

LECTURE ON THE GREAT SABBATH. -- EZE. xx. 12.
p. 1, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Moreover, also, I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign
between me and them, that they might know that
I am the Lord that sanctify them.
p. 1, Para. 2, [GREAT].

THIS text is but a recapitulation of one in Exodus xxxi. 13, and is repeated again by the prophet Ezekiel in verse 20. You will take notice that it is a sign between God and the children of Israel forever. See Ex. xxxi. 17: "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." It is also a perpetual covenant: see verse 16. Now I want you should observe, that this sabbath was the seventh day sabbath. God calls it "*my sabbath*," and shows his reason why: "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." He engrafted it then into the decalogue, and it was written upon both tables of testimony, showing clearly that it would be binding under the gospel, as well as under the law. See verse 18: "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." And its being contained in the ten commands, written by the finger of God, on both tables of the testimony, graven on stone, to be a sign forever, and a perpetual covenant, proves, in my opinion, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it is as binding upon the christian church as upon the Jewish, and in the same manner, and for the same reasons. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord." This was the manner. p. 1, Para. 3, [GREAT].

I. WE SHALL INQUIRE WHETHER THE SEVENTH OR THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK OUGHT TO BE KEPT AS A SABBATH. p. 1, Para. 4, [GREAT].

I say the *first*; for two reasons. One is Christ's resurrection, and his often meeting with his disciples afterwards on that day. This, with the example of the apostles, is strong evidence that the proper creation sabbath to man came on the first day of the week. For Adam must have rested on the first day after his creation, he

being the last work of God, and then God rested. Adam must have rested on the first day of his life, and thus you will see that to Adam it was the first day of the week; for it would not be reasonable to suppose that Adam began to reckon time before he was created. He certainly could not be able to work six days before the first sabbath. And thus with the second Adam; the first day of the week he arose and lived. And we find by the Bible and by history, that the first day of the week was ever afterwards observed as a day of worship. p. 2, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Again; another reason I give is, that the sabbath is a sign of the rest which remains for the people of God. And to me it is very evident that this rest must be after the resurrection of the saints, and not before; and of course the saints' rest will be the beginning of time in the new heavens and new earth, as the creation sabbath was the beginning of time with Adam. For Adam rested with God after He had finished his work; so, in the new creation, the church will rest with her Head when he has finished his work and made all things new. To Christ it will be the seventh day; for he will have been six thousand years creating his bride; that is, to the time she is perfected, and pronounced good, or sanctified, as it is said in our text; but to man in his perfect state it will be the first day. p. 2, Para. 2, [GREAT].

Now those who believe in a temporal millennium, or the seventh thousand years, wherein Christ will do more work than he has in six thousand years before, are very inconsistent with the Bible and themselves. They are inconsistent with the Bible; for that says, "Six days shalt thou do thy work; but the seventh is a day of rest, holy to the LORD." Can any one believe that Christ in his work will not keep his Father's law? No, not one jot or tittle of that law shall fail, which was written by the finger of God upon the two tables of testimony. But be not ignorant, brethren, that one day with the LORD is as a thousand years with you, and a thousand years with you is one day with the LORD. You think Christ is slack concerning this law of the sabbath, because he has thus worked almost six thousand years. You think he will always be working to redeem sinners. True, he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is the reason why Christ has chosen the longest days, as given in the Scriptures, for his working days. And, Oh! sinner, do you know that the last hour of the sixth day is almost run out,

and you have not come to repentance yet? But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night; for when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape. p. 2, Para. 3, [GREAT].

Who says peace and safety? Must I be plain with you, my friend? Yes, yes, I must, or I shall meet my Master's frown. Of this class are all those who tell men that they need not look for that day of rest until Christ converts the whole world; for certainly, if the world were converted, it would be no harm to say peace and safety. For all men to be Christians, and live as such too, I think would make peace and safety, truly. Those, then, cry peace and safety, who say all men will be converted before that day. Those, too, who believe all mankind will enter into that rest, and preach this doctrine to sinners, are deceiving souls, and will meet with destruction. Those who cry peace and safety, either by saying that "my Lord delays his coming," or that all men will be saved, without any reference to their character in this life, are both alike deceiving souls. p. 3, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Again; those who believe in a temporal millennium ought to keep the seventh day of the week, instead of the first, to be consistent with themselves; for there must be a similarity between our sabbath and the day of rest, or it is not a sign! "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Do you understand the argument, my dear reader? I say the sabbath, with God, was the seventh day; but with man, it was the first day, as is evident by the account of the creation; for the sabbath was the first day which man enjoyed in time: even so the sabbath is the seventh day with the Lord, with Christ; but with the church in the new creation it will be the first day. Creation opened to man by a sabbath; so will eternity open to man by a sabbath. As man began time with a sabbath, so also will man, in the new creation, begin eternity by the keeping of a sabbath; for it is a "sign," says our text. *Thus, the first day of the week is a sabbath for man.* I will now, p. 3, Para. 2, [GREAT].

II. SHOW HOW AND IN WHAT WAY THE SABBATH IS A SIGN, AND WHAT IT IS A SIGN OF. p. 4, Para. 1, [GREAT].

1. *It is a sign, because God has given it to us expressly for that purpose.* See our text: "To be a sign between me

and them;" that is, between God and the children of Israel. Now another question will evidently arise: Who are the children of Israel? I answer, while the first covenant was standing they were the children of Jacob, descendants of the twelve tribes; but that covenant they broke: see Lev. xxvi .2,15; also Deut. xxxi. 10-16. This covenant was broken, as Moses had foretold. Then Jesus Christ brought in a new covenant, which continued the sign of the sabbath, and prepared another people, by writing his law upon their hearts. These now are the true Israel; for the changing of the subjects never did, nor ever can, change the moral law of God. Therefore Paul argues the circumcision of the heart, and says that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called; that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." p. 4, Para. 2, [GREAT].

Now if the children of God are the true Israel, and if the sabbath was given as a sign forever, and a perpetual covenant, I ask, how can it be abolished while there is one Israelite remaining to claim the promise? You have evidently noticed, that all the difficulties on the sabbath question among Christians have arisen from the foolish, judaizing notion, that Israel meant only the literal Jew. But when we understand Israel to mean the people of God, the difficulties, every man must acknowledge, all vanish at once. p. 4, Para. 3, [GREAT].

I say, and I believe I am supported by the Bible, that the moral law was never given to the Jews as a people exclusively, but they were for a season the keepers of it in charge. And through them the law, oracles, and testimony, have been handed down to us: see Paul's clear reasoning in Romans, second, third, and fourth chapters, on that point. Then, says the objector, we are under the same obligation to keep the sabbaths of weeks, months and years, as the Jews were. No, sir; you will observe that these were not included in the decalogue; they were attachments, added by reason of transgression, until the seed should come, to whom the promise of one eternal day, or sabbath of rest, was made. "Therefore there remaineth a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God." Only one kind of sabbath was given to Adam, and one only remains for us. See Hosea ii. 11: "I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." All

the Jewish sabbaths did cease, when Christ nailed them to his cross. Col. ii. 14-17: "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. p. 5, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." These were properly called Jewish sabbaths. Hosea says, "her sabbaths." But the sabbath of which we are speaking, God calls "my sabbath." Here is a clear distinction between the creation sabbath and the ceremonial. The one is perpetual; the others were merely shadows of good things to come, and are limited in Christ. The sabbath which remains is to be kept on the first day of every week, as a perpetual sign that, when Christ shall have finished the work of redemption, we shall enter into that rest which remains for the people of God, which will be an eternal rest. p. 5, Para. 2, [GREAT].

2. *It is a sign, because no servile labor is to be performed in it.* "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." This is a sign that our work for time, and for eternity, must be done here; no work of preparation in the great sabbath, and certainly there is no work nor device in the grave, whither thou goest. Then we are taught to have our work done, and well done, while in life. Paul certainly intimates as much as this, Heb. iv. 11: "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Some say that this rest means natural death. How can that be Paul's meaning? Would he exhort us to murder ourselves? Moreover, does not Paul tell us, in verse 6, that "they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief?" And is unbelief a preservation from natural death? Who can believe this? This certainly shows most conclusively that our present state is a probationary one, and that we are here forming characters for eternity. It teaches us, too, that Christ will have finished his work of redemption before the great sabbath, and that the new heavens and the new earth will have been finished before this day will commence. Heb. iv. 11: "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." For Christ must finish his work, as the Father did his, before

the great sabbath. p. 6, Para. 1, [GREAT].

3. *It is a sign that we shall know him, see him, and live with him.* For the text tells us, "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." If you will take the pains to examine the places in scripture where this phrase is used, "that they may know that I am the Lord," you will find it generally refers to a time when God has wrought or will work out some great deliverance for his people: such as their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage, as in Exodus vi. 7, and viii. 22,23; feeding them in the wilderness with quails and manna, Exodus xvi. 12; delivering them from the host of the Syrians, 1 Kings xx. 28; destruction of idolaters from among his people, as in Eze. vi. 7,13; when they are brought into judgment for their abominations, Eze. vii. 4,9; destruction of false teachers, Eze. xiii. 9-23. xiv. 8; purging out the wicked rebels from among the children of God, Eze. xx. 38; the final deliverance of the people of God in the end of the world, Eze. xxxiv. 22-31. xxxviii. 22,23; the Lord sanctifying his people and dwelling among them forever, Ex. xxix. 43-46. Eze. xxxvii. 23-28. And our text plainly declares, that it is a sign of their sanctification, when they will all know him. And by the New Testament we are referred to the second coming of Christ as the time when these things will take place; 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Then we shall not be wholly sanctified until he comes, and then we shall be like him, and see him as he is. We shall certainly know him then. Job says, "In my flesh shall I see God." David says, Ps. xvii. 15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." p. 6, Para. 2, [GREAT].

Now we see through signs "darkly," and "then face to face;" we shall have no need of signs, no need of our present sabbaths, or any other memorial; for we shall be with him. As long as the sign is given, and kept by us, so long we may be satisfied that the thing signified has not come; and if the sabbath is not a sign of the day of glory, what is it a sign of? Not of the gospel day; for that has

already come, and we continue the sign. This certainly would be inconsistent. Paul tells us, that "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Not of a temporal millennium, for in that, if there ever is one, which I do not believe, they will have to "work," and keep the "sign." For I believe all who advocate the doctrine of a temporal millennium, which they call spiritual, believe we shall have a weekly sabbath as the nations do now. Of course, then, the sign must allude to that happy period when Christ will come in all his glory, gather his scattered sheep, deliver them from the bondage of death, destroy the host of the wicked from among them, burn up the idols out of the land, punish and banish from his church and people all false prophets and teachers, cleanse his chosen ones from all their abominations and filthiness, judge them in righteousness, present them sanctified before his Father, form them into a glorified kingdom, enter with them into the eternal rest, and live with them, and reign over them forever. p. 7, Para. 1, [GREAT].

4. *I shall now show that the sabbath is a sign of the TIME.* I beg of you, my dear reader, not to let your prejudice against my saying anything about time cause you to throw down the book and read no further. I pray you, do not judge before you read. "Hear, and then judge," is an excellent maxim. Many a man has lost his life by not reading -- *Julius Caesar, Henry Fourth, &c.* It is even possible that your eternal life may be at stake; or the life of some of your relatives or friends may hang upon your conduct, even in this thing. Your example may prevent others from reading, who might possibly, if they should read, be convinced, get ready, enter into life, and be happy. It may be your companion, or child, or some other dear friend who is looking up to you for example. Do nothing that may cause your heart to ache in a coming day. p. 8, Para. 1, [GREAT].

I shall show that the sabbath, which God has given to us as a sign, does indicate the time of the great sabbath of rest, which the apostle Paul exhorts us to labor to enter into. You will perceive, Ex. xxxi. 17, that "it is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." God gives us a reason why it is a sign -- because he was six days making heaven and earth, and rested on the seventh. Paul has given us a

comment on this very text, in Heb. third and fourth chapters. He shows us in these chapters that there is a day of rest, or keeping of the sabbath, to the people of God; and that it was not fulfilled by the children of Israel going into Canaan. We should conclude, by the apostle's manner of reasoning, that he was contending against some persons who believed the sabbaths had their fulfilment and end, like the manna, when the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan; for it is very evident that it was in the days of Paul as it is with us now. Some then contended that the sabbaths given by God to Moses, in the wilderness, were ended when Joshua led the people into the promised land. Paul confutes them by showing that David afterwards spake of this sabbath as being limited to another day. Our anti-sabbatarians argue that the sabbaths ended with Christ's crucifixion. And now may I not use the weapons which Paul has put into my hands against these anti-sabbatarians? for Paul says, thirty years after Christ's death, "There remaineth, therefore, a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God." Now, if sabbaths had been done away, Paul would not have spoken of a sabbath remaining. p. 8, Para. 2, [GREAT].

It is also evident, by the next verse, that Paul means to show us that time is also prefigured in this keeping of a sabbath which remains. He says, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." In this text, there is, at the first view, a little ambiguity. Either Paul is continuing his argument, by showing that if Christ had entered into his rest, as you suppose, he might have said to the opposers of a sabbath, then "he has ceased from his labors, as God did from his." Or Paul may mean, that Jesus Christ had finished his personal work on earth, and was now entered into his glory as a forerunner for us; not that we can suppose that the work of salvation, of which Jesus Christ is the author, was finished when Christ ascended into heaven; for he is yet an advocate for us; as the apostle tells us, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And this certainly is a work which we hope is not yet finished. Now which will you choose? Either the sabbath must continue, or else the work of salvation by Jesus Christ is finished; for when the sabbath ended as a sign, then Christ's work must have ended, to agree with the figure, "as God did from his." But one thing is certain, and that is, as God created the old heavens and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh, so, in like manner,

will Christ be six days creating the new heavens and earth, and then he will rest from his labors. This is the inference we must draw from Paul's expression in the text we are examining. If, then, the work of redemption and salvation must be completed in six days, what can those days mean? p. 9, Para. 1, [GREAT].

There are three kinds of days mentioned in the Bible: 1. The natural day, which is twenty-four hours. 2. The prophetic day, which is a year with us. See Eze. iv. 5,6: "For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. p. 10, Para. 1, [GREAT].

And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year." 3. The day of the Lord, which is as a thousand years with us. See 2 Pet. iii. 8,10: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." These are the only ways in which the Bible uses the word day, denoting any given or regular period of time. The first is measured by the revolution of the earth on its axis, and is known by day and night. The second is measured by the revolution of the earth around the sun, in its orbit, and is known by the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, and winter. The third is the Lord's day, which cannot be measured by the life of any one man, no man, in this world, ever having lived out one of these days: it cannot properly be called by any other name than "the Lord's day." Peter tells us expressly not to be ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years. What does Peter mean by this expression? It would seem by his charge that he meant something of importance for us to know: "*Beloved, be not ignorant.*" Very well, Peter, we listen to you, we are all attention, we will try not to be ignorant: but of what? "*Of this one thing.*" Only one thing; we will try hard to understand you, Peter; we think we can learn one thing. But what is this one thing? Here steps in one of our wise-heads, and says, "Peter, let me explain your meaning to this inquirer; let me answer his question;

I can do it to a charm." The inquirer then turns his attention to Wise-head, and says, "Pray, sir, tell me what this one thing is?" "This is it, that one day, twenty-four hours, is as long with God as a thousand years." "But," says the inquirer, "sir, I am ignorant yet; I cannot understand how twenty-four hours is as long as 365,000 times that. p. 10, Para. 2, [GREAT].

If this is true, then numbers and mathematics are not true, and I am all abaft." Another wiseacre now steps up and says, "Let me explain, sir." The inquirer turns round to Wiseacre -- "Well, sir, what say you this one thing is?" "I say, Peter tells you that God does not count time at all; with him is one forever now; no beginning of days nor end of years." "You have made it more dark still; I cannot conceive how God does not count time at all, and yet tells us of one day and a thousand years. How could he tell us that he was six days making the heavens and the earth? How could he measure all the events spoken of in the prophets, and specify the time to the self-same day? What did he mean by saying, 'In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son?' How can he appoint a day in which he will judge the world? I am ignorant how things may be, and not be, at one and the same time. Who gave the sun its decree, and the moon its time of changing, and fixed its revolution in the heavens? Who gave the earth its diurnal motion, and marked the circle of its annual pathway so complete? He that made the day and night can number them in his wisdom. He that made time can surely number the seasons at his will. He that numbers our months can tell our days to a hair's breadth. I am ignorant how God does not count time, when such a cloud of witnesses daily testify to the contrary." Our inquirer now turns to *Peter*, and asks, "What is this one thing of which we ought not to be ignorant, brother Peter?" Peter answers, "*That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" Now I understand you, Peter; it is plain enough. Let me illustrate the meaning of these words by an example. Suppose I am talking with my neighbor about the President elect, General Harrison. I say, he will have two days to rule these United States. "What do you mean?" says my neighbor. I answer, "Beloved neighbor, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the President as four years, and four years as one day." p. 11, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Now, I ask, who would not understand me? The smallest

intellect would understand me to mean that General Harrison would be elected the second time, and have two periods, of four years each, to rule over these United States. Why, then, not understand Peter, whose language is as simple and plain? Ah! many would if it were not for wise-heads and wiseacres, who draw our attention from Peter, take the words out of his mouth, put in some ambiguous words of their own, clothe the scripture in sackcloth, multiply words without knowledge, confuse and confound our thoughts, so that we hardly know what to think, till, in our confusion, we throw down our Bibles in disgust, become almost skeptics, and lose the whole force of truth and relish for the Bible. p. 12, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Peter, in this chapter, is talking about the judgment day, and the perdition of ungodly men. He then tells us how long that day shall be, charges us not to be ignorant that it is a thousand years, gives a plain reason why a day of the Lord is a thousand years long -- because he is long-suffering towards men, not willing that any should perish, but rather they would come to repentance. Peter next informs us that the day of the Lord, which he has just told us is as a thousand years, will come upon us -- and how? As a thief in the night: the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works therein shall be burnt up. Then, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. p. 13, Para. 1, [GREAT].

Who, let me now inquire, can believe that this great work will be performed in the holy sabbath of eternal rest? How can Christ do all his work in six days, and yet perform all this in or after the seventh? What is the seventh day? It is a holy day. Peter says, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is the day of the Lord, and the day of God. And Peter says, "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." p. 13, Para. 2, [GREAT].

Therefore, it is evident that Peter means to be understood, that the destruction of ungodly men, the burning of the works of men, the passing away of the heavens, melting of the elements, and making the new heavens and new earth, are all performed before this holy sabbath, rather than afterwards, as our modern millenarians hold. If, then, Jesus Christ does his work in six days, and rests from all his labors on the seventh, when may we

expect this great event to take place? I answer -- if a thousand years is one day with the Lord, as I think I have proved, then six thousand years from the first creation the new one must be formed: "For in six days God made the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh." Mason Good, in his "Book of Nature," supposes that the earth was six thousand years in forming: if so, then here would be another proof that I am right concerning a thousand years being a day with the Lord. And, moreover, if Christ worked after the example of his Father, and rested, as God rested from his labors, then the seventh thousand years would be a sabbath of rest for Christ and his people. p. 13, Para. 3, [GREAT].

To arrive at a nearer conclusion of the whole matter, we shall now consult the age of the world. It is a well-known fact that chronological writers disagree much as to the present age. The Chinese make it about 25,000 years; the Hindoos about 14,000; the Romans about 6550. The Pentateuch, or Samaritan copy of the five books of Moses, makes it about 5648. The Septuagint copy of the Old Testament makes it 6254. The Hebrew Bible, from which ours is principally taken, makes the age of the world, as calculated by Usher, 5844. Some others have varied from Usher's calculation. The reader will find, accompanying this volume, * a chronology, made, as it is believed, from the Bible, having very clear evidence of every period of time given from the creation to Christ, which makes our present year, from the creation of Adam, 5997. p. 14, Para. 1, [GREAT].

If this should be the true era of the world, then we live within three or four years of the great sabbath of rest. You are under obligation to examine for yourselves. Whether any one of the above calculations concerning the age of the world is right, no man can, in my opinion, possibly determine with entire certainty. But I have never seen any chronology with so few difficulties to my mind as the one here presented. Compare, and read, and labor to enter into that rest which remains for the people of God. Every sabbath we enjoy here ought to remind us of the great sabbath to which we shall shortly come. Every trial we have here to endure should remind us that the days of our labor will soon be past, and our work finished and sealed up for eternity. Strive, then, to enter into that rest; and know, O man! that this is the time to prepare to meet God and our Savior in rest. Amen. p. 14, Para. 2, [GREAT].

[*] Dissertation on Prophetic Chronology, page 40.] p.
15, Para. 1, [GREAT].