviour relative to the Sabbath. It is evident that in this he designed to show his regard for that day; for it was not necessary thus to do in order to gain a congregation, as vast multitudes were ever ready to throng his steps. His testimony being rejected, our Lord left Nazareth for Capernaum. Thus the sacred historian says:

"But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her; and immediately she rose and ministered unto them."4

These miracles are the first which stand upon record as performed by the Saviour upon the Sabbath. But the strictness of Jewish views relative to the Sabbath is seen in that they waited till sunset, that is, till the Sabbath was passed,5 before they brought the sick to be healed. Thus it is added:

"And at even when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him."6

The next mention of the Sabbath is of peculiar interest:

"At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."7

The parallel text in Mark has an important addition to the conclusion as stated by Matthew:

"And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."8

The following points should be noted in examining this text:

1. That the question at issue did not relate to the act of passing through the corn on the Sabbath; for the Pharisees themselves were in the company; and hence it may be concluded that the Saviour and those with him were either going to, or returning from, the synagogue.

2. That the question raised by the Pharisees was this: Whether the disciples, in satisfying their hunger from the corn through which they were passing, were not violating the law of the Sabbath.
3. That he to whom this question was proposed was in the highest degree competent to answer it; for he was with the Father when the Sabbath was made.[9](#)
4. That the Saviour was pleased to appeal to scriptural precedents for the decision of this question, rather than to assert his own independent judgment.
5. That the first case cited by the Saviour was peculiarly appropriate. David, fleeing for his life, entered the house of God upon the Sabbath,[10](#) and ate the shew-bread to satisfy his hunger. The disciples, to relieve their hunger, simply ate of the corn through which they were passing upon the Sabbath. If David did right, though eating in his necessity of that which belonged only to the priests, how little of blame could be attached to the disciples who had not even violated a precept of the ceremonial law? Thus much for the disciples' satisfying their hunger as they did upon the Sabbath. Our Lord's next example is designed to show what labor upon the Sabbath is not a violation of its sacredness.
6. And hence the case of the priests is cited. The same God who had said in the fourth commandment, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all THY work," had commanded that the priests upon the Sabbath should offer certain sacrifices in his temple.[11](#) Herein was no contradiction; for the labor performed by the priests upon the Sabbath was simply the maintenance of the appointed worship of God in his temple, and was not doing what the commandment calls "THY WORK." Labor of this kind, therefore, the Saviour being judge, was not, and never had been, a violation of the Sabbath.
7. But it is highly probable that the Saviour, in this reference to the priests, had his mind not merely upon the sacrifices which they offered upon the Sabbath, but upon the fact that they were required to prepare new shew-bread every Sabbath; when the old was to be removed from the table before the Lord and eaten by them.[12](#) This view of the matter would connect the case of the priests with that of David, and both would bear with wonderful distinctness upon the act of the disciples. Then our Lord's argument could be appreciated when he adds: "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." So that if the shew-bread was to be prepared each Sabbath for the use of those who ministered in the temple, and those who did this were guiltless, how free from guilt also must be the disciples who, in following HIM that was greater than the temple, but who had not where to lay his head, had eaten of the standing corn upon the Sabbath to relieve their hunger?
8. But our Lord next lays down a principle worthy of the most serious attention. Thus he adds: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." The Most High had ordained certain labor to be performed upon the Sabbath, in order that sacrifices might be offered to himself. But Christ affirms upon the authority of the Scriptures,[1](#) that there is something far more acceptable to God than sacrifices, and that this is acts of mercy. If God held those guiltless who offered sacrifices upon the Sabbath, how much less would he condemn those who extend mercy and relief to the distressed and suffering, upon that day.
9. Nor does the Saviour even leave the subject here; for he adds: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." If the Sabbath was made, certain acts were necessary in order to give existence to it. What were those acts? (1) God rested upon the seventh day. This made the seventh day the rest-day or Sabbath of the Lord. (2) He blessed the day, thus it became his holy day. (3) He sanctified it, or set it apart to a holy use; thus its observance became a part of man's duty toward

God. There must be a time when these acts were performed. And on this point there is really no room for controversy. They were not performed at Sinai, nor in the wilderness of Sin, but in paradise. And this is strikingly confirmed by the language here used by the Saviour: "The Sabbath was made for THE man, not THE man for the Sabbath;"¹⁴ thus citing our minds to the man Adam that was made of the dust of the ground, and affirming that the Sabbath was made for him; a conclusive testimony that the Sabbath originated in paradise. This fact is happily illustrated by a statement of the apostle Paul: "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."¹⁵ It will not be denied that this language has direct reference to the creation of Adam and Eve. If then we turn back to the beginning, we shall find Adam made of the dust of the ground, Eve taken from his side, and the Sabbath made of the seventh day.¹⁶ Thus the Saviour, to complete the solution of the question raised by the Pharisees, traces the Sabbath back to the beginning, as he does the institution of marriage when the same class proposed for his decision the lawfulness of divorce.¹⁷ His careful statement of the design of the Sabbath and of marriage, tracing each to the beginning, in the one case striking down their perversion of the Sabbath, in the other, that of marriage, is the most powerful testimony in behalf of the sacredness of each institution. The argument in the one case stands thus: In the beginning God created one man and one woman, designing that they TWO should be one flesh. The marriage relation therefore was designed to unite simply two persons, and this union should be sacred and indissoluble. Such was the bearing of his argument upon the question of divorce. In relation to the Sabbath, his argument is this: God made the Sabbath for the man that he made of the dust of the ground; and being thus made for an unfallen race, it can only be a merciful and beneficent institution. He who made the Sabbath for man before the fall saw what man needed, and knew how to supply that want. It was given to him for rest, refreshment, and delight; a character that it sustained after the fall,¹⁸ but which the Jews had wholly lost sight of.¹⁹ And thus our Lord lays open his whole heart concerning the Sabbath. He carefully determines what works are not a violation of the Sabbath; and this he does by Old-Testament examples, that it may be evident that he is introducing no change in the institution; he sets aside their rigorous and burdensome traditions concerning the Sabbath, by tracing it back to its merciful origin in paradise; and having thus disencumbered the Sabbath of Pharisaic rigor, he leaves it upon its paradisiacal foundation, enforced by all the authority and sacredness of that law which he came not to destroy, but to magnify and make honorable.²⁰

10. Having thus divested the Sabbath of all Pharisaic additions, our Lord concludes with this remarkable declaration: "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." (1) It was not a disparagement to the Sabbath, but an honor, that God's only Son should claim to be its Lord. (2) Nor was it derogatory to the character of the Redeemer to be the Lord of the Sabbath; with all the high honors pertaining to his messiahship he is ALSO Lord of the Sabbath. Or, if we take the expression in Matthew, he is "Lord EVEN of the Sabbath day," it implies that it is not a small honor to possess such a title. (3) This title implies that the Messiah should be the protector, and not the destroyer, of the Sabbath. And hence that he was the rightful being to decide the proper nature of Sabbatic observance. With these memorable words ends our Lord's first discourse concerning the Sabbath.

From this time the Pharisees watched the Saviour to find an accusation against him of violating the Sabbath. The next example will show the malignity of their hearts, their utter perversion of the Sabbath, the urgent need of an authoritative correction of their false teachings respecting it, and the Saviour's unanswerable defense:

"And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and behold there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore, it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath

days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him."[21](#)

What was the act that caused this madness of the Pharisees? On the part of the Saviour, it was a word; on the part of the man, it was the act of stretching out his arm. Did the law of the Sabbath forbid either of these things? No one can affirm such a thing. But the Saviour had publicly transgressed that tradition of the Pharisees that forbade the doing of anything whatever toward the healing of the sick upon the Sabbath. And how necessary that such a wicked tradition should be swept away, if the Sabbath itself was to be preserved for man. But the Pharisees were filled with such madness that they went out of the synagogue and consulted how they might destroy the Saviour. Yet Jesus only acted in behalf of the Sabbath in setting aside those traditions by which they had perverted it.

After this, our Lord returned into his own country, and thus we read of him:

"And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?"[22](#)

Not far from this time we find the Saviour at Jerusalem, and the following miracle was performed upon the Sabbath:

"And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been there now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? . . . The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."[23](#)

Our Lord here stands charged with two crimes: 1. He had broken the Sabbath. 2. He had made himself equal with God. The first accusation is based on these particulars: (1) By his word he had healed the impotent man. But this violated no law of God; it only set at naught that tradition which forbade anything to be done for curing diseases upon the Sabbath. (2) He had directed the man to carry his bed. But this as a burden was a mere trifle,[24](#) like a cloak or mat, and was designed to show the reality of his cure, and thus to honor the Lord of the Sabbath who had healed him. Moreover, it was not such a burden as the Scriptures forbid upon the Sabbath.[25](#) (3) Jesus justified what he had done by comparing his present act of healing to that work which his Father had done HITHERTO, i.e., from the beginning of the creation. Ever since the Sabbath was sanctified in paradise, the Father, by his providence, had continued to mankind, even upon the Sabbath, all the merciful acts by which the human race has been preserved. This work of the Father was of precisely the same nature as that which Jesus

had now done. These acts did not argue that the Father had hitherto lightly esteemed the Sabbath, for he had most solemnly enjoined its observance in the law and in the prophets;²⁶ and as our Lord had most expressly recognized their authority,²⁷ there was no ground to accuse him of disregarding the Sabbath, when he had only followed the example of the Father from the beginning. The Saviour's answer to these two charges will remove all difficulty:

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."²⁸

This answer involves two points: 1. That he was following his Father's perfect example, who had ever laid open to him all his works; and hence as he was doing that only which had ever been the pleasure of the Father to do, he was not engaged in the overthrow of the Sabbath. 2. And by the meek humility of this answer - "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do" - he showed the groundlessness of their charge of self-exaltation. Thus, in nothing was there left a chance to answer him again.

Several months after this, the same case of healing was under discussion:

"Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath-day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"²⁹

This Scripture contains our Lord's second answer relative to healing the impotent man upon the Sabbath. In his first answer he rested his defense upon the fact that what he had done was precisely the same as that which his Father had done hitherto, that is, from the beginning of the world; which implies that the Sabbath had existed from the same point, else the example of the Father during this time would not be relevant. In this, his second answer, a similar point is involved relative to the origin of the Sabbath. His defense this time rests upon the fact that his act of healing no more violated the Sabbath than did the act of circumcising upon the Sabbath. But if circumcision, which was ordained in the time of Abraham, was older than the Sabbath - as it certainly was if the Sabbath originated in the wilderness of Sin - there would be an impropriety in the allusion; for circumcision would be entitled to the priority as the more ancient institution. It would be strictly proper to speak of the more recent institution as involving no violation of an older one; but it would be otherwise to speak of an ancient institution as involving no violation of one more recent. The language therefore implies that the Sabbath was older than circumcision; in other words, more ancient than the days of Abraham. These two answers of the Saviour are certainly in harmony with the unanimous testimony of the sacred writers, that the Sabbath originated with the sanctification of the rest-day of the Lord in Eden.

What had the Saviour done to justify the hatred of the Jewish people toward him? He had healed upon the Sabbath, with one word, a man who had been helpless thirty-eighty years. Was not this act in strict accordance with the Sabbatic institution? Our Lord has settled this point in the affirmative by weighty and unanswerable arguments,³⁰ not in this case alone, but in others already noticed, and also in those which remain to be noticed. Had he left the man in his wretchedness because it was the Sabbath, when a word would have healed him, he would have dishonored the Sabbath, and thrown reproach upon its Author. We shall find the Lord of the Sabbath still further at work in its behalf in rescuing it from the hands of those who had so utterly perverted its design; a work quite unnecessary, had he designed to nail the institution to his cross.

The next incident to be noticed is the case of the man that was born blind. Jesus seeing him said:

"I must work the works of him that sent me whilst it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. . . . And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes."[31](#)

Here is the record of another of our Lord's merciful acts upon the Sabbath day. He saw a man blind from his birth; moved with compassion toward him, he moistened clay and anointed his eyes, and sent him to the pool to wash; and when he had washed he received sight. The act was alike worthy of the Sabbath and of its Lord: and it pertains only to the opponents of the Sabbath now, as it pertained only to the enemies of its Lord then, to see in this even the slightest violation of the Sabbath.

After this we read as follows:

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."[32](#)

This time a daughter of Abraham, that is, a pious woman,[33](#) who had been bound by Satan eighteen years, was loosed from that bond upon the Sabbath day. Jesus silenced the clamor of his enemies by an appeal to their own course of action in loosing the ox and leading him to water upon the Sabbath. With this answer our Lord made ashamed all his adversaries, and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. The last of these glorious acts with which Jesus honored the Sabbath is thus narrated:

"And it came to pass as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the the Sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things."[34](#)

It is evident that the Pharisees and lawyers durst not answer the question, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? If they said, "Yes," they condemned their own tradition. If they said, "No," they were unable to sustain their answer by fair argument. Hence they remained silent. And when Jesus had healed the man, he asked a second

question equally embarrassing: Which of you shall have an ox fall into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath? They could not answer him again to these things. It is apparent that our Lord's argument with the Pharisees from time to time relative to the Sabbath had satisfied them at last that silence relative to their traditions was wiser than speech. In his public teaching the Saviour declared that the weightier matters of the law were judgment, MERCY, and faith;[35](#) and his long-continued and powerful effort in behalf of the Sabbath, was to vindicate it as a MERCIFUL institution, and to rid it of Pharisaic traditions, by which it was perverted from its original purpose. Those who oppose the Sabbath are here guilty of unfairness in two particulars: 1. They represent these Pharasaic rigors as actually belonging to the Sabbatic institution. By this means they turn the minds of men against the Sabbath. 2. And having done this they represent the effort of the Saviour to set aside those traditions as directed to the overthrow of the Sabbath itself.

And now we come to the Saviour's memorable discourse upon the mount of Olives, on the very eve of his crucifixion, in which for the last time he mentions the Sabbath:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day; for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."[36](#)

In this language our Lord brings to view the dreadful calamities of the Jewish people, and the destruction of their city and temple as predicted by the Daniel the prophet;[37](#) and his watchful care over his people as their Lord leads him to point out their means of escape.

1. He gives them a token by which they should know when this terrible overthrow was immediately impending. It was "the abomination of desolation" standing "in the holy place;" or, as expressed by Luke, the token was "Jerusalem compassed with armies."[38](#) The fulfillment of this sign is recorded by the historian Josephus. After stating that Cestius, the Roman commander, at the commencement of the contest between the Jews and the Romans, encompassed the city of Jerusalem with an army, he adds:

"Who, had he but continued the siege a little longer, had certainly taken the city; but it was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already at the city and the sanctuary, that he was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day. It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world."[39](#)

2. This sign being seen, the disciples were to know that the desolation of Jerusalem was nigh. "Then," says Christ, "let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Josephus records the fulfillment of this injunction:

"After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink."[40](#)

Eusebius also relates its fulfillment:

"The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice for their crimes against Christ and his apostles, finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evil-doers from the earth."[41](#)

3. So imminent was the danger when this sign should be seen that not a moment was to be lost. He that was upon the housetop could not even come down to take a single article from his house. The man that was in the field was forbidden to return to the house for his clothes. Not a moment was to be lost; they must flee as they were, and flee for life. And pitiable indeed was the case of those who could not flee.

4. In view of the fact that the disciples must flee the moment that the promised token should appear, our Lord directed them to pray for two things: 1. That their flight should not be in the winter. 2. That it should not be upon the Sabbath day. Their pitiable situation should they be compelled to flee to the mountains in the depth of winter, without time to even take their clothes, sufficiently attest the importance of the first of these petitions, and the tender care of Jesus as the Lord of his people. The second of these petitions will be found equally expressive of his care as Lord of the Sabbath.

5. But it is replied that this last petition has reference only to the fact that the Jews would then be keeping the Sabbath strictly, and as a consequence the city gates would be closed that day, and those be punished with death who should attempt to flee; and hence this petition indicates nothing in proof of Christ's regard for the Sabbath. An assertion so often and so confidently uttered should be well founded in truth; yet a brief examination will show that such is not the case. 1. The Saviour's language has reference to the whole land of Judea, and not to Jerusalem only: "Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." The closing of the city gates could not therefore affect the flight of but a part of the disciples. 2. Josephus states the remarkable fact that when Cestius was marching upon Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Saviour's token and had reached Lydda, not many miles from Jerusalem, "he found the city empty of its men; for the the whole multitude were gone up to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles."[42](#) The law of Moses required the presence of every male in Israel at this feast in Jerusalem;[43](#) and thus, in the providence of God, the disciples had no Jewish enemies left in the country to hinder their flight. 3. The Jewish nation being thus assembled at Jerusalem did most openly violate the Sabbath a few days prior to the flight of the disciples; a singular commentary on their supposed strictness in keeping it at that time.[44](#) Thus Josephus says of the march of Cestius upon Jerusalem that,

"He pitched his camp at a certain place called Gabao, fifty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. But as for the Jews, when they saw the war approaching to their metropolis, they left the feast, and betook themselves to their arms; and taking courage greatly from their multitude, went in a sudden and disorderly manner to the fight, with a great noise, and without any consideration had of the rest of the seventh day, although the Sabbath was the day to which they had the greatest regard; but that rage which made them forget the religious observation [of the Sabbath] made them too hard for their enemies in the fight; with such violence therefore did they fall upon the Romans, as to break into their ranks, and to march through the midst of them, making a great slaughter as they went,"[45](#) etc.

Thus it is seen that on the eve of the disciples' flight the rage of the Jews toward their enemies made them utterly disregard the Sabbath! 4. But after Cestius encompassed the city with his army, thus giving the Saviour's signal,

he suddenly withdrew it, as Josephus says, "without any reason in the world." This was the moment of flight for the disciples, and mark how the providence of God opened the way for those in Jerusalem:

"But when the robbers perceived this unexpected retreat of his, they resumed their courage, and ran after the hinder parts of his army, and destroyed a considerable number of both their horsemen and footmen: and now Cestius lay all night at the camp which was at Scopus, and as he went off farther next day, he thereby invited the enemy to follow him, who still fell upon the hindmost and destroyed them."[46](#)

This sally of the excited multitude in pursuit of the Romans was at the very moment when the disciples were commanded to flee, and could not but afford them the needed facility of escape. Had the flight of Cestius happened upon the Sabbath, undoubtedly the Jews would have pursued him upon that day, as under less exciting circumstances they had a few days before gone out several miles to attack him upon the Sabbath. It is seen, therefore, that whether in city or country, the disciples were not in danger of being attacked by their enemies, even had their flight been upon the Sabbath day.

6. There is therefore but one view that can be taken relative to the meaning of these words of our Lord, and that is that he thus spake, out of sacred regard for the Sabbath. For in his tender care for his people he had given them a precept that would require them to violate the Sabbath, should the moment for flight happen upon that day. For the command to flee was imperative the instant the promised signal should be seen, and the distance to Pella, where they found a place of refuge, was at least sixty miles. This prayer which the Saviour left with the disciples would cause them to remember the Sabbath whenever they should come before God. It was therefore impossible that the apostolic church should forget the day of sacred rest. Such a prayer, that they might not at a future time be compelled to violate the Sabbath, was a sure and certain means of perpetuating its sacred observance for the coming forty years, until the final destruction of Jerusalem, and was never forgotten by that early church, as we shall hereafter see.[47](#) The Saviour, who had taken unwearied pains during his whole ministry to show that the Sabbath was a merciful institution and to set aside those traditions by which it had been perverted from its true design, did, in this his last discourse, most tenderly commend the Sabbath to his people, uniting in the same petition their own safety and the sacredness of the rest-day of the Lord.[48](#)

A few days after this discourse, the Lord of the Sabbath was nailed to the cross as the great sacrifice for the sins of men.[49](#) The Messiah was thus cut off in the midst of the seventieth week; and by his death he caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease.[50](#)

Paul thus describes the abrogation of the typical system at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus:

"Blotting 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. . . . Let no man thereof judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."[51](#)

The object of this action is declared to be the handwriting of ordinances. The manner of its abrogation is thus stated: 1. Blotted out; 2. Nailed to the cross; 3. Taken out of the way. Its nature is shown in these words: "Against us" and "contrary to us." The things contained in it were meats, drinks, holy days [Gr. eorhtes a feast day], new moons and sabbaths.[52](#) The whole is declared a shadow of good things to come; and the body which casts this shadow is of Christ. That law which was proclaimed by the voice of God and written by his own finger upon the tables of stone, and deposited beneath the mercy-seat, was altogether unlike that system of carnal

ordinances that was written by Moses in a book, and placed in the side of the ark.[53](#) It would be absurd to speak of the tables of STONE as NAILED to the cross; or to speak of BLOTTING out what was ENGRAVED in STONE. It would be to represent the Son of God as pouring out his blood to blot out what the finger of his Father had written. It would be to confound all the immutable principles of morality, to represent the ten commandments as "contrary" to man's moral nature. It would be to make Christ the minister of sin, to represent him as dying to utterly destroy the moral law. Nor does that man keep truth on his side who represents the ten commandments as among the things contained in Paul's enumeration of what was abolished. Nor is there any excuse for those who would destroy the ten commandments with this statement of Paul; for he shows, last of all, that what was thus abrogated was a shadow of good things to come - an absurdity if applied to the moral law.

The feasts, new moons, and sabbaths, of the ceremonial law, which Paul declared to be abolished in consequence of the abrogation of that code, have been particularly noticed already.[54](#) That the Sabbath of the Lord is not included in their number, the following facts evince:

1. The Sabbath of the Lord was made before sin entered our world. It is not therefore one of those things that shadow redemption from sin.[55](#)
2. Being made FOR man before the fall it is not one of those things that are AGAINST him and CONTRARY to him.[56](#)
3. When the ceremonial sabbaths were ordained they were carefully distinguished from the Sabbath of the Lord.[57](#)
4. The Sabbath of the Lord does not owe its existence to the handwriting of ordinances, but is found in the very bosom of that law which Jesus came not to destroy. The abrogation of the ceremonial law could not therefore abolish the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.[58](#)
5. The effort of our Lord through his whole ministry to redeem the Sabbath from the thralldom of the Jewish doctors, and to vindicate it a merciful institution, is utterly inconsistent with the idea that he nailed it to his cross, as one of those things against man and contrary to him.
6. Our Lord's petition respecting the flight of the disciples from Judea, recognizes the sacredness of the Sabbath many years after the crucifixion of the Saviour.
7. The perpetuity of the Sabbath in the new earth is not easily reconciled with the idea that it was blotted out and nailed to our Lord's cross as one of those things that were contrary to man.[59](#)
8. Because the authority of the fourth commandment is expressly recognized after the the Saviour's crucifixion.[60](#)
9. And finally, because the royal law which is unabolished embodies the ten commandments, and consequently embraces and enforces the Sabbath of the Lord.[61](#)

When the Saviour died upon the cross the whole typical system which had pointed forward to that event as the commencement of its antitype, expired with him. The Saviour being dead, Joseph of Arimathea went in unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and with the assistance of Nicodemus, buried it in his own new tomb.[62](#)

"And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came

with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." [63](#)

This text is worthy of special attention. 1. Because it is an express recognition of the fourth commandment after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. 2. Because it is the most remarkable case of Sabbatic observance in the whole Bible. The Lord of the Sabbath was dead; preparation being made for his embalming, when the Sabbath drew on it was suspended, and they rested, says the sacred historian, according to the commandment. 3. Because it shows that the Sabbath day according to the commandment is the day before the first day of the week; thus identifying the seventh day in the commandment with the seventh day of the New-Testament week. 4. Because it is a direct testimony that the knowledge of the true seventh day was preserved as late as the crucifixion; for they observed the day enjoined in the commandment; and that was the day on which the Most High had rested from the work of creation.

In the course of the day following this Sabbath, that is, upon the first day of the week, it was ascertained that Jesus was risen from the dead. It appears that this event must have taken place upon that day, though it is not thus stated in express terms. At this point of time it is supposed by many that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; and that the sacredness of the seventh day was then transferred to the first day of the week, which henceforth was the Christian Sabbath, enforced by all the authority of the fourth commandment. To judge of the truthfulness of these positions, let us read with care each mention of the first day found in the four evangelists. Thus writes Matthew:

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher."

Thus also Mark writes:

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. . . . Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

Luke uses the following language:

"And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."

John bears the following testimony:

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher. . . . 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 their midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." [64](#)

In these texts the foundation of the "Christian Sabbath" must be sought - if indeed such an institution actually

exists - for there are no other records of the first day which relate to the time when it is supposed to have become sacred. These texts are supposed to prove that at the resurrection of the Saviour, the first day absorbed the sacredness of the seventh, elevating itself from the rank of a secular to that of a sacred day, and abasing the Sabbath of the Lord to the rank of "the six working days."[65](#) Yet the following facts must be regarded as very extraordinary indeed. if this supposed change of the Sabbath here took place:

1. That these texts should contain no mention of this change of the Sabbath.
2. That they should carefully discriminate between the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and the first day of the week.
3. That they should apply no sacred title to that day; particularly that they should omit the title of Christian Sabbath.
4. That they should not mention the fact that Christ rested upon that day; an act essential to its becoming his Sabbath.[66](#)
5. That they do not relate the act of taking the blessing of God from the seventh day, and placing it upon the first; and indeed that they do not mention any act whatever of blessing and hallowing the day.
6. That they omit to mention anything that Christ did TO the first day; and that they even neglect to inform us that Christ so much as took up the first day of the week into his lips!
7. That they give no precept in support of first-day observance, nor do they contain a hint of the manner in which the first day of the week can be enforced by the authority of the fourth commandment.

Should it be asserted, however, from the words of John, that the disciples were on this occasion convened for the purpose of honoring the day of the resurrection, and that Jesus sanctioned this act by meeting with them, thus accomplishing the change of the Sabbath, it is sufficient to cite in reply the words of mark in which the same interview is narrated:

"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."[67](#)

This testimony of Mark shows that the inference so often drawn from the words of John is utterly unfounded. 1. The disciples were assembled for the purpose of eating supper. 2. Jesus came into their midst and upbraided them for their unbelief respecting his resurrection.

The Scriptures declare that "with God all things are possible;" yet this statement is limited by the declaration that God cannot lie.[68](#) Does the change of the Sabbath pertain to those things that are possible with God, or is excluded by that important limitation, God cannot lie? The Law-giver is the God of truth, and his law is the truth.[69](#) Whether it would still remain the truth if changed to something else, and whether the Law-giver would still continue to be the God of truth after he had thus changed it, remains to be seen. The fourth commandment, which is affirmed to have been changed, is thus expressed:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy

God. . . . 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."

If now we insert "first day" in place of the seventh, we shall bring the matter to a test:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . The first day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

. . . .

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the first day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

This changes the truth of God into a lie;[70](#) for it is false that God rested upon the first day of the week and blessed and hallowed it. Nor is it possible to change the rest-day of the Creator from that day on which he rested to one of the six days on which he did not rest.[71](#) To change a part of the commandment, and to leave the rest unchanged, will not therefore answer, as the truth which is left is still sufficient to expose the falsehood which is inserted. A more radical change is needed, like the following:

"Remember the Christian Sabbath, to keep it holy. The first day is the Sabbath of the Lord Jesus Christ. For on that day he arose from the dead; wherefore he blessed the first day of the week, and hallowed it."

After such a change, no part of the original Sabbatic institution remains. Not only is the rest-day of the Lord left out, but even the reasons on which the fourth commandment is based are of necessity omitted also. But does such an edition of the fourth commandment as this exist? Not in the Bible, certainly. Is it true that such titles as these are applied to the first day? Never, in the Holy Scriptures. Did the Law-giver bless and hallow that day? Most assuredly not. He did not even take the name of it into his lips. Such a change of the fourth commandment on the part of the God of truth is impossible; for it not merely affirms that which is false and denies that which is true, but it turns the truth of God itself into a lie. It is simply the act of setting up a rival to the Sabbath of the Lord, which, having neither sacredness nor authority of its own, has contrived to absorb that of the Bible Sabbath itself. Such is the FOUNDATION of the first-day Sabbath. The texts which are employed in rearing the institution upon this foundation will be noticed in their proper order and place. Several of these texts properly pertain to this chapter:

"And after eight days 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."[72](#)

It is not asserted that on this occasion our Lord hallowed the first day of the week; for that act is affirmed to date from the resurrection itself on the authority of the texts already quoted. But the sacredness of the first day being assumed as the foundation, this text furnishes the first stone for the superstructure; the first pillar in the first-day temple. The argument drawn from it may be thus stated: Jesus selected this day as the one in which to manifest himself to his disciples; and by this act strongly attested his regard for the day. But it is no small defect in this argument that his next meeting with them was on a fishing occasion,[73](#) and his last and most important manifestation, when he ascended into Heaven, was upon Thursday.[74](#) The act of the Saviour in meeting with his disciples must therefore be yielded as insufficient of itself to show that any day is sacred; for it would otherwise prove the sacredness of several of the working days. But a still more serious defect in this argument is found in the fact that this meeting of Jesus with his disciples does not appear to have been upon the first day of the week. It was "after eight days" from the previous meeting of Jesus and the disciples, which, coming at the very close of

the resurrection day, could not but have extended into the second day of the week.⁷⁵ "After eight days" from this meeting, if made to signify only one week, necessarily carries us to the second day of the week. But a different expression is used by the Spirit of inspiration when simply one week is intended. "After seven days" is the chosen term of the Holy Spirit when designating just one week.⁷⁶ "After eight days" most naturally implies the ninth or tenth day;⁷⁷ but allowing it to mean the eighth day, it fails to prove that this appearance of the Saviour upon the first day of the week. To sum the argument: The meeting first meeting of Jesus with his disciples in the evening at the close of the first day of the week was mainly if not wholly upon the second day of the week;⁷⁸ the second meeting could not have been earlier in the week than the second or third day, and the day seems to have been selected simply because that Thomas was present; the third meeting was upon a fishing occasion; and the fourth, was upon Thursday, when he ascended into Heaven. The argument for first-day sacredness drawn from this text is eminently fitted to the foundation of that sacredness already examined; and the institution of the first-day Sabbath itself, unless formed of more substantial frame-work than enters into its foundation, is at best only a castle in the air.

The text which next enters into the fabric of first-day sacredness is the following:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."⁷⁹

This text is supposed to contribute an important pillar for the first-day temple. On this wise it is furnished: The disciples were convened on this occasion to celebrate the first-day Sabbath, and the Holy Spirit was poured out at that time in honor of that day. To this deduction there are, however, the most serious objections. 1. That there is no evidence that a first-day Sabbath was then in existence. 2. That there is no intimation that the disciples came together on this occasion for its celebration. 3. Nor that the Holy Spirit was then poured out in honor of the first day of the week. 4. That from the ascension of Jesus until the day of the Spirit's outpouring, the disciple has continued in prayer and supplication, so that their being convened on this day was nothing materially different from what had been the case for the past ten or more days.⁸⁰ 5. That had the sacred writer designed to show that a certain day of the week was honored by the events narrated, he would doubtless have stated that fact, and named that day. 6. That Luke was so far from naming the day of the week that it is even now a disputed point; eminent first-day authors⁸¹ even asserting that the day of Pentecost that year came upon the seventh day. 7. That the one great event which the Holy Spirit designed to mark was the antitype of the feast of Pentecost; the day of the week on which that should occur being wholly immaterial. How widely, therefore, do those err who reverse this order, making the day of the week, which the Holy Spirit has not even named, but which they assume to be the first day, the thing of chief importance, and passing in silence over that fact which the Holy Spirit has so carefully noted, that this event took place upon day of Pentecost. The conclusion to which these facts lead is inevitable; viz., that the pillar furnished from this text for the first-day temple is like the foundation of that edifice, simply a thing of the imagination, and quite worthy of a place beside the pillar furnished from the record of our Lord's second appearance to his disciples.

A third pillar for the first-day edifice is the following: Redemption is greater than creation; therefore the day of Christ's resurrection should be observed instead of the day of the Creator's rest. But this proposition is open to the fatal objection that the Bible says nothing of the kind.⁸² Who then knows that it is true? When the Creator gave existence to our world, did he not foresee the fall of man? And, foreseeing that fall, did he not entertain the purpose of redeeming man? And does it not follow that the purpose of redemption was entertained in that of creation? Who then can affirm that redemption is greater than the creation?

But as the Scriptures do not decide this point, let it be assumed that redemption is the greater. Who knows that a day should be set apart for its commemoration? The Bible says nothing on the point. But granting that a day should be set apart for this purpose, what day should have the preference? Is it said, That day on which redemption was finished? It is not true that redemption is finished; the resurrection of the saints and redemption of our earth from the curse are included in that work.⁸³ But granting that redemption should be commemorated before it is finished, by setting apart a day in its honor, the question again arises, What day shall it be? The Bible is silent in reply. If the most memorable day in the history of redemption should be selected, undoubtedly the day of the crucifixion, on which the price of human redemption was paid, must have the preference. Which is the more memorable day, that on which the infinite Law-giver gave up his only and well-beloved Son to die and ignominious death for a race of rebels who had broken his law, or that day on which he restored that beloved Son to life? The latter event, though of thrilling interest, is the most natural thing in the world; the crucifixion of the Son of God for sinful men may be safely pronounced the most wonderful event in the annals of eternity. The crucifixion day is therefore beyond all comparison the more memorable day. And that redemption itself is asserted of the crucifixion rather than of the resurrection is an undoubted fact. Thus it is written:

"In whom we have redemption through his blood." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" "Thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."⁸⁴

If, therefore, any day should be observed in memory of redemption, unquestionably the day of the crucifixion should have the preference. But it is needless to pursue this point further. Whether the day of the crucifixion or the day of the resurrection should be preferred is quite immaterial. The Holy Spirit has said nothing in behalf of either of these days, but it has taken care that the event in each case should have its own appropriate memorial. Would you commemorate the crucifixion of the Redeemer? You need not change the Sabbath to the crucifixion day. It would be a presumptuous sin in you to do this. Here is the divinely appointed memorial of the crucifixion:

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."⁸⁵

It is the death of the Redeemer, therefore, and not the day of his death that the Holy Spirit has thought worthy of commemoration. Would you also commemorate the resurrection of the Redeemer? You need not change the Sabbath of the Bible for that purpose. The great Law-giver has never authorized such an act. But an appropriate memorial of that event has been ordained:

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."⁸⁶

To be buried in the watery grave as our Lord was buried in the tomb, and to be raised from the water to walk in newness of life, as our Lord was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, is the divinely authorized memorial of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And let it be observed, it is not the day of the resurrection, but the resurrection itself, that was thought worthy of commemoration. The events which lie at the foundation of

redemption are the death, burial, and resurrection, of the Redeemer. Each of these has its appropriate memorial; while the the days on which they severally occurred have no importance attached to them. It was the death of the redeemer, and not the day of his death, that was worthy of commemoration; and hence the Lord's supper was appointed for that purpose. It was the resurrection of the Saviour, and not the day of the resurrection, that was worthy of commemoration; and hence burial in baptism was ordained as its memorial. It is the change of this memorial to sprinkling that has furnished s plausible a plea for first-day observance in memory of the resurrection.

To celebrated the work of redemption by resting from labor on the first day of the week after six days of toil, it should be true that our Lord accomplished the work of human redemption in the six days prior to that of his resurrection, and that he rested on that day from the work, blessing it, and setting it apart for that reason. Yet not one of these particulars is true. Our Lord's whole life was devoted to this work. He rested temporarily from it indeed over the Sabbath following his crucifixion, but resumed the work on the morning of the first day of the week, which he has never since relinquished, and never will, until its perfect accomplishment in the resurrection of the saints and the redemption of the purchased possession. Redemption, therefore, furnishes no plea for a change of the Sabbath; its own memorials being quite sufficient, without destroying that of the great Creator. And thus the third pillar in the temple of first-day sacredness, like the other parts of that structure which have been already examined, is found to be a thing of the imagination only.

A fourth pillar in this temple is taken from an ancient prophecy in which it is claimed that the Christian Sabbath was foretold:

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."[87](#)

This text is considered one of the strongest testimonies in support of the Christian Sabbath. Yet it is necessary to assume the very points that this text is supposed to prove. 1. It is assumed that the Saviour became the head of the corner by his resurrection. 2. That the day of his resurrection was made the Christian Sabbath in commemoration of that event. 3. And that this day thus ordained should be celebrated by abstinence from labor, and attendance upon divine worship.

To these extraordinary assumptions it is proper to reply: 1. There is no proof that Jesus became the head of the corner on the day of his resurrection. The Scriptures do not mark the day when this event took place. His being made head of the corner has reference to his becoming the chief corner stone of that spiritual temple composed of his people; in other words, it has reference to his becoming head of that living body, the saints of the Most High. It does not appear that he assumed this position until his ascension on high, where he became the chief corner stone in Zion above, elect and precious.[88](#) And hence there is no evidence that the first day of the week is even referred to in this text. 2. Nor is there the slightest evidence that that day or any other day was set apart as the Christian Sabbath in memory of Christ's resurrection. 3. Nor can there well be found a more extraordinary assumption than that this text enjoins the Sabbatic observance of the first day of the week!

This scripture has manifest reference to the Saviour's act of becoming the head of the New-Testament church; and consequently it pertains to the opening of the gospel dispensation. The day in which the people of God rejoice, in view of this relation to the Redeemer, can therefore be understood of no one day of the week; for they are commanded to "rejoice EVERMORE;"[89](#) but of the whole period of the gospel dispensation. Our Lord uses the word day in the same manner when he says:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." [90](#)

To assert the existence of what is termed the Christian Sabbath on the ground that text is the prediction of such an institution, is to furnish a fourth pillar for the first-day temple quite as substantial as those already tested.

The seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy extends three and a half years beyond the death of the Redeemer, to the commencement of the great work for the Gentiles. This period of seven years through which we have been passing is the most eventful period in the history of the Sabbath. It embraces the whole history of the Lord of the Sabbath as connected with that institution: His miracles and teaching, by which it is affirmed that he weakened its authority; his death, at which many affirm that he abrogated it; and his resurrection, at which a still larger number declare that he changed it to the first day of the week. We have had the most ample evidence, however, that each of these positions is false; and that the opening of the great work for the Gentiles witnessed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment neither weakened, abrogated, nor changed.

1 Gal.4:4,5; John 1:1-10; 17:5,24; Heb.1. [Return](#)

2 Dan.9:25; Mark 1:14,15. [Return](#)

3 Luke 4:14-16. [Return](#)

4 Luke 4:30-39; Mark 1:21-31; Matt.8:5-15. [Return](#)

5 See, on this point, the conclusion of chapter viii. [Return](#)

6 Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40. [Return](#)

7 Matt.12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5. [Return](#)

8 Mark 2:27,28. [Return](#)

9 Comp. John 1:1-3; Gen.1:1,26; 2:1-2. [Return](#)

10 See chap. viii. [Return](#)

11 Num.28:9,10. [Return](#)

12 Lev.24:5-9; 1Chron.9:32. [Return](#)

13 Hosea 6:6. [Return](#)

14 Thus the Greek Testament: Kai elegen autois. To sabbaton dia ton anthropon egebeto, ech o anthropos dia to sabbaton. [Return](#)

15 1Cor.11:9 [Return](#)

16 Gen.2:1-3,7,21-23. [Return](#)

17 Matt.19:3-9. <[Return](#)>

18 Ex.16:23; 23:12; Isa.58:13,14. <[Return](#)>

19 See conclusion of chap. ix. <[Return](#)>

20 Matt.5:17-19; Isa.42:21. <Return>

21 Matt.12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11. <Return>

22 Mark 6:1-6. <Return>

23 John 5:1-18. <Return>

24 Dr. Bloomfield's Greek Testament on this text; family Testament of the American Tract Society on the same; Nevins' Biblical Antiquities, pp. 62, 63. <Return>

25 Compare Jer.17:21-27 with Nehemiah 13:15-20. <Return>

26 Gen.2:1-3; Ex.20:8-11; Isa.56; 58:13,14; Eze.20. <Return>

27 Gal.4:4; Matt.5:17-19; 7:12; 19:17; Luke 16:17. <Return>

28 John 5:19. <Return>

29 John 7:21-23. <Return>

30 Grotius well says: "If he healed any on the Sabbath he made it appear, not only from the law, but also from their received opinions, that such works were not forbidden on the Sabbath." - The Truth of the Christian Religion, b. v. sect. 7. <Return>

31 John 9:1-16. <Return>

32 Luke 13:10-17. <Return>

33 1Pet.3:6. <Return>

34 Luke 14:1-6. <Return>

35 Matt.23:23. <Return>

36 Matt.24:15-21. <Return>

37 Dan.9,26,27. <Return>

38 Luke 21:20. <Return>

39 Jewish Wars, b. ii, chap. xix. <Return>

40 Id. b. ii, chap. xx. <Return>

41 Eccl. Hist. b. iii, chap. v. <Return>

42 Jewish Wars, b. ii, chap. xix. <Return>

43 Deut.16:16. <Return>

44 Thus remarks Mr. Crozier in the Advent Harbinger for Dec. 6, 1851: "The reference to the Sabbath in Matt.24:20, only shows that the Jews who rejected Christ would be keeping the Sabbath at the destruction of Jerusalem, and would, in consequence, add to the dangers of the disciples' flight by punishing them perhaps with death for fleeing on that day." And Mr. Marsh, forgetting that Christ forbade his disciples to take anything with them in their flight, uses the following language: "If the disciples should attempt to flee from Jerusalem on that day and carry their things, the Jews would embarrass their flight and perhaps put them to death. The Jews would be keeping the Sabbath, because they rejected Christ and his gospel." Advent Harbinger, Jan. 24, 1852. These quotations betray the bitterness of their authors. In honorable distinction from these anti-Sabbatarians, the following is quoted from Mr. William Miller, himself an observer of the first day of the week:

"`Neither on the Sabbath day.' Because it was to be kept as a day of rest, and no servile work was to be done on that day, nor would it be right for them to travel on that day. Christ has in this place sanctioned the Sabbath, and clearly shows us our duty to let no trivial circumstance cause us to break the law of the Sabbath. Yet how many who profess to believe in Christ, at this present day, make it a point to visit, travel, and feast, on this day? What a false-hearted profession must that person make who can thus treat with contempt the moral law of God, and despise the precepts of the Lord Jesus! We may here learn our obligation to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." - Exposition of Matt.24, p. 18. <Return>

45 Jewish Wars, b. ii, chap. xix. <Return>

46 Id. b. ii, chap. xix. <Return>

47 See chap. xvi. <Return>

48 President Edward says: "A further argument for the perpetuity of the Sabbath we have in Matt.24:20: `Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.' Christ is here speaking of the flight of the apostles and other Christians out of Jerusalem and Judea, just before their final destruction, as is manifest by the whole context, and especially by the 16th verse: `Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.' But this final destruction of Jerusalem was after the dissolution of the Jewish constitution, and after the Christian dispensation was fully set up. Yet it is plainly implied in these words of our Lord, that even then Christians were bound to a strict observation of the Sabbath." - Works of President Edwards, vol. iv, pp. 621, 622, New York, 1849. <Return>

49 Matt.27, Isa.53. <Return>

50 Dan.9:24-27. <Return>

51 Col.2:14-17. <Return>

52 For and extended view of these Jewish festivals see chapter vii. <Return>

53 Deut.10:4,5, compared with 31:24-26. Thus Morer contrasts the phrase "in the ark," which is used with reference to the two tables, with the expression "in the side of the ark," as used respecting the book of the law,

- and says of the latter: "In the side of the ark, or more critically, in the outside of the ark; or in a chest by itself on the right side of the ark, saith the Targum of Jonathan." - Morer's Dialogues on the Lord's Day, p. 211, London, 1701. <Return>
- 54 See chap. vii. <Return>
- 55 See chap. ii. <Return>
- 56 Mark 2:27. <Return>
- 57 Lev.23:37,38. <Return>
- 58 Gen.2:1-3; Ex.20; Matt.5:17,19. <Return>
- 59 Isa.66:22,23. See also the close of chap. xix of this work. <Return>
- 60 Luke 23:34-56. <Return>
- 61 James 2:8-12; Matt.5:17-19; Rom.3:19,31. <Return>
- 62 Heb.9; 10; Luke 23:46-53; John 19:38-42. <Return>
- 63 Luke 23:54-56. <Return>
- 64 Matt.28:1; Mark 16:1,2,9; Luke 23:56; 24:1; John 20:1,19. <Return>
- 65 Ezek.46:1. <Return>
- 66 See the origin of the ancient Sabbath in Gen.2:1-3. <Return>
- 67 Mark 16:14. That this interview was certainly the same with that in John 20:19, will be seen from a careful examination of Luke 24. <Return>
- 68 Matt.19:26; Titus 1:2. <Return>
- 69 Isa. 65:16; Ps.119:142,151. <Return>
- 70 Rom.1:25. <Return>
- 71 It is just as easy to change the crucifixion-day from that day of the week on which Christ was crucified, to one of the six days on which he was not, as to change the rest-day of the Creator from that day of the week on which he rested, to one of the six days on which he wrought in the work of creation. <Return>
- 72 John 20:26. <Return>
- 73 John 21. <Return>
- 74 Acts 1:3. Forty days from the day of the resurrection would expire on Thursday. <Return>
- 75 When the resurrection day was "far spent," the Saviour and two of the disciples drew near to Emmaus, a

village seven and half miles from Jerusalem. They constrained him to go in with them to tarry for the night. While they were eating supper they discovered that it was Jesus, when he vanished from their sight. Then they arose and returned to Jerusalem; and after their arrival, the first meeting of Jesus with the eleven took place. It could not therefore have lacked but little of sunset, which closed the day, if not actually upon the second day, when Jesus came into their midst. Luke 24. In the latter case, the expression, "the same day at evening being the first day of the week," would find an exact parallel in the meaning, in the expression, "in the ninth day of the month at even," which actually signifies the evening with which the tenth day of the seventh day of the seventh month commences. Lev.23:32. <Return>

76 Those who were to come before God from Sabbath to Sabbath to minister in his temple, were said to come "after seven days." 1Chron.9:25; 2Kings 11:5. <Return>

77 "After six days," instead of being the sixth day, was about eight days after. Mark 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28. <Return>

78 That sunset marks the close of the day, see the close of chapter viii. <Return>

79 Acts 2:1,2. <Return>

80 Luke 24:49-53; Acts 1. <Return>

81 Horatio B. Hacket, D.D., Professor of Biblical Literature, in Newton Theological Institution, thus remarks: "It is generally supposed that this Pentecost, signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit, fell on the Jewish Sabbath, our Saturday." - Commentary of the Original Text of the Acts, pp. 50, 51. <Return>

82 In 1633, William Prynne, a prisoner in the tower of London, composed a work in defense of first-day observance, entitled, "Dissertation on the Lord's Day Sabbath." He thus acknowledges the futility of the argument under consideration: "No scripture . . . prefers or advanceth the work of redemption . . . before the work of creation; both these works being very great and glorious in themselves; wherefore I cannot believe the work of redemption, or Christ's resurrection alone, to be more excellent and glorious than the work of creation, without sufficient texts and Scripture grounds to prove it; but may deny it as a presumptuous fancy or unsound assertion, till satisfactory proved, as well as peremptorily averred without proof." - Page 59. This is the judgment of a candid advocate of the first day as a Christian festival. On Acts 20:7, he will be allowed to testify again. <Return>

83 Luke 21:28; Rom.8:23; Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30. <Return>

84 Eph.1:7; Gal.3:13; Rev.5:9 <Return>

85 1Cor.11:23-26. <Return>

86 Rom.6:3-5; Col.2:12. <Return>

87 Ps.118:22-24. <Return>

88 Eph.1:20-23; 2:20,21; 1Pet.2:4-7. <Return>

89 1Thess.5:16. <Return>

90 John 8:56. <Return>

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