

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath

Part II

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I Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The *doctrine* founded on these words was this, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties.

I proposed to discourse upon this doctrine under two propositions; and having already, under the first, endeavoured to prove, That one day of the week is, throughout all ages, to be devoted to religious exercises; I proceed now to the

II. PROP. That it is the will of God, that under the gospel dispensation, or in the christian church, this day should be the first day of the week.

In order to the confirmation of this, let the following things be considered.

1. The words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this being the day that should be the sabbath, any more than against any other day. That this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the first of the week, should be kept as a sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day. The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, "Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest ;" which implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy. And this we are obliged to do for ever. But the words no way determine where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, i.e. where to begin and end it; but that is supposed to be determined otherwise.

The Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any.

It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint. The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, *viz.* in Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26. "And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake, to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And Moses said, Eat that today; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none." This is the first place where we have any mention made of the sabbath, from the first sabbath on which God rested.

It seems that the Israelites, in the time of their bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of time by the days of the week, reckoning from the first day of the creation. They were slaves, and in cruel bondage, and had in a great measure forgotten the true religion: for we are told, that they served the gods of Egypt. And it is not to be supposed, that the Egyptians would suffer their slaves to rest from their work every seventh day. Now, they having remained in bondage for so long a time, had probably lost the weekly reckoning; therefore, when God had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, he made known to them the sabbath, on the occasion and in the manner recorded in the text just now quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, &c. he made known unto them his holy sabbath; Neb. ix. 14. "And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath." To the same effect, we read in Ezek. xx. 10, 12." Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my sabbaths."

But they never would have known where the particular day would have fallen by the fourth command. Indeed, the fourth command; as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish sabbath. But that doth not prove, that the day was determined and appointed by it. The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. But this doth not prove, but that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day, now in the christian church. The words of the fourth command may oblige the church, under different dispensation; to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige different persons to honour different fathers and mothers.

The christian sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish sabbath; because it is kept after six days of labour as well as that; it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God's rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.

Therefore, by the institution of the christian sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; but the change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days. So that those words of the fourth command, *viz.* "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God;" afford no objection against that which is called the christian sabbath; for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, *viz.* "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." These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the christian sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God hath set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.

It is true, these words did carry something further in their meaning, as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was then also intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, do not import all that they did, as they related to the Jews. For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, which are known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, and as they related to the Jews, *viz.* these words, in the preface to the ten commands, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken; for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments. But they do not now remain in all the signification which they had, as they respected the Jews. For we never were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, except in a mystical sense.—The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves, Deut. v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day."

So that all the arguments of those who are against the christian sabbath, drawn from the fourth command, which are all their strength, come to nothing.

2. That the ancient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for the keeping of a weekly sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it.

We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that. We read, That “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The Scriptures teach us to look upon the old creation as destroyed, and as it were annihilated by sin; or, us being reduced to a chaos again, without form and void, as it was at first. Jer. iv. 22, 23. “They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light!” *i. e.* they were reduced to the same state in which they were at first; the earth was without form and void, and there was no light, but darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The Scriptures further teach us to call the gospel-restoration and redemption, a creation of a new heaven and a new earth; Isa. lxxv. 17, 18. “For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” And Isa. li.16. “And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” And chap. lxxvi. 22. “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make,” &c.—In these places we are not only told of a new creation, or new heavens and a new earth, but we are told what is meant by it, *viz.* The gospel renovation, the making of Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; saying unto Zion, “Thou art my people,” &c. The prophet, in all these places, is prophesying of the gospel-redemption.

The gospel-state is every where spoken of as a renewed state of things, wherein old things are passed away, and all things become new: we are said to be created unto Christ Jesus unto good works: all things are restored and reconciled whether in heaven or in earth, and God hath caused light to shine out of darkness, as he did at the beginning; and the dissolution of the Jewish state was often spoken of in the Old Testament as the end of the world.—But we who belong to the gospel-church, belong to the new creation; and therefore there seems to be at least as much reason, that we should commemorate the work of this creation, as that the members of the ancient Jewish church should commemorate the work of the old creation.

3. There is another thing which confirms it, that the fourth command teaches God’s resting from the new creation, as well as from the old: which is that the Scriptures expressly speak of the one, as parallel with the other, *i. e.* Christ’s resting from the work of redemption, is expressly spoken of as being parallel with God’s resting from the work of creation. Heb. iv. 10. “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Now, Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead, on the first day of the week. When he rose from the dead, then he finished his work of redemption; his humiliation was then at an end; he then rested, and was refreshed.— When it is said, “There remaineth a rest to the people of God;” in the original, it is, *a sabbatism, or the keeping of a sabbath*: and this reason is given for it, “For he that entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—These three things at least we are taught by these words:

(1.) To look upon Christ’s rest from his work of redemption, as parallel with God’s rest from the work of creation; for they are expressly compared together, as parallel one with the other.

(2.) They are spoken of as parallel, particularly in this respect, viz. The relation which they both have to the keeping of a sabbath among God’s people, or with respect to the influence which these two rests have, as to sabbatizing in the church of God: for it is expressly with respect to this that they are compared together. Here is an evident reference to God’s blessing and hallowing the day of his rest from the creation to be a sabbath, and appointing a sabbath of rest in imitation of him. For the apostle is speaking of this, ver. 4. “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” Thus far is evident; whatever the apostle has respect to by this keeping of a sabbath by the people of God, whether it be a weekly sabbatizing on earth, or a sabbatizing in heaven.

(3.) It is evident in these words, that the preference is given to the latter rest, viz. The rest of our Saviour from his works, with respect to the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the people of God, now under the gospel, evidently implied in the expression, “There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God. For he that entered into his rest,” &c. For, in this expression, *There remaineth*, it is intimated that the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of God’s rest from the work of creation, doth not remain, but ceases; and that this new rest, in commemoration of Christ’s resting from his works, remains in the room of it.

4. The Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that the Sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation, should not be kept in gospel-times. Isa. lxxv. 17, 18. There we are told, that when God should create new heavens and a new earth, the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind. If this be so, it is not to be supposed, that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it, and call it to mind.

Let us understand this which way we will, it will not be well consistent with the keeping of one day in seven, in the gospel-church, principally for the remembrance and calling to mind of the old creation. If the meaning of the place be only this, that the old creation

shall not be remembered nor come into mind in comparison with the new—that the new will be so much more remarkable and glorious, will so much more nearly concern us, so much more notice will be taken of it, and it will be thought so much more worthy to be remembered and commemorated, that the other will not be remembered, nor come into mind—it is impossible that it should be more to our purpose. For then hereby the Holy Ghost teaches us, that the christian church has much more reason to commemorate the new creation than the old; insomuch, that the old is worthy to be forgotten in comparison with it.

And as the old creation was no more to be remembered, nor come into mind; so, in the following verse, the church is directed for ever to commemorate the new creation: “But be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;” i. e. Though you forget the old, yet for ever to the end of the world, keep a remembrance of the new creation

5. It is an argument that the Jewish sabbath was not to be perpetual, that the Jews were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt. One reason why it was instituted was, because God thus delivered them, as we are expressly told, Deut. v. 15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.” Now, can any person think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?

6. The Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that instituted memorials of the Jews’ deliverance from Egypt should be no longer upheld in gospel-times, Jer. xvi. 14, 15. The Holy Ghost, speaking of gospel-times, says, “Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their own land.” *They shalt no more say, The Lord liveth that brought, &c. i. e.* at least they shall keep up no more any public memorials of it.

If there be a sabbath kept up in gospel-times, as we have shown there must be, it is more just from these words to suppose, that it should be as a memorial of that which is spoken of in the latter verse, *the bringing up of the children of Israel from the land of the north*; that is; the redemption of Christ, and his bringing home the elect, not only from Judea, but from the north, and from all quarters of the world.—See Isa. xliii. 16—20.

7. It is no more than just to suppose, that God intended to intimate to us, that the sabbath ought by Christians to be kept in commemoration of Christ’s redemption, in that the Israelites were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; because that deliverance out of Egypt is an evident, known, and allowed type of it. It was ordered of God, on purpose to represent it; every thing about that deliverance was typical of this redemption, and much is made of it, principally for this reason, because it is so remarkable a type of Christ’s redemption. And it was but a shadow, the

work in itself was nothing in comparison with the work of redemption. What is a petty redemption of one nation from a temporal bondage, to the eternal salvation of the whole church of the elect in all ages and nations, from eternal damnation, and the introduction of them, not into a temporal Canaan, but into heaven, into eternal glory and blessedness? Was that shadow so much to be commemorated, as that a day once a week was to be kept on the account of it; and shall not we much more commemorate that great and glorious work of which it was designed on purpose to be a shadow.

Besides, the words in the fourth commandment, which speak of the deliverance out of Egypt, can be of no significancy unto us, unless they are to be interpreted of the gospel-redemption: but the words of the decalogue are spoken to all nations and ages. Therefore, as the words were spoken to the Jews, they referred to the type or shadow; as they are spoken to us, they are to be interpreted of the antitype and substance. For the Egypt from which we under the gospel are redeemed, is the spiritual Egypt; the house of bondage from which we are redeemed, is a state of spiritual bondage.— Therefore the words, as spoken to us, are to be thus interpreted, Remember, thou wast a servant to sin and Satan, and the Lord thy God delivered thee from this bondage, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.

As the words in the preface to the ten commandments, about the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, are interpreted in our catechism, and as they have respect to us, must be interpreted, of our spiritual redemption, so, by an exact identity of reason, must these words in Deuteronomy, annexed to the fourth command, be interpreted of the same gospel-redemption.

The Jewish sabbath was kept on the day that the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. For we are told in Deut. v. 15. that this holy rest of the sabbath was appointed in commemoration of their coming up out of Egypt. But the day of their going through the Red sea was the day of their coming up out of Egypt; for till then they were in the land of Egypt. The Red sea was the boundary of the land of Egypt.—The Scripture itself tells us, that the day on which they sung the song of Moses, was the day of their coming up out of the land of Egypt; Hosea ii. 15. “And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt;” referring plainly to that triumphant song which Moses and the children of Israel sang when they came up out of the Red sea.

The Scripture tells us, that God appointed the Jewish sabbath in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their task-masters, the Egyptians, and of their rest from their hard bondage and slavery under them; Deut. v. 14, 15. “That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.” But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were

before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed. But on the morning that they came up out of the Red sea, they had complete and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters. Then God said to them, "The Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye shall see no more for ever;" Exod. xiv. 13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their sabbath of rest.

But this coming up of the children of Israel out of the Red sea, was only a *type* of the resurrection of Christ, That people was the mystical body of Christ, and Moses was a great type of Christ himself; and besides, on that day Christ went before the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, as their Saviour and Redeemer. On that morning Christ, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the Red sea, as out of great waters; which was a type of Christ's rising from a state of death, and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is in Scripture represented by his coming up out of deep waters. So it is in Christ's resurrection, as represented by Jonah's coming out of the sea; Matt. xii. 40. It is also compared to a deliverance out of deep waters, Psalm lxi. 1, 2, 3. and verse 14, 15. These things are spoken of Christ, as is evident from this, that many things in this Psalm are in the New Testament expressly applied to Christ¹ —Therefore, as the Jewish sabbath was appointed on the day on which the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the Red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of Christ, came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of Christ; it is a great confirmation that the christian sabbath should be kept on the day of the rising of the real body of Christ from the grave, which is the antitype. For surely the Scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the antitype, and that the shadow should give way to the substance.

8. I argue the same thing from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23,24. There we are taught, that the day of Christ's resurrection is to be celebrated with holy joy by the church. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The stone spoken of is Christ; he was refused and rejected by the builders, especially when he was put to death. That making him the head of the corner, which is the Lord's doing, and so marvellous in our eyes, is Christ's exaltation, which began with his resurrection. While Christ lay in the grave, he lay as a stone cast away by the builders. But when God raised him from the dead, then he became the head of the corner. Thus it is evident the apostle interprets it, Acts iv. 10, 11. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name or Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," &c. "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner." —And the day on

¹ Compare verse 4. with John xv. 25; and ver. 9. with John ii. 17; and ver. 2 with Matt xxvii. 34, 48, and Mark xv. 23, and John xix. 29; and ver. 2 with Rom.xi. 9,10; and ver. 25. with Acts i. 20.

which this was done, we are here taught, God hath made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.

9. The abolition of the Jewish sabbath seems to be intimated by this, that Christ, the Lord of the sabbath, lay buried on that day. Christ, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation of which the Jewish sabbath was the memorial. It was he that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed. Yet he was holden in the chains of death on that day.—God, who created the world, now in his second work of creation, did not follow his own example, if I may so speak; he remained imprisoned in the grave on that day, and took another day to rest in.

The sabbath was a day of rejoicing; for it was kept in commemoration of God's glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore we are directed to call the sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, Christ's spouse, to rejoice, when Christ the bridegroom lies buried in the grave, as Christ says, Matt. ix. 15. "That the children of the bride-chamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; then shall they mourn. —While Christ was holden under the chains of death, then the bridegroom was taken from them; then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when Christ rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

10. Christ hath evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, by taking it from time to time to appear to the apostles; and he chose this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which we read of in the second chapter of Acts. For this was on Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. And he honoured this day by pouring out his Spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions, Rev. i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," &c.—Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honouring this day.

11. It is evident by the New Testament, that this was especially the day of the public worship of the primitive church, by the direction of the apostles. We are told that this was the day that they were wont to come together to break bread: and this they evidently did with the approbation of the apostles, inasmuch as they preached to them on that day; and therefore doubtless they assembled together by the direction of the apostles. Acts xx. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." So the Holy Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text.

12. This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord's day; see Rev. i. 10.—Some say, how do we know that this was the first day of the week? Every day is the Lord's day. But it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions. And if by the Lord's day is meant any day, how doth that inform us when that event took

place?

But what is meant by this expression we know, just in the same way as we know what is the meaning of any word in the original of the New Testament, or the meaning of any expression in an ancient language, viz, by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in ancient times. This expression, the Lord's day, is found by the ancient use of the whole christian church, by what appears in all the writings of ancient times, even from the apostles' days, to signify the first day of the week.

And the expression implies in it the holiness of the day. For doubtless the day is called *the Lord's day*, as the sacred supper is called *the Lord's supper*, which is so called, because it is a *holy* supper, to be celebrated in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and of his redemption. So this is a holy day, to be kept in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and his redemption.

The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord's day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God; for God hath been pleased to call it by his own name. When any thing is called by the name of God in Scripture, this denotes the appropriation of it to God.—Thus God put his name upon his people Israel of old; Numbers vi. 27. "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." They were called by the name of God, as it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 14. "If my people which are called by my name," &c. *i. e.* They were called God's people, or the Lord's people. This denoted that they were a holy peculiar people above all others. Deut. vii. 6. "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord;" and so in ver. 14. and many other places.

So the city Jerusalem was called by God's name; Jer. xxv. 29.—"Upon the city which is called by my name." Dan. ix. 18, 19. "And the city which is called by thy name," &c. This denoted that it was a holy city, a city chosen of God above all other cities for holy uses, as it is often called *the holy city*, as in Neh. xi. 1. "To dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city;" and in many other places.

So the temple is said to be, a house called by God's name; I Kings viii. 43. "This house that is called by my name." And often elsewhere. That is, it was called God's house, or the Lord's house. This denoted that it was called a holy place, a house devoted to holy uses, above all others.

So also we find that the first day of the week is called by God's name, being called in Scripture God's day, or *the Lord's day*, which denotes that it is a holy day, a day appropriated to holy uses, above all others in the week.

13. The tradition of the church from age to age, though it be no rule, yet may be a great confirmation of the truth in such a case as this is. We find by all accounts, that it has been the universal custom of the christian church, in all ages, even from the age of the apostles, to keep the first day of the week. We read in the writings which remain of the

first, second, and third centuries, of the Christians keeping the Lord's day; and so in all succeeding ages: and there are no accounts that contradict them.—This day hath all along been kept by Christians, in all countries throughout the world, and by almost all that have borne the name of Christians, of all denominations, however different in their opinions as to other things.

Now, although this be not sufficient of itself without a foundation in Scripture; yet it may be a confirmation of it, because here is really matter of conviction in it to our reason. Reason may greatly confirm truths revealed in the Scriptures. The universality of the custom throughout all christian countries, in all ages, by what account we have of them, is a good argument, that the church had it from the apostles: and it is difficult to conceive how all should come to agree to set up such a custom through the world, of different sects and opinions, and we have no account of any such thing.

14. It is no way weakening to these arguments, that there is nothing more plainly said about it in the New Testament, till John wrote his *Revelation*, because, there is a sufficient reason to be given for it. . In all probability it was purposely avoided by the Holy Spirit, in the first settling of christian churches in the world, both among the heathen and among the Jews, but especially for the sake of the Jews, and out of tenderness to the Jewish Christians. For it is evident that Christ and the apostles declared one thing after another to them gradually as they could bear it.

The Jews had a regard for their sabbath above almost any thing in the laws of Moses; and there was that in the Old Testament which tended to uphold them in the observance of this, much more strongly than any thing else that was Jewish. God had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded it, and had often so dreadfully punished the breach of it, that there was more colour for their retaining this custom than almost any other.

Therefore Christ dealt very tenderly with them in this point. Other things of this nature we find very gradually revealed. Christ had many things to say, as we are informed, which yet he said not, because they could not as yet bear them, and gave this reason for it, that it was like putting new wine into old bottles. They were so contrary to their old customs, that Christ was gradual in revealing them. He gave here a little and there a little, as they could bear; and it was a long time before he told them plainly the principal doctrines of the kingdom of heaven.—He took the most favourable opportunities to tell them of his sufferings and death, especially when they were full of admiration at some signal miracle, and were confirmed in it, that he was the Messiah.

He told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection than before. But even then, he did not tell them all, but left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They therefore were much more enlightened after that than before. However, as yet he did not reveal all. The abolition of the ceremonial law about meats and drinks was not fully known till after this.

The apostles were in the same manner careful and tender of those to whom they

preached and wrote. It was very gradually that they ventured to teach them the cessation of the ceremonial laws of circumcision and abstinence from unclean meats. How tender is the apostle Paul with such as scrupled, in the fourteenth chapter of Romans! He directs those who had knowledge, to keep it to themselves, for the sake of their weak brethren. Rom. xiv. 22.—But I need say no more to evince this.

However, I will say this, that it is very possible that the apostles themselves at first might not have this change of the day of the sabbath fully revealed to them. The Holy Ghost, at his descent, revealed much to them, yet after that, they were ignorant of much of gospel-doctrine; yea, they were so a great while after they acted the part of apostles, in preaching, baptizing, and governing the church. Peter was surprised when he was commanded to eat meats legally unclean; and so were the apostles in general, when Peter was commanded to go to the Gentiles, to preach to them.

Thus tender was Christ of the church while an infant. He did not feed them with strong meat, but was careful to bring in the observance of the Lord's day by degrees, and therefore took all occasions to honour it, by appearing from time to time of choice on that day; by sending down his Spirit on that, day in that remarkable manner at Pentecost; by ordering Christians to meet in order to break bread on that day, and by ordering their contributions and other duties of worship to be holden on it; thus introducing the observance of it by degrees. And though as yet the Holy Ghost did not speak very plainly about it, yet God took special care that there should be sufficient evidences of his will, to be found out by the christian church, when it should be more established and settled, and should have come to the strength of a man.

Thus I leave it with every one to judge, whether there be not sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be kept by the christian church as a sabbath?

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