

J THOMAS ON SABBATH KEEPING

... such is the course invariably pursued by the old Adam when he desires to distinguish himself in “theology.” He is never satisfied with “the testimony of God,” in its prophetic, apostolic, and historical unity; but he must be probing after something of no real importance, that opportunity may be afforded for him to shine to the glory of the flesh. He is a perfect crotchitarian, and unsurpassingly skilful in all the sophistication of the craft. Nothing comes amiss to him, but “the simplicity that is in Christ.” He cannot get along with this, for it affords him no scope for tinkering. He is a subtle genius, and more like “the old serpent” than any other in the menagerie of the present evil world. Let us beware of him, for there is mesmerism in his finesse.

How long will it be ere Christians come to a Scriptural comprehension of the relation of the Mosaic law to “the truth as it is in Jesus?” To those who would in anything put themselves under the law, do ye not hear the law which thunders in your ears from Sinai: “Cursed be every one who continueth not *in all things* written in the book of the law to do them?” It is of no avail to keep the law in one or more points, and to violate it in a thousand others, or even in one other. It must be kept “*in all things*,” not merely in some things, by one who would commend himself to God by its observances. But it cannot be kept; first because of the weakness of the flesh; and secondly, because of political impediments—so that it is written, “by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

The righteousness of the law, however, may be kept, and must be fulfilled by all, both Jews and Gentiles, who would be saved. “The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh,” says Paul, “but after the spirit.” Israel under the law walked after the flesh; that is, in its ordinances pertaining to the flesh; but the Israel in Christ in walking worthy of God, “walk after the spirit.” These alone keep the righteousness of the law. Thus, they keep Sabbath, not in abstaining from all manner of work on the seventh day, or Saturday; but in ceasing or resting from their own works, the works of the old Adam, or the flesh of sin, as God rested from His. They eat also the unleavened bread of the presence, in eating leavened bread “with the unleavened (principles) of sincerity and truth;” the bread of the passover, and the show bread of the Holy Place, being typical, not of unleavened bread upon the Lord’s table, but of the mystical body of Christ unleavened “with the leaven of malice and wickedness.” The things of the law are not typical of themselves, but of the things of the spirit. The oil in the golden lightstand did not typify oil, but spirit; nor the burning incense, literal incense, but the prayers of the saints; nor the paschal lamb, a literal lamb, but Christ personal and mystical; and so forth. How “barren,” then, “and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ” must those minds be, that can rise no higher than the conception of a *type terminating in a type, or in itself*—oil ending in oil, unleavened bread in unleavened bread, incense in incense, meat in meat, drink in drink, day in day, and so forth, to the end of all crotchets without end. Such, however, is “the mind of the flesh,” which can rise no higher than that which elaborates it. The mind of the flesh can only generate fleshly notions. The signification of the Holy Spirit in the types it cannot penetrate, because they are “spiritually discerned,” or perceived by the testimony of the spirit exhibited in the word.¹

¹ (2001). *The Christadelphian*, 26(electronic ed.), 274–275.