

God's Sign; Or, Christ in the Sabbath, and the Sabbath in Christ.

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ANOTHER ground of objection that Mr. Torrey lays against the Sabbath of the Lord is that it is a sign between God and his people. With much vim he quotes, as a powerful argument against God's people now keeping the Sabbath, the following blessed texts:—

“Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” Ex. 31:13.

“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.” Verse 17.

“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.” Eze. 20:12.

And there is another one to the same purpose: “Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Verse 20.

Now that anything that ever was a sign between God and his people, by which they should know that he is the Lord, that he sanctifies men, that he created the heavens and the earth, and that he is the Lord their God; that a thing by which was conveyed and obtained the knowledge of God, which is in itself life eternal,—that anything clothed with all this virtue from God to men, should ever become a thing to be spoken against, and to be despised and rejected, by the very ones who most loudly profess to be the people of God, is indeed most strange.

Is it such an evil thing for men to know the Creator of the heavens and the earth that the very sign which he himself set, by which they might know him, must be denounced and repudiated?

Is it such a reproachful thing for men to know that the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is *their* God, that they must be taught to despise and reject the very sign which the Lord himself set, by which they *might* know that he is their God?

Is it such a disgraceful thing for men to know that the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is their God, and that he is sanctifying them, that they must cast down and trample underfoot the specific sign that God has given that men might know all this?

The Creator of the heavens and the earth, the God of Israel, is the only true God. It is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Is the knowledge of God, which is life eternal, such a damage to men that the very thing which he has given by which men may attain to that knowledge of God and of Christ which is life eternal, must be spoken against and avoided as if it were a most destructive thing?

But, upon all this, Brother Torrey may exclaim that it is carrying things too far to say that the Sabbath is or ever was intended to be a means by which men might know God, *and Jesus Christ*, whom he has sent. But it is not in any sense carrying things too far. The statement is not in the least extravagant. It is the simple, sober truth. And all may know that it is the truth, who are willing to have the true and full knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.

Come, let us candidly study the word. It is written, "Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that *ye may* KNOW that I am *the Lord* YOUR God." There is, therefore, that about the Sabbath by which he who hallows it may know not only that the Lord is God, but that the Lord is *his* God. But to know God is to know not only *that* he is, but also *what* he is, for his name is not simply "I AM," but "I AM THAT I AM,"—I am *what* I am, I am *that which* I am,—so that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, *and that he is a rewarder* of them that diligently seek him,"—must believe not only *that* he is, but also *what* he is. Therefore as the Sabbath is a sign which God has set by which those who hallow it may know that he is the Lord their God, it follows with perfect certainty that there is in the Sabbath that by which those who hallow it may find the knowledge of God. There is in it that by which he who hallows it may know what God is to the person who believes in him; in other words, the Sabbath is a revelation of God.

This is yet more fully seen in the truth that "no man knoweth . . . the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. 11:27. Thus God is known only as he is revealed in Jesus Christ. What God is, is revealed only through Christ, and can be known only in Christ. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Christ is therefore and forever "God with us."

Now as the Sabbath is God's sign by which men may know that he is the Lord, and as he is known only as he is revealed in Christ, it is the very certainty of truth that the Sabbath is God's sign by which those who hallow it may know God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ,—the sign by which men may know what God is to the believer in Jesus.

Again: the Sabbath is God's sign by which those who hallow it may know that the Lord sanctifies them. But no man can be sanctified except by faith that is in Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:18. Therefore as the Sabbath is the Lord's sign that he sanctifies men, and as men can be sanctified only by faith in Jesus, it is the plain truth that the Sabbath is God's sign by which men may know the sanctifying power and purity of God, through *faith in Jesus Christ*.

This is why it is that only the believer can enter into God's rest in the Sabbath, as it is written, "We which have believed do enter into rest." And this is why it was that Israel, who did not believe, could not enter into God's rest; as it is written, "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." But "to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that *believed not*? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Thus faith in Jesus Christ is and always was the object of the Sabbath, and the whole life of Sabbath-keeping.

The Sabbath, then, being the sign of what God in Christ is to the believer, it follows that there must be found in the Sabbath that which is also found in Christ; in other words, the Sabbath being the sign by which men may know that God is the Lord, and as God is known only in Jesus Christ, it follows that in the Sabbath there is the very reflection of Jesus in what he is to the believer; otherwise it could not be such a sign.

Let us, therefore, look at the Sabbath as God made it; and at what the Lord did in the making of it by which it became the Sabbath of the Lord. First, he created all things; then he ceased from his works and rested the seventh day; he then blessed the seventh day, and he made it holy, and sanctified it. The Sabbath, therefore, is—

1. The reminder of God as Creator: it is the reminder of his creative power manifested; for it is a sign between him and his people forever, *because* that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Ex. 31:17.

2. In the Sabbath is God's *rest*; "for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest from all his works. And in this place again [he spoke of the seventh day on *this* wise], They shall not enter into my rest." Heb. 4:4, 5.

3. In the Sabbath is God's *blessing*; for he "blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Gen. 3:2.

4. In the Sabbath is God's *holiness*, for "he hallowed [made holy] the Sabbath day." But it is only the presence of God which makes anything holy. When Moses, attracted by the curious sight of the bush burning with fire yet not consumed, turned aside and approached to behold, "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy

shoes from off thy feet, for *the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*” Ex. 3:4, 5. That place was made holy ground solely by the *presence* of “him who dwelt in the bush.” Again, when Joshua, near Jericho, beheld “a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand,” and Joshua asked him, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” “he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. . . . And the Captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for *the place whereon thou standest is holy.*” Joshua 5:13-15. That which made holy the place whereon Joshua stood, was the presence of the “Captain of the Lord’s host,” who was there. And as it is thus the presence of the Lord which makes holy, that which made holy the *seventh day*, the Sabbath of the Lord, was the *presence* of him who rested the seventh day from all his works.

5. The Sabbath has in it God’s *sanctification*; because he not only blessed the seventh day, but *sanctified* it,—set it apart unto the holy use and service of the Lord,—that his presence might dwell therein; for it is not merely the transient presence, but the *abiding* presence, the *dwelling* of God in a place, which sanctifies; for it is written: “Israel shall be sanctified by my glory;” for “I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.” Ex. 29:43 (margin), 45.

Thus connected with the Sabbath, there is the creative power of God, the rest of God, the blessing of God, the presence of God which makes holy, and the continuing, dwelling, presence of God, which sanctifies.

And all this is precisely, and in order, what is found in Christ by the believer in Jesus; for—

1. First of all, the believer finds in Jesus the *creative power of God* manifested in making him a new creature; for, “We are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Eph. 2:10.

2. The believer finds in Jesus God’s *rest*; for, having found in Christ creative power to make him new, he ceases from his own works, as God did from his, and enters into God’s rest in Christ. Heb. 4:10. Therefore it is written: “Come unto me, all ye that *labor* and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matt. 11:28, 29.

3. The believer finds in Christ God’s *blessing*; for “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to *bless* you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:26. And “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . *hath blessed us* with all spiritual *blessings* in heavenly things [margin] *in Christ.*” Eph. 1:3.

4. The believer finds in Christ *the presence of God* to make him *holy*; for it is written: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . At that day ye shall know that I am

in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him.*” John 14:18-23. And “God would make known [“to his saints”] what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory.” Col. 1:27.

5. The believer finds in Christ God’s *abiding, dwelling, presence to sanctify* him; for it is written: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and *make our abode with him*” (John 14:23); and “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God *dwelleth* in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15); “For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will *dwell* in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” 2 Cor. 6:16.

Thus it is plainly seen that in the Sabbath is the very reflection of all that the believer finds in Jesus; and thus it is that the Sabbath is a sign to every one who hallows it, by which he knows that the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is his God. And so no one can know God except as he is revealed in Jesus Christ; and as the Sabbath has connected with it the suggestion, the reflection, of all that the believer finds in Jesus; it is plainly God’s sign, by which he who hallows it may find the knowledge of God *as he is revealed in Christ.*

In all this it must also be borne in mind that it was in Christ and by him that God created all things; for, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:1-3. “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.” Col. 1:16. Thus it was Christ who created all things; it was Christ who rested on the seventh day from all his works; it was Christ who blessed the seventh day because that in it he had rested; it was Christ whose presence made the day holy; and it is the continuing, dwelling, presence of Christ which sanctified, and *sanctifies*, the seventh day. It was Christ himself, therefore, who connected with the Sabbath of the seventh day that which is the reflection of himself, that which is the expression of what he is to the believer in him, so that whosoever would hallow the Sabbath might know that the Lord, who is known only in Christ, is his God.

A beautiful lesson that shows Christ in the Sabbath and the Sabbath in Christ, is found in the ancient sanctuary. There was the table of showbread, upon which were placed, at the beginning of every Sabbath, twelve fresh-baked cakes. Those cakes

remained there until the beginning of the next Sabbath, when they were replaced by the fresh bread. Thus at the beginning of every Sabbath the bread was renewed.

Now the term “showbread” is literally “bread of the presence,” and signified Christ, “the true bread which came down from heaven.” This bread of the presence therefore signified the presence of Christ with the whole people—the twelve tribes—of Israel. The bread’s being always there, signified the presence of Christ always with his people. But this bread of the presence was always there only by being *renewed*, and it was renewed *every Sabbath*. And thus God would teach the people then, and now, and forevermore, that *his presence in Christ is renewed* to the believer *every Sabbath*. When the Sabbath is past, however, his presence still abides through all the days of the week until the next Sabbath, when it is renewed. And thus is fulfilled the scripture, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Ex. 33:14.

Thus the true believer in Jesus, and the true observer of the Sabbath, is ever growing in the knowledge of God as he is revealed in Christ; and thus the Sabbath is a sign by which he *knows* that the Lord is his God, and that by his abiding presence he sanctifies him.

It is so also with the *blessing* of God in the Sabbath. When on the sixth day God made the man, “God blessed *them*.” Gen. 1:28. Then came the seventh day, in which God rested, and “God blessed *the seventh day*.” Gen. 2:3. Thus both the man and the seventh day were blessed. The man was blessed before the day was blessed. Then when that blessed man came to that blessed day, he found additional blessing; and each succeeding Sabbath he found yet additional blessing. And had he remained faithful, it would ever have been the blessed man coming each Sabbath to the blessed day; and so he would ever have grown in the knowledge of God. *And so it is today* with every soul whom God has blessed in turning him away from his iniquities, and who hallows God’s blessed Sabbath day: every time this blessed man comes to that blessed day, he receives additional blessing, and so is ever growing in the knowledge of God. And thus, whether before man sinned, or since he sinned, the Sabbath has ever been, and is still, and will ever be, God’s sign, by which he who hallows it may *know* that the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is his God; and may know *what* God is, as he is revealed in Jesus Christ, whether in creation or in redemption.

And what shall we more say? The time would fail us to tell all of God’s blessed Sabbath. The Sabbath, truly understood, means all of Christ; and Christ, truly understood, means all of the Sabbath. And neither can be truly understood without the other. The Sabbath is God’s sign, and Christ is God’s sign. Christ is God’s sign spoken

against, and the Sabbath is God's sign spoken against; and all, "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:34, 35. Yet ever he is indeed "the glorious Lord" (Isa. 33:21); and ever "his rest," his Sabbath, is indeed "glorious." Isa. 11:10.

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. . . . For we which have believed do enter into rest." "And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."

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