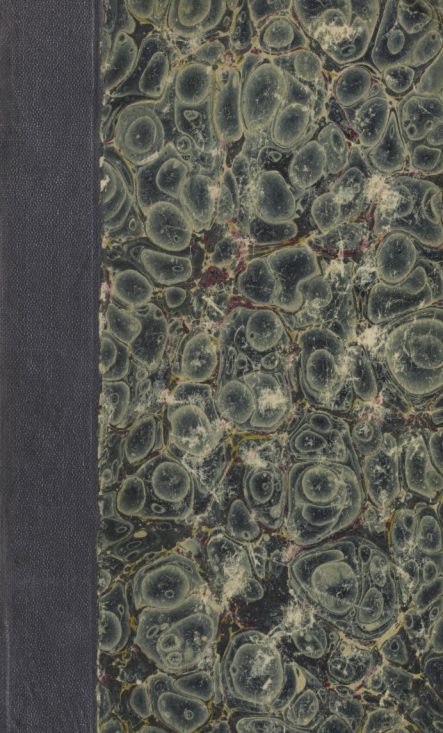




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13.
ON

THE SABBATH.

BY

THE LATE REV. GAVIN PARKER,

MINISTER OF BON-ACCORD CHURCH.

"HE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

This Tract was found among Mr. PARKER's manuscripts, prepared for publication; and is now printed at the request of the Kirk Session and Congregation of Bon-Accord Church.

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ON THE SABBATH.

IN this short Tract, it is attempted to furnish evidence—intelligible to all—that the SABBATH is a divine institution, appointed to continue in the Church of God till the end of time.

Its origin is to be traced to the state of primeval innocence. On the seventh day of this world's existence "God ceased from his own works." "He rested and was refreshed." He was well pleased with the works which he had just finished. They appeared to him sufficient for the purposes intended; he had pronounced them good, and on the first Sabbath he rejoiced in them as the productions of divine power, and wisdom, and goodness, which he had created for the diffusion of benevolence and joy among countless myriads of intelligent beings not then in existence. Gen. ii. 1—3. He blessed the seventh day. He rejoiced in it as a day of peculiar delight to himself. Also, he sanctified it. He taught the first man—recently formed after the divine image—to rejoice, to bless, and to glorify his benevolent Creator, and to enjoy along with him a day of holy rest.

It was the Great, the Benevolent, Lord of All, who made the first Sabbath a holy and a happy day. He separated it from other days for the special purposes of solemn yet joyful worship ; for affording to men regular and frequent opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge and felicity, and to be an example of that glorious rest which shall for ever be enjoyed by all the holy creatures of God. The Sabbath was, therefore, appointed for man, and announced to him as the first fruits of divine wisdom and holiness, and, to this region of creation, the most ancient of the laws of God. It is unquestionably the will of God that his own example should be a perpetual rule to man. His will is that, on the Sabbath, the soul of man should rest from things common, and be joyfully occupied about things that are holy.

The institution of the Sabbath is to be traced to the benevolence of the Godhead ; and from this lofty source, Sabbath after Sabbath, there shall continue to flow streams of pleasure, to be enjoyed by all who love God during the measured ages of time and onward to eternity. We, therefore, pronounce this institution venerable from its antiquity—sacred by the example of the benevolent God—and conducive to the improvement and happiness of all who are in earnest in seeking preparation for the everlasting Sabbath in heaven.

We possess some evidence that the Sabbath was observed by godly men before the giving of the law at Sinai. Even prior to the Deluge, Enoch and Noah, at least, and perhaps many others

“walked with God” and “pleased God.” Could they have done so without obedience to his law? Are there not strong reasons to believe that they did obey him, and imitate his example in observing every seventh day as a day of holy and joyful rest? The sacred Scriptures also inform us that, before the thousands of Israel in their journeyings from Egypt had reached Sinai—before the fiery law, and the phenomena which attended its promulgation, had diffused trembling throughout the camp—the seventh day had been distinctly marked and called the “rest of the holy Sabbath;” and it had been observed as a day peculiarly holy “unto the Lord.” Had not Moses been accustomed to observe the Sabbath before the giving of the manna in the wilderness, how could we suppose that the God of Israel could have spoken to him in these words (Exod. xvi. 4, 5), “Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day. * * And on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily”? In these words the God of Israel evidently addressed one who understood what was to be done on the seventh day. Even the people also must have known that the Sabbath ought to be observed—for “It came to pass,” probably before Moses had given them any particular instruction concerning the manna, “that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man.” The rulers of the congregation appear to have been surprised at the conduct of

the people, as they may have supposed that the gathering of the manna could not be any great violation of the Sabbath, and they "came and told Moses." He approved of what the people had done, and he more fully expounded and enforced the first law which God gave to man. *Exod. xvi. 23—30.* In these transactions we recognise the God of Israel, by his servant Moses, repeating his injunctions, and more fully revealing his will, concerning the sanctification of the seventh day. He gives bread from heaven for six days successively—bread which could not be preserved from day to day—bread to be gathered anew each day. He commands that on the sixth day a double quantity be gathered, and on the seventh he preserves it in a miraculous manner as suitable food for his chosen people.

On the seventh day the benevolent God ceased to send food from heaven, and gave commandment to the people that they also should cease on the seventh day from the work or labour of gathering. In defending the perpetual obligation to observe the Sabbath, therefore, we can trace its origin and authority far beyond the era of the Jewish system of laws. It was revered and observed by the people of God during the patriarchal ages—it is almost coeval with the creation of our world.

The Sabbath is recognised in the moral law as an institution previously in existence. It rests not merely on the circumstance which gave birth to the Mosaic institutions. It is derived from a higher origin, and it continues, and it will con-

tinue, in force when the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic ritual are no longer necessary. “*Remember,*” said *Jehovah*, at Sinai. In this I give you no new commandment. I call upon you to obey with more reverence an old commandment which was from the beginning. I give it new publicity and authority, and I more fully explain its duties and its privileges. You have known, or might have known, the order of days from the creation. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of *Jehovah* thy God.” His name is upon it. He claims it as His property. Neglect not, forget not, to sanctify it; love, and honour, and observe it as that holy day which is the peculiar property of the holy and benevolent God. Never let this commandment be strange to your minds or unwelcome to your souls. Never dare to set it at nought; never venture to profane any part of it by common works, or words, or thoughts. Let gratitude to God for allowing you six days to follow out common labour—let a regard to your own salvation and comfort—let an ardent desire to please God and to enjoy his friendship—induce you to remember and to sanctify the Sabbath-day.

We might now add, that no repeal of this law took place before the coming of Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ himself made no change on the moral law; but, in the present Tract, there is no room for illustration on these and other proofs for the permanent authority of the Sabbath.

In conclusion, This law comes to all with au-

thority from Jehovah, authority which cannot be denied, and which cannot be resisted, with impunity. May it be written on every heart! The duty is binding on every one of us—"Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." Let all be obedient.

This law is addressed to parents and masters, and all who give employment to other human beings, and to all who require labour from cattle. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, But the seventh day is the Sabbath of JEHOVAH thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger, that is within thy gates."

By giving you this Tract, we call on YOU to keep the Sabbath holy. We bring the law to your doors—we bring it to your consciences. We say, read, and understand, and obey the words of JEHOVAH, your witness and your judge.

The Sabbath was made for man; it was made for YOU! Keep, therefore, this law; it will be for your good. "Blessed is every one who keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it." See that you all observe it, and enjoy it, as a good, a blessed day. On this blessed day, behold and admire the words of God—behold the Lamb of God—repent and turn to God—search the Scriptures—follow after holiness—and, in all the ways which the benevolent God has prescribed, seek to be prepared for enjoying an everlasting Sabbath in the heaven of heavens.

But let it be considered that the disobedient

abide under the curse of God. Expect not the blessing of God on your persons or property, or on the works of your hands, unless you keep the Sabbath holy. Deceive not yourselves by supposing that you can be in earnest in seeking salvation—or that God will approve of any profession of faith in Christ which you may make—until you sanctify the Sabbath.

Let parents keep the Sabbath, and thus teach their children, by their example, to fear the Lord and to obey his voice. Let masters or employers beware lest they do anything, or require any work, which would tempt, or induce, or even permit, their servants to neglect the duties of the Sabbath.

Let children begin to obey this law by reading the holy Scriptures, by regular attendance in the House of God, and by learning at home and in Sabbath Schools the way of salvation, and the practice of holy living. Let none of the young appear idle in our streets, or even within doors, on any part of the Sabbath. But let them in early life be earnest to obtain the salvation of the Lord, and that holiness without which none can enter heaven.

Our friendly desire is to summon all to duty. JEHOVAH hath spoken. Let parents and children—let the rich and the poor—let the old and the young—hear and obey the voice of the Lawgiver and Judge. “In his favour is life.” His indignation is terrific as death. “Hear, and your souls shall live.”

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