

balance, and takes up the isles as a very little thing, while we walk in all his commandments and ordinances, is due from us who are but dust in his sight and whose life is a vapor which appears but for a brief moment, then passes away, while he is from everlasting to everlasting. How dare we by disobedience, come in collision with such an One? Are we stronger than he? Remember Lot's wife.

Let us for our comfort and encouragement look a little while upon the bright side of this picture. We have seen that the power of this Infinite One is fearful and wholly irresistible; but he puts it forth not only to destroy, but to save—not only to kill, but to make alive; so while we should greatly fear to provoke him because of his power, we should rejoice greatly to have such an One for our Father, exerting the same almighty power for our good, supporting, sustaining and shielding, causing all things to work together for one good, so that no real evil can befall us. None can pluck us from our Father's hands. He is able to do for us exceeding abundant above all we ask or think. He is a stronghold in the day of trouble. As we have seen, he saved Noah when he drowned the world, and Lot when he consumed the cities. Nothing is too hard for him. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions by those who had plotted his death, these lions became as harmless as doves, and when his three friends were cast into the furnace, it flames, though intensified seven fold, were as harmless as a gentle zephyr at the close of day; and we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man can do to me." "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." And after we shall have entered the abode of death itself, the same Almighty power that brought back from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep will bring us back also; change these vile bodies and fashion them like the glorious body of our great Shepherd, bear us high above the planes of the burning world, and we shall be forever with the Lord. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

#### GOD DISPOSES.

We should never do anything about which we are not certain of God's approval. Every Christian should constantly feel that he is

directed by the Omnipotent Father. We can not know what misfortune may come upon us, but all things will work for our good, if we love God. Who can tell what may happen on the morrow? Napoleon sends a messenger to Paris with the tidings that Waterloo is gained. In less than twenty-four hours he was found dismounted, haggard, gloomy, marching towards Waterloo, the wonderful somnambulist of a departed dream.

JAS. W. LOWBER.

#### SABBATICAL OBSERVANCE

BY S. H. HEDRIX.

The object of this essay is to set out an epitomy of the Sabbath; who authorized it, and to whom was it given? What was it; when and where was it given? in what manner and for what purpose? The great scope of the subject and the limits of this essay forbids notice to many minor details and, indeed, much that is of the more vital consideration can only be stated.

I. In Ex. 16: 16-30, we find the Lord by the hand of Moses leading forth the people of Israel. They are approaching Mt. Sinai, having been separated from all other families and becoming a great people they are about to receive their national code of laws. They are fed with manna and directed to gather on the sixth day a double portion and rest on the seventh, which is declared to be "a holy Sabbath unto the Lord." On that day they are assured there will be no manna in the field; but some of the people disregarded this injunction and the Lord reproved them; and in impressing the authority of his precepts upon them he said: "See the Lord has given you the Sabbath." A short time after this event these people received the law at Sinai, and the precept is the fourth of their decalogue, viz: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Ex. 20. Briefly then we have in these two passages and their immediate context the answer to most of our questions. We may meet objections on some points, but he that assumes difficulty must remember the burden of proof falls on him and not on us. God is the giver and this one nation is the receiver of this precept. They became observers of the Sabbath. They are the first and the only people on record that do keep it. There is no testimony known to me to show that

any one, either individually or collectively ever heard of this precept before the time of the gathering of Israel from Egypt. Not only do we fail to find such a command but there is no record of any one attempting to keep the Sabbath or failing to keep it, and therefore in the absence of all command or example, or blessing to the faithful or reproof to the disobedient we conclude that from Adam to Moses there was no such thing known among the nations of the earth as Sabbatical observance.

II. On Mt. Sinai the law was given to Israel. They are the only nation that received that law then and, indeed, the only nation among all their cotemporaries that ever did receive it, and therefore they are the only nation that kept the Sabbath. They regarded and called the seventh day of the week Sabbath; they kept it not only by ceasing their manual labor, but by keeping within their places. They had to extend the same rest to their beast, their servants and the indi-

vidual stranger within their gates. This began full 430 years after the call of Abraham and 215 years after Jacob went into Egypt, and continued with this one nation for 1500 years.

III. Our time and place for the giving of this law is some times disputed and we are told that it was enjoined upon Adam at the beginning, and therefore upon all the race. But we want the testimony in support of this objection. As further proof of our position as to time and place we cite Neh. 9: 13, 14, "Thou comest down on Mt. Sinai and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes and laws by the hand of Moses thy servant." We insist that if the whole race had been through all their history in possession of this precept the prophet never would have so specifically represented God as revealing it at Sinai. Then Ezek. 20: 10-12, says, in reference to the same parties and events: "Moreover 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." This shows the design of the institution, and it is peculiar to this people only. Again, Dent. 5, Moses gives specific instructions concerning this

subject and the manner in which it is to be kept, and who is to be under its benefits, and then states the design and reason why it is to be kept. Verse 15, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God brought thee out, through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." These Scriptures are sufficiently specific on persons, time, place and manner, and also on the object and design of the Sabbath, as a sign between God and Israel relative to their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Now the objector generally calls for Gen. 1. But we find that to be every way consistent with the foregoing it tells what God did on the seventh day, that he rested because he had finished his work, wherefore he blessed the seventh day; but no allusion is made to Adam or any one else keeping it until we follow Israel from Egypt, and Ex. 20 with Gen. 2 simply shows why the seventh day rather than any other was chosen for Israel's emblem. It had no relation to creation further than this. To Israel it was the sign between God and them, and fitly called to their minds the deliverance from Pharaoh; and it also typified "the rest that remains for the children of God." The children of Israel alone observed this law through its existences as a statute.

IV. Sabbatical law is peculiar to the covenant made with the fathers whom God led out of Egypt and of whom he had promised unto Abraham to make a great nation. It was enjoined upon no one before that time. It was given to Israel and to no others. They were under it as long as their priesthood continued and until the grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, until the word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem. It was one of the rules of that old covenant or law which was their school master to bring them to Christ. After the faith or gospel came in they were no longer under the school master. The old covenant passed away when the new one was made, when the Priesthood was changed. The old covenant or law brought forth the Sabbath, that was the seventh day. No other day is ever called the Sabbath by any inspired writer or any one else who speaks as the oracles of God. It is strange to see people