

THE

Original Title
Beecher

HOLY SABBATH:

ITS

NATURE, DESIGN, AND OBSERVANCE.

A PRIZE ESSAY.

BY

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RICHMOND:

PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

PREFATORY NOTICE.

A BENEVOLENT gentleman of Atlanta, Georgia,* having offered a reward of \$200 for the best essay on the "Nature, Design, and Proper Observance of the Sabbath," and the undersigned having been appointed the committee of award, submitted to the public a card, announcing their decision, as follows, viz :

The number of manuscripts received within the prescribed time was one hundred and eight. These manuscripts came from all sections of this country, and some of them from abroad. The work of careful examination of these numerous essays has been one of considerable magnitude, involving no small responsibility. The rules adopted by the Committee for their own guidance were—

- 1st. To test the several essays by the conditions proposed by the giver of the prize, to wit : the true unfolding of "the Nature, Design, and Proper Observance of the Sabbath."
- 2nd. There must be a comprehensive, scholarly, clear, and forcible treatment of the whole subject.
- 3rd. A style calculated to arrest public attention, to meet the demands of a correct taste, and to produce a deep and permanent conviction of truth and duty.

The aim of the Committee has been to select from all the manuscripts offered to them, the one which, in their judg-

* William A. Moore, Esq., a ruling elder of the First Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Ga.

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ment, should in all respects best meet and answer to these several conditions.

The Committee have reluctantly declined several manuscripts of remarkable ability; some of them in some respects superior, perhaps, to the one to which the award is unanimously given; and a profound regret is felt that the strong and noble points and sentiments of a considerable number of these papers may not be made the common property of the Church and the world; as by them the literature of the Church might be enriched, and its piety elevated and invigorated.

The decision has tasked our judgment, and the award has not been made without solemn thought, mingled with some self-distrust.

We humbly commend our action to the favour of God and the prayers of His people; ourselves uniting in the petition that, through the blessing of God, the essay approved in our estimation may have a wide-spread and permanent influence in the better, the holier, practical appreciation of the Nature, Design, and Proper Observance of the Sabbath of God.

It remains to be said, that in their reading and decision the Committee have been entirely ignorant of the several authors, even of their names.

We have awarded the prize to an essay subscribed "Sigma," and upon opening the sealed envelope, the name of the author is now found to be, Rev. James Stacy, of Newnan, Georgia.

E. T. BAIRD,
M. D. HOGE,
C. H. READ, } Committee.

RICHMOND, VA., July 5th, 1876.

THE H O L Y S A B B A T H.

MOSES, in his history of the creation, has given an account of the origin of the Christian Sabbath which is at once rational and satisfactory. And surely it is no mean argument in favour of any statement or theory, that it at once commends itself to the judgment as soon as enunciated. The Mosaic account occupies this high vantage ground, inasmuch as it challenges our assent at the very outset, by the plausibility of its statement, and the logical fitness of the reason assigned:

"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."—GEN. ii. 3.

That the completion of the work of creation should be celebrated is nothing wonderful; nor yet that it should be done in the manner herein described. If the achievements of human genius be thought worthy of commemoration, how much more so the

stupendous evolution of the "sun, moon and stars of light," and their orderly arrangement in the heavens. If, at the foundation of the mighty structure, it was proper that the "morning stars should sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy," how befitting that man should perpetuate the song, until the notes of the final jubilee be sounded, when men and angels shall unitedly take up the refrain, and for ever swell the chorus of thanksgiving and praise.

Moreover, that the great Creator should, in some way, demand of His creatures a formal acknowledgment of their fealty to His throne; that He should seek to bind them to Himself by levying a tribute upon their love and affection; that He should appoint a place and designate a time when He would descend to meet them, and graciously admit them to communion with Himself; that He should select, for this purpose, the day of His resting from His creative work; and that He should hallow the day thus selected, by separating it from all the rest, and making it holy as He is holy, that it might thus ever stand a perpetual witness for Him, is neither a strange nor unwarrantable assumption. The whole arrangement is so simple, and yet so comprehensive, so analogous to all the other works of this mighty Architect, as to stamp it indelibly with the impress of His divine hand. To suppose,

on the contrary, that He would create a world, and seek no association with His creatures, and make no arrangement for their communion with Him, would be to rob Him of every feeling of a father, and even the interest of a sovereign, and at the same time make the very object of creation itself a mysterious problem.

Starting, therefore, with this antecedent presumption, which carries with it all the force of an *a priori* argument, we proceed at once to inquire into the claims of the Christian Sabbath. And we hesitate not to affirm, that no other institution presents more clearly the seal of divinity. Not even old ocean itself is more securely reposing in its silurian bed, than this institution in the place prepared for it in the order of nature and providence.

I. ROOTED IN TRADITION.

In the first place, *its claims are firmly rooted in the traditions of the world.* That it has been customary, for a long period, to divide time into cycles of days and weeks, is a fact which none will question. And that this custom has not been confined to any one nation is equally apparent. For it is an indisputable fact that the Egyptians, Arabians, Assyrians, and nearly all the nations of antiquity, held to the same division. The prevalence, so generally, and for so long a time, of this septenary calendar, out-

side of the pale of Christianity, and even Judaism, finds its solution only in the supposition that it was inaugurated at the creation; and being once established, has been handed down from sire to son, and from generation to generation.

II. INWROUGHT IN SCRIPTURE.

Not only is this institution thus attested by existing facts which would be otherwise unaccountable, but it is also *so completely inwrought into the very texture of the entire Scriptures, as to be one and inseparable.* Like a golden thread, it runs through the entire book, and is so intertwined and interwoven with all that is written, that it would be utterly impossible to eliminate it without completely marring the whole.

1. *It is interwoven in its history.* From the beginning of its Genesis, to the end of its Apocalypse, we find constant allusions to it. Noah waited each time seven days before sending the dove. Jacob fulfilled the weeks demanded for Rachel. Job waited seven days in silent grief, before opening his mouth to speak. Frequent mention is made of the Sabbath, as well as the other days of the week, in the history of the Jews, and also of Christ and his Apostles. This institution is everywhere recognized by the sacred writers as a reality, as much so as the existence of the Church, or any of her or-

dinances. The history of the Bible would be utterly incomplete without it.

2. *It is equally intertwined in its legislation.* It was the law of Eden, for there it was originally enacted, and together with the ordinance of marriage, constitutes the only remains of the earthly Paradise. It was a recognized law in the wilderness, as appears from the gathering of a double portion of manna on the sixth day. It was afterwards incorporated in the decalogue. It occurs again and again in the prophetic writings, and formed the foundation of some of their severest reproofs and animadversions. It also formed part of the Saviour's teachings and instructions. The legislation of the Scriptures, no less than its history, would be imperfect without it.

3. *It is also interlaced in all its symbolism.* There is a continual recurrence of the number seven. There were seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine, in Pharaoh's vision. The walls of Jericho were encompassed seven days by seven priests, bearing seven trumpets, and seven times on the seventh day. Balaam built seven altars, and offered seven sacrifices. Solomon was seven years building the Temple. The ark rested in the seventh month on Mount Ararat. The golden candelabrum had seven branches. There were seven heathen nations driven out of Canaan

by the invading hosts of Israel. There were seven things to be offered in sacrifice. Rome, the mystical Babylon, had her seven heads decked with seven crowns. We also read of seven churches—seven candlesticks—seven spirits—seven seals—seven trumpets—seven angels—seven thunders—seven vials, and the seven last plagues.

This recurrence is just as noticeable in the *typical development of Scripture*. That development is in septenary cycles. Seven is the archetypal number, and seven periods the archetypal cycle, in the typical cosmogony. Thus, the seventh seal contains the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials. Seven days bring on the Sabbath, seven weeks the pentecost, seven months the atonement, seven years the sabbatic year, seven sabbatic years the jubilee, seven thousand years the millenary period, as is generally believed; and for aught we know the seventh millenary period will be the dawn of heaven, the final, everlasting jubilee.

Here, then, is a most remarkable phenomenon. How is it to be accounted for? Is there no purpose in the repeated use of this number? Would it not be unaccountably, and even marvellously strange, that an arrangement so uniformly regular and progressive should be the result of accident? The *only key* to all this mysterious symbolism is

the simple account of the creation given by Moses. There we have the groundwork of the entire plan. God purposely selected six days in which to do His work, and the seventh in which to rest, and in so doing has made it the basis of His future plans. With this explanation, the mystery is solved; without it, we find ourselves at once in a labyrinthine maze, without a clue to guide us.

4. Not only does the idea of a Sabbath run through each separate department of revealed truth, *but is actually the grand substratum of the whole*. There is one progressive plan running through all nature. We see it in the anatomical structure of animals; one great archetypal form, starting with the mollusk and lower orders of creation, and rising in development until perfected in man. We see the same running through the planetary worlds, in their diurnal and onward motions, each revolving around the other, and rising higher and higher in gradation as they approach nearer and nearer the complete realization of the great archetypal thought. So in Scripture truth, there is clearly the development of a plan; and in that development the Sabbath forms an essential element. The plot is laid in Eden, and perfected in heaven. The Scriptures set out with the idea of a rest for the people of God, which is more and more unfolded unto the close of the book. Hence the various prefigurative steps: First, the

miniature form in the seventh day; then the prophetic adumbration in the sabbatic year; then the fuller development into the seventh seventh, or jubilee; then the longer rest of Canaan; then the millennium; then the final, everlasting rest of heaven. The book opens with a paradise begun, and closes with a paradise completed. It begins with a rest commenced, and ends with a rest perfected. *The Sabbath is both the initial and terminal point* in the entire scheme, and at the same time the main-linked chain binding the whole together. It is the continuous indivisible bow that spans the entire firmament of revealed truth. With one foot resting upon the earthly paradise, it sweeps the heavens, and plants its other firmly upon the threshold of the heavenly. Take away from our theology the idea of a sabbatic rest, and the whole becomes a disjointed mass. Remove any part of the archway, and the whole must fall. The entire book is so full of the thought as to render its removal impossible. We find it in the garden; we find it in the wilderness; we find it in Canaan; we find it in the apostolic church; we find it in the millennium; we find it in heaven, where it becomes eternal.

Here, then, is the great irrefragable argument for the perpetuity of this day, which neither the falsity of friends nor the opposition of foes can ever overthrow—the fact that it forms a part, and an essen-

tial part, of a plan, the development of which is only completed in the paradise above. The simple utterance of the entire Scriptures is, *that it stands the type of the heavenly rest.* To that it looks, to that it points, and of that it stands the perpetual prophecy and pledge. Like the rising sun, it is ever casting its radiance upon the opposite skies. Take this away, and there is no prelude of that coming rest; the sabbatic year, the year of jubilee, and the rest of Canaan, having all been already removed. But when placed over against that rest, no one can fail to see the correlation, and in that correlation the purpose of the Creator, the one being the exact counterpart of the other, both in its nature and the similitude of its designs; rest from labour and communion with God being alike the central ideas of both. If, then, the Sabbath be interwoven with the work of creation, it must be co-existent with that creation. If it be the prophecy and pledge of the coming rest, it must continue until we enter that rest. Anything short of that would be a subversion of the whole scheme.

III. CONFIRMED BY NATURE.

But then the page of revealed truth is not the only place where this inscription is made. God has another witness to the truth. As there are two dispensations, related to each other as shadow and

substance, and both teaching essentially the same thing, so there are two worlds, the spiritual and natural, sustaining a similar relation, and agreeing likewise in their testimony, thus showing the common origin of both. There is not a truth asserted by the one but is also confirmed by the other. There is not a moral thought but finds its analogy in some natural similitude—not a sound uttered in the one world without awakening its echo in the other. God intends nature to confirm His revelation; so that “by the mouth of two witnesses, every word shall be established.” When these witnesses fail to agree, we may well question the utterance of the one or the other. When they do agree, their concurrent testimony becomes overwhelmingly conclusive. And herein we have the united strength of this two-fold cord. For this ordinance of revelation is just as undeniably written in the volume of nature—just as indelibly stamped upon her every page—just as indissolubly inwrought in all her tissues and folds.

1. *It is clearly written upon the constitution of man,* each part of his triple nature being an unimpeachable witness to the truth of the inscription. The Master uttered a great truth when He said, “The Sabbath was made for man.” If the adaptation of day and night, food and air, to the necessities of man, prove they were made for him, equally so does

the adaptation of this institution. There is a demand for this rest deep down in the necessities of his nature. His heart and flesh are ever crying out for it. His body needs it. His mind needs it. His soul needs it. The wear and tear of his whole being, physical, intellectual and spiritual, absolutely demand this intercalary rest. Without it man is degraded physically and morally. Abolish the night, with its hours of refreshment and repose, and the enfeebled body would quickly exhibit unmistakable signs of the deprivation. And yet the lack of this seventh-day rest would just as surely, though more stealthily, undermine the constitution and exhaust the physical powers. Even those who deny a divine warrant for the day, are nevertheless compelled to admit its necessity upon grounds of expediency. When the infidel *Commune*, in the days of the French Revolution, in their mad phrensy, undertook to overthrow the Christian religion, and inaugurate the worship of Reason, though abolishing the Sabbath, they still found it necessary to appoint another day in its stead. *From well-attested experiments*, made both in this country and abroad, it has been demonstrated beyond a cavil, that the bodies of man and beast will do more, and last longer, by resting every seventh day, than by continuous labour and toil; thus showing the law written in their very members.

As the traveller gains in speed by resting at noon, and the reaper saves time by halting to whet his scythe, so the world actually gains, not only in speed, but in health and strength, in flesh and muscle, by thus pausing to rest. The bow never unstrung, soon loses its elasticity: so mind and body will soon give way under the continual pressure of care and toil. As a pause in music gives beauty and emphasis to the following strain, so this weekly pause imparts fresh tone and vigour to man and beast. All classes, after refreshing rest, begin each week invigorated and recuperated, and go forth to the discharge of duty with greater cheerfulness and activity. And when the pause is universal, the interest of no class is compromised by the suspension.

But it is especially on the side of humanity, and from *considerations of mercy*, that the argument derives its chief force. It might not matter so much with the rich, who, with voluptuous ease, can at any hour seek and enjoy repose. But how can the labouring poor do without such a boon as this; the hosts of hired servants, whose time is not their own, and the vast multitudes who, with dependent families, are forced from necessity to earn their bread by incessant toil, keeping up with the chariot of the sun in his daily race, and scarcely finding repose at his setting? Is there no mercy in allowing

some rest to wearied humanity, and throwing some protection around the helpless, irrational beasts of burden? Must the hireling never cease his labour, and the poor, dumb brute never have his burden unbound? And is there no wisdom in arranging for weekly household communings? In no one single arrangement do we see more of the divine beneficence than in this merciful provision, by which the labouring classes may rest without reduction of wages, in the sweet enjoyment of family intercourse and communion, and be brought under the restraining, elevating and sanctifying power of home influence. The Sabbath is too full of mercy, too philanthropic in its designs, too beneficent in its provisions, to have emanated from any but a divine source.

The argument receives additional force when we remember *the impetus that the religion of Christ gives to the business of this world*. Christianity is but the synonym of activity. It condemns sloth, and every species of inactivity. Wherever it has gone, it has awakened the spirit of industry and enterprise. When it shall girdle the whole earth, it will fully arouse all the dormant energies of man, and put them to their utmost tension. The millennial world will be one universal scene of the busiest activity. Heathenism, in its torpor, may not feel the need of such an appointment, but Christianity,

with its restless, surging life, demands it. And instead of this institution being suited only to the first ages of the world, and now no longer needed, it is rather the imperative accompaniment of an advancing civilization. The necessity of a weekly rest will grow with the increasing activity of the race. Each additional conquest, as science and art compel new domains of the material world to minister to the uses of man, will only act as a stimulus to a still greater speed in the onward march; and as time moves on, the blended wisdom and love of the great law which mingles periodic rest with inevitable toil will become more and more apparent.

2. *The argument from man's spiritual necessity is just as strong and conclusive.* And after all, here is just where his greatest need lies. If the body needs the day, the soul still more. It needs just such a time of hallowed rest. It needs just such a quiet retreat to which it may retire when fretted and chafed, and where the boisterous spirit may be calmed, and the tumultuous passions subdued; just such an *asylum*, to which it may safely flee when hotly pursued by the predatory hosts of harrassing and vexatious cares, which are ever trooping after the hapless sons of men. It needs just such sacred, softening, sanctifying influences as emanate from the Sabbath, and which come from no other source—influences which can be felt, but not expressed, which have a won-

derfully soothing and hallowing power over human nature, and which remove much of the roughness and asperity from every-day life. It needs just such a pause in the whirling rush of business, that it may quietly give itself to the contemplation of spiritual and eternal things; and it needs just such a sacred stillness that it might hear the gentle whisperings of the heavenly voices calling it to the skies. It needs thus continually to be reminded of its immortality; of its inheritance in the great hereafter; that the goal is beyond; that the harp, and crown, and mansion, and loved ones, are all on the other shore; that this is but the beginning of the drama, but the opening scene in the apocalypse of life. It needs a season in which it may cast out the sounding line, consult chart and compass, determine its latitude and longitude and spiritual bearing, and ascertain whether bound to some fairer, greener shore, or some dreary, barren coast; whether nearing the haven of eternal rest, or approaching the rocks and hidden reefs of perdition. When viewed in man's spiritual relations alone, the appointment becomes an absolute necessity. As it is, with all the quickening, restraining, hallowing and elevating influences of the day, it seems almost impossible to unrivet his thoughts and affections from the perishing things of earth. How certain, therefore, without such seasonable helps and restraints, the grand

concerns of the soul would be neglected, if not for ever consigned to the tomb of oblivion! The man that disregards the day is doing his own soul an incalculable wrong.

In this matter we may safely appeal to *the argument of experience*, which is always unanswerable. Experience shows that nothing has so much to do with the development of spiritual life in the soul, nothing so hardens or softens, nothing so elevates or degrades, as the manner in which this ordinance is observed. No Christians grow so rapidly, or make such lofty attainments in the divine life, as those who love and keep this day; none become so callous and indifferent as those who treat it with neglect and dishonour. No man can become very bad while truly reverencing the day; so there are no depths of iniquity too profound into which he may not be plunged while resisting this ordinance, and trampling its authority under foot. The statistics of crime and the voluntary confessions of criminals furnish the fullest confirmation of all this. Their united testimony is, *that Sabbath desecration is usually the initiative in the downward road to ruin.* It is also a fact worthy of observation, that the more spiritually minded a man becomes, the greater his attachment to the day; and the greater his worldliness, the greater his aversion. Every man who has the other marks of the Spirit will also have this--

that he loves the Lord's day. Indeed, the pure and good are, with rare exceptions, the firm friends of the Sabbath; its enemies usually found among the openly wicked and profane. Now, a cause may always be judged by the character of its advocates. The very fact that the good and pure are its friends and allies, and its enemies are found among the ranks of the wicked, is a powerful argument in favour of the validity of its claims.

3. The Sabbath is not only thus identified with our highest individual and personal interests, *but enters just as closely into our entire social structure.* To say that it is the stronghold of the Church, the powerful auxiliary and ally of true religion, and consequently the safeguard of morality and good government, is but feebly expressing the truth. We feel we are not putting the case too strongly, when we assert that it is essential to the very existence of the Church, and therefore must underlie the whole field of social ethics. No organization can exist without outward symbols, and outward symbols are worthless without set times for their exhibition. Even the idolatry of the heathen is dependent for its perpetuity upon such exhibitions. Hence their feast days and set times for religious ceremonies. Masons, Odd Fellows, and all fellow-craftsmen, have their celebrations and public exhibitions. The fires of patriotism are kept burning upon the coun-

try's altar by means of holidays and anniversaries, commemorative of great events in national annals. The only way to keep alive the religious element is to call the people together in their solemn assemblies. Hence the appointment of the old Jewish feasts and ceremonies, and the frequent public gatherings of the people. It was not until Jewish altars were broken down, and Jewish festivals neglected, that the nation lapsed into idolatry. Abolish the Sabbath, and without some unwonted divine interference, the rites of religion would inevitably fall into desuetude. The voluntary principle alone is too feeble to resist the demands of trade and the allurements of pleasure. If simply left to freewill, the public, the solemn assemblies, would soon be disbanded, and with that disbandment would come spiritual decay. There can be no general observance of religious ceremonies without uniformity; there can be no uniformity without a general arrangement, and no general arrangement without the authoritative appointment of stated seasons for public services. One day in seven is none too often, as experience fully demonstrates, to be brought into contact with the sanctifying influences of the gospel, and the ordinances of the sanctuary. To state the argument briefly: The state of society is dependent upon the state of morals—the state of morals upon the state of religion—the state

of religion upon the life of God in the soul, manifesting itself in outward observances—outward observances upon regular periodical convocations—and regular periodical convocations upon the authoritative appointment of stated seasons. Relinquish the authoritative appointment, and the key to the whole is surrendered, and the way open for general degeneracy and final disintegration. Remove the protecting calyx from the unfolding corolla, and its tender petals will soon be torn from the parent stem. Remove the undergirding from the ship, and it will easily become a prey to the over-dashing waves.

An institution, therefore, ordained at the beginning, and handed down with all the authority of traditionary lore; an institution so deeply laid in the very plan of creation, and so essential to the after development of that plan; an institution so intertwined and interwoven through the entire system of revealed truth, its history, its theology, its morality, its types and symbols; an institution so indelibly stamped upon the very constitution of man and beast, and so essential to the very life of all Christianity and all religion, and the development of Christian character, and so underlying the whole social structure, as to be the very foundation of all true morality and good government; an institution so deeply imbedded in the hearts of all true Chris-

tians, not only as the type, but also the prophecy and pledge of the heavenly rest, and that is loved by the pure and holy, and opposed by the worldly and profane, clearly has the seal of divinity stamped upon it, and must be heavenly in its origin and perpetual in its existence.

IV. NOT ABOLISHED WITH THE JEWISH CEREMONIAL.

In opposition to this general conclusion is the position assumed by a certain class of interpreters, that the Sabbath was intended for the Jewish people only; that it was given to them in the wilderness, as appears from Ezek. xx. 12, "Gave them My Sabbaths;" and Neh. ix. 14, "And madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath;" that it was intended merely as "a sign" of the covenant with Israel, Ex. xxxi. 17; that the day, therefore, being intended for the Jews only, was abolished with the destruction of their nationality and the dispersion of that people. And the passages in Rom. xiv. 5, 6, and Col. ii. 16, 17, are cited in support of the position, where the apostle seemingly classes the day with the different kinds of meats, and drinks, and new moons, as shadows merely "of good things to come." Furthermore, in support of the position, it is urged that the New Testament has no positive precept on the subject.

In reply to all this, let it first be asserted that if the day was intended for the Jews, as is here maintained, then for that very reason it must still exist, for they are still the people of the Lord, cast off for a time, it is true, but not for ever, for they are yet to be brought back into the fold of their covenant keeping God. (Rom. xi. 25.) The covenant with Israel is an "everlasting covenant." If the Sabbath be the sign of that covenant, it too must be a perpetual sign. Besides, "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly." If the covenant be transferred to believers, and now confirmed unto them as the spiritual children of Israel, it must still remain the same everlasting covenant, and as such must retain the same perpetual sign. As long as the covenant with Noah stands, will the bow of promise appear in the heavens as a witness to that covenant.

But we are far from admitting the exclusive claim of the Jew to this day. That it is not his peculiar heritage, but the common property of mankind, appears from the simple declaration of Moses, that God blessed and hallowed it at the time of the creation. If the appointment was made, and the day blessed and sanctified at the beginning, then it was intended for the world. If it was given to Adam, it clearly becomes the universal birthright of the race.

In order to overcome the force of this reasoning,

the plea is set up that this statement is to be understood proleptically; that Moses was giving the *reason*, and not the time, of the appointment. It is impossible to conceive by what figure of speech or syntactical rule the words can be so construed. To say that an inspired writer, when giving an account of the creation, would then and there, without any declaration of purpose or parenthetical explanation, assign a reason why a particular people should begin to observe the day twenty-five hundred years afterwards, would be making him guilty of the greatest incoherency of style and thought, and at the same time treating that portion of revelation as a superfluity or anachronism. Nothing is clearer than that the resting, blessing, and sanctifying are all closely conjoined, both in the history and order of thought. The ground of the appointment is the sanctifying; the ground of the sanctifying, the blessing; the ground of the blessing, the resting; and the ground of the resting, the finishing of the work. If the resting was at the finishing of the work, so were the blessing and sanctifying. If the blessing and sanctifying were not until the time of Israel in the wilderness, neither was the resting till then. Nothing but the most violent wrestling can separate members so closely and compactly articulated. No one can read the account, with anything like an unbiassed mind, without being

satisfied that Moses intended to say that God made the appointment at the time of the resting, and that He blessed and hallowed the day then, and did not wait twenty-five hundred years before doing it.

Then the reason assigned for its observance is not Jewish. The six days' creation the foundation and reason of a Jewish ceremony, which was so soon to pass away, and that forever! A universal and eternal fact the foundation of a particular and temporary creed, and that too in the most compact piece of legislation in existence! Is there any more reason why the Jew should observe the day, because God rested from His labours at that time, than that we should? The ground of the appointment is the example of God, and that example is in no sense the exclusive property of any one nation. It is a universal standard. It was set at the beginning, and was clearly intended for Adam and his posterity. Hence the "stranger within the gate," the representative of the whole outside world, was also required to keep the law. It is the privilege, yea, imperative duty of every one to imitate the example of his God. The very essence of holiness consists in being like Him. The reason is universal, so the command must also be.

Furthermore, the ground of the appointment being in God, it can never be revoked. He blessed the day and set it apart for what He did.

It is the memorial of His resting, and however beneficent the appointment, the original enactment is entirely independent of the creature. His law was not made conformable to our necessities, but our necessities to His law. The ultimate ground is in Him, not in us. If so, then every possibility of its forfeiture and revocation is for ever barred. The reason for the blessing and hallowing must ever stand. As the necessity of the appointment will ever remain unchanged, the appointment itself must also be immutable, and therefore of universal application.

In addition to all this, we have the emphatic declaration of the Master Himself, that "the Sabbath was made for man;" not for the Jew only, or for the Hottentot, or Arabian, or any other one nation or people, but for man universally.

These views of themselves are sufficient to show that the day was not intended for the Jewish people only, but for the whole race; and if so, then the law regulating it must be of universal obligation. Moreover, they show that the interpretation given by the opponents of the day to the above cited passages, viz: Neh. ix. 12, and Ezek. xx. 12, is erroneous, their true meaning simply being to make the ordinance *more fully known*, and not to give it in the first instance. This will still further appear from the following considerations:

1. *The Sabbath, strictly speaking, formed no part of the Jewish ceremonial.* It was in it, but not of it. It merely flowed through it like a stream. It had a prior existence, as appears from the prohibition about manna-gathering in the wilderness. And the language there again shows that that was not the time of its first enactment. "To-morrow is the Sabbath of the Lord." This is not the language of a legislator, but of a historian. And the whole context shows that it was not a new, but simply the revival of an old statute, that had fallen into disuse. The words can only be construed into a law to regulate the gathering of manna, and not the authoritative appointment of a day of rest. They naturally point to something going before. It is only when interpreted in connection with the primitive original appointment, that we can fully understand the peculiar form of the phraseology, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Remember to keep holy the day already appointed, and that was so solemnly and formally hallowed and blest from the beginning. As the day existed previously, it could not have originated with the Mosaic ritual. And not having originated with that ritual, it could not in any way depend upon it for its perpetuity. Like the law of murder, and the ordinance of marriage, having a previous and independent existence, and being of universal application, it was only united

to the Sinaitic laws in a temporary union, and together with them formed the statutory code of the land. The after dissolution of that union could only leave it where it found it. The only part that strictly belonged to the state was the death penalty, which was afterwards added, and which has been repealed, being no part of the original law. If, then, it had an anterior and independent existence, the overthrow of the ritualistic law could not affect it in the least, any more than it could the law of murder or the ordinance of marriage.

2. That it was not abolished with that law also appears from the fact that *it cannot comply with the terms of abolition*. There is absolutely but one way to abolish a typical ordinance, and that is to fulfil it. Christ broadly asserted the rule when He said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." He arbitrarily and absolutely destroyed nothing. He only removed what was fulfilled, and because fulfilled. The shadow only gives place to the substance, the type to the antitype. Thus the sacrifices were not destroyed; they only gave place to the great atoning sacrifice, of which they were shadows. The type is but another form of prophecy; and no prophecy can fail short of fulfilment. No type can vanish until it reaches the antitype. The Sabbath antedating the Mosaic economy, and being the prophecy and pledge of future rest, cannot be abol-

ished until it merges into the everlasting rest in heaven. Indeed, so far as the principle is concerned, it is never to be abolished, any more than the principle of marriage. These two ordinances stood side by side, twin sisters in the first Eden, and they are yet to stand side by side in the second, the Jachin and Boaz, in the eternal temple on high; the one typical of and consummated in the marriage of the Church to the Lamb; the other typical of and fulfilled in the saints' everlasting rest. The Sabbath is a component part of creation. Being part of the original plan, and having the imperishable work of creation for its foundation, it must be perpetual. It is only to be transferred to heaven, with the removal of God's people, for it is a part of the promised inheritance, where it will be enlarged and perfected. What we now call the Sabbath will then become the rest of heaven. Hence the declaration of the apostle, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest," (*σαββατισμος*, literally, a keeping of the Sabbath,) "to the people of God." (HEB. IV. 9.)

3. Furthermore, that the Sabbath was not abolished with the ceremonial, is perfectly obvious from the fact that *it was formally incorporated in the moral law, and therefore forms an integral part of the morals of the universe*. The superiority of the moral over the ceremonial appears from the marked respect God has shown the former, not only by giv-

ing it anterior to the other, but also in the manner of its delivery. The ten commandments were spoken in an audible voice, by the Lord Himself, from the summit of mount Sinai, in the audience of the people. They were then written with His own fingers upon enduring tables of stone. They were then by His express command deposited in the ark of the covenant, directly under the overshadowing mercy-seat, the symbolic throne of the Most High, indicative of the fact that they constituted the foundation of that throne; "and heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of that law shall in any wise fail." The ceremonial law had no such sublime formalities connected with its promulgation. It was not spoken by the Lord in the audience of the people. It was not engraved upon tables. It was not deposited in the ark. It was simply delivered personally to Moses, with instructions to publish to the people.

Here, then, is a most remarkable fact, that the Sabbath is, by Divine arrangement, permanently incorporated with the immortal ten commandments, and forms an integral part of the morals of the Scriptures and of the world. *It is placed in precisely the same category with theft, lying, murder and adultery.* If the law of the Sabbath has been abolished with the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial, so also the law of theft, lying, murder, and adultery.

For they were all grouped together; promulgated by the same lips, and at the same time; engraved by the same hand, upon the same tablets, and deposited in the same hallowed receptacle. Here, then, is a sufficient answer to the quibbling about the "simplicity of ancient language," and the "frequent confusion of thought" in old writers. Man may not be able to draw the proper distinctions between moral and ceremonial things, but God certainly knows the difference; and here he has by an unmistakable providence clearly and forever separated the one from the other, and that too with an interposing chasm, which none but the most reckless will ever undertake to overleap.

Not only is the moral law thus widely separated from the ceremonial in the time and manner of its delivery, but also in its nature and designs. The latter was enacted to subserve a particular purpose, during a particular exigency; the former to meet the general demands of the race through all time. The one grew out of a peculiar set of circumstances, the other is the result of the eternal fitness of things. The law of the Sabbath is not simply a question of *human expediency or arbitrary law.* Its foundation is laid deep down in the laws of our being. God has not commanded its observance merely in the exercise of a divine prerogative, but, as in the case of idolatry, theft, murder, and adultery because there

is a reason for it existing in the *very nature of things*. It was placed in the decalogue because it belonged to the department of morals; it belongs to the department of morals because it underlies the very structure of society; and it underlies the structure of society because it constitutes an inseparable adjunct to all true religion and good government, and is, therefore, directly connected with the best interests of the race. It also belongs to the department of morals, because it directly concerns our relations to God, being a perpetual witness of His sovereign ownership, and a public acknowledgment of our submission to His throne. To undertake to abolish this institution, is to uproot one of the eternal supports of morality and truth, which cannot be effected without a terrible upheaval of the very foundation of things.

As this law, then, had a previous and independent existence, and formed no part of the Jewish nationality, any more than the principles of morality enter into the structure of any Christian government, it was impossible for it to be annulled by the mere overthrow of that nationality, any more than its authority could now be impaired by the overthrow of the government of the United States or Great Britain; for it likewise forms a part of the organic law of these nations. Nor yet could it be affected by *the removal of the entire Mosaic ritual*. Cere-

mony is one thing, morality is another. All the rites and ceremonies of the world might be swept away, and the principles of morality, which are eternal, would triumphantly survive the wreck. If the Sabbath belongs to the department of morals, then the question of its perpetuity is forever settled; for it is simply idle to talk about changing or amending a moral principle. Just as soon talk of changing the nature of God, or the eternal principles of truth and justice.

V. ESTABLISHED BY NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS.

These conclusions are in full accord with the teachings of the New Testament, and the practice of the Apostolic Church. There is absolutely not a single line in the New Testament showing that this institution was ever abolished, or its authority abated in the least. The only passages which are alleged to teach this are the following: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." (Rom. xiv. 5, 6.) And, "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." (Col. ii. 16, 17.) But does it not seem strange that Paul, that mighty champion of the gospel, should be made the instrument of, and witness to the destruction of one of its strongest bulwarks? Paul opposed to the Sabbath, when he was so ready to rejoice over everything calculated to place the cause of his Master and the grand concerns of eternity in the ascendancy over the world and the flesh! Paul doing away with the distinction of days, when continually observing them himself! He pulling down the very foundation upon which he himself was standing to build, and at the same time flatly contradicting Isaiah, who, in his prophetic description of gospel times, clearly recognizes the existence of the day, and even enumerates certain blessings pronounced upon those who shall observe it! See chapter lvi. 6, 7. A close analysis will show that the object of his animadversion was the old Jewish festivals and holy days, and not the Christian Sabbath. That these passages have no reference to the original seventh day rest, appears, 1. From the fact that the word used is in the plural, not *the Sabbath*, but *Sabbaths*; and the term *Sabbaths* is the one commonly applied to the other Jewish festivals and holy days. These were simply

styled "*Sabbaths*," but the seventh day is termed, by way of eminence, "the Sabbath," "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," and "the Lord's day." 2. It is used in both places in connection with eating or feasting; and nothing is said about eating or feasting in the Sabbatic law. 3. These festival days are termed by the Apostle, "shadows of good things to come," and "contrary to us;" whereas it is impossible to see how the seventh day rest can be a shadow of anything in gospel times, or contrary to us in any particular. 4. The word "holy day" in Col. ii. 16, is also calculated to mislead. In the original it is *feast day*. The verse strictly rendered would read, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a *feast-day*, or of *Sabbaths*." The whole context shows that the apostle was speaking of Jewish holy days or festivals, and not of the Christian Sabbath; and if so, then, these passages are wholly irrelevant.

Nor yet is there anything in the *teaching or practice of Christ or His apostles* that savours in the least of dishonour, much less destruction. Instead of annulling they have actually confirmed the law, both by precept and example.

It was the Saviour's custom to enter the synagogues on the Sabbath, and "stand up for to read." (Luke iv. 16.) It was every Sabbath that Paul reasoned in the synagogues. (Acts xviii. 4.) It

was on the Sabbath that he went out and preached to Lydia and other women of Philippi. (Acts xvi. 13.) It was on the Sabbath, at Antioch, that the Gentiles besought him that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. (Acts xiii. 42.) And it was out of respect to the sacredness of the day that the Saviour said, "pray ye that your flight be not in winter, or on the Sabbath day." (Matt. xxiv. 20.) So after the change of dispensation, the same honour was put upon the first day that had been given to the seventh. It was on the first day of the week that Christ first appeared unto His disciples. It was on the evening of the same day, being the first day of the week, the door being shut, that He appeared to them, and breathed on them the Holy Ghost. So it was after eight days, that the disciples were within, on the first day of the week, when He appeared again unto them, and renewed the salutation of peace. And it was on the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, that the Holy Ghost was first poured out, and with such pentecostal power, at Jerusalem, under the preaching of Peter, and such multitudes added to the church. (See Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.) It was on the first day of the week that the disciples were gathered together at Troas for the purpose of breaking bread, that Paul preached unto them. (Acts xx. 6, 7.) It was on the first day of the week that

Paul, even this same Paul that is accused of abolishing the Christian Sabbath, and doing away with the distinction of days, commanded that collections be taken up in the church at Corinth, as he had also directed in all the churches in Galatia. (1 Cor. xvi. 12.) So it was on the "Lord's day" that John was rapt in apocalyptic vision, on the isle of Patmos, when not only was the prophetic scroll unrolled, but even the gates of the heavenly city itself were thrown open to his view. Thus showing to the very last that this asserted claim of the Lord to a certain day was widely and even universally recognized and accorded to Him by the church throughout the entire period of revealed truth. Moses, in opening the canon, asserts that God has a day; and John in closing that canon, reiterates the truth that God still has a day; and the Lord Himself confirms and seals the same by favouring His servant on that day with the sublimest of all visions.

Nor did the honour stop with the close of the canon. The early Christians caught the spirit from the Apostles, and perpetuated the same after their decease, as appears from the well known letter of Pliny, the epistle of Barnabas, the writings of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, and the famous test question put to Christians by their persecutors in the third century, "Have you kept the Lord's day?"

Here, then, in this universal and continuous rever-

ence we have *an answer to the cavil* that the New Testament Scriptures contain no positive precept on the subject. They are silent, it is true, but not because the law was repealed, as its opposers maintain; nothing would have sooner broken the silence than the announcement of such repeal. A volcano in the sea would hardly have produced a greater upheaval than the abolition of this organic law a commotion in the Jewish world; and an authoritative pronouncement from apostolic lips would have been the result; but the silence is to be accounted for by the fact that the observance was so universal as to make its repetition unnecessary. The Saviour shaped His instructions, and the apostles their epistles, to meet the exigencies of the times, and to correct abuses then existing. As no directions and instructions were necessary, none were given. The very silence of the Scriptures shows the unity of sentiment then prevailing in favour of the ordinance.

If any one had the right to repeal or modify the law in any particular, it surely was He who was the recognized "Lord of the Sabbath." Though claiming this high prerogative, He has said or done nothing that can be interpreted to mean destruction. Yea, He distinctly avows that He "*came not to destroy.*" He is still the "Lord of the Sabbath," as He is the "God of the living, and not of the dead." All that He has done is to give its true interpreta-

tion, as in the case of divorce, murder, and adultery, and in so doing, instead of annulling, He has actually confirmed the same. A commentary upon a law is a virtual repetition of that law, and constitutes the very strongest proof of its continuation. All that has been done by Christ or His disciples is simply to **change the day from the seventh to the first, and to relieve it of all traditional abuses, neither of which has impaired its obligation in the least.**

A careful study of the exposition of the Master will show, that instead of repealing the law, His real purpose was *to preserve its integrity*, by relieving it of all Pharisaic glosses and perversions. The Pharisee held to the "*opus operatum*," the virtue in the simple doing. He made the morality of the ordinance to consist in a mere outward observance, and therefore insisted upon a strict adherence to the very letter. The Saviour, on the other hand, taught that the morality consisted in adherence to the spirit and not the letter; that the law contemplated mercy, as well as outward obedience. He did not say that the day was abolished, either in whole or in part; or that its original intention was in any wise changed; or that God would compromise His claim in any particular. It was still the Lord's day, wholly and entirely, and was still to be hallowed as such. But as to the manner of that hallowing, the

Pharisees were entirely in error: for works of necessity and mercy were within the scope and intention of the original law, as they themselves acknowledged by their own conduct in leading their ox or ass to water, and the official acts of their priests. Yea, more, that the Father Himself had "hitherto worked" in that sense on that day, and was still working, and, therefore, that He had a right to do the same, or any one else in imitation of His example. In one word, that the original law, as to its first intention, stands intact: that according to the terms of that law, the Lord demands the hallowing of the whole day; and that works of necessity and mercy, instead of interfering with, really and truly constitute a part of that hallowing. Instead of annulling, He thus confirms the law by His exposition.

Nor yet is its validity in the least affected by the change of day, for—

1. In changing the day *a great purpose has been engrafted upon it*, and instead of abolishing, has thereby only made it the more obligatory. It was due to our Lord that His resurrection should be thus signalized, as it was the dawn of a new era, the completion of a second great work, and also of a second great deliverance. And as Christianity was not so much the continuation as the development of Judaism, it was proper that the whole system should be moved forward at least one day, that the

one should not be confounded with the other. As there was a change in the seal and ordinance of the church, and the general computation of time, it was also necessary that the day of worship should be changed, so that "all things might become new." Instead, therefore, of annulling, this authoritative change has only confirmed the original law, and made it the more sacred and eternal, by engrafting another and more glorious purpose upon it, and thus furnishing additional sanctions for its observance. At first it was simply the hallowed day of the Creator; now it is the thrice hallowed day of our Redeemer God! And instead of one, actually commemorating three events—the creation, the deliverance from Egypt, and the eternal redemption through Christ; and is yet to be the triumphant commemoration of still another, even the everlasting deliverance of the saints from the power and dominion of sin and corruption.

2. Even if the present Christian Sabbath be altogether a different day from the Judaic, or from the primitive or Paradisiacal, *its sanctity is not thereby diminished*. Changing the day is not changing its design or uses. Change argues perpetuation, not annihilation. Changing the day is not a destruction of its claims, but simply a transfer of those claims to another. Changing the positive part of the law is one thing, and changing its morality quite another.

The morality of the precept does not consist in keeping this or that particular day. This is Phariseism. No one particular portion of time is intrinsically holier than any other. But the morality consists simply in imitating the example of God, in keeping the seventh, after six days of toil. Besides, owing to the diurnal revolution of the earth, and the inequalities in the length of the days as we travel from the equator to the poles, it is utterly impossible for all the inhabitants of the world to observe precisely the same period of time. The days vary in length from twenty four hours to six months. The sun is ever rising, ever setting. The day is ever dawning, ever closing. While it is day with one-half of the world, it is night with the opposite portion. The day is ever travelling with the sun, from east to west, until it crosses the one hundred and eightieth parallel of longitude, where its name suddenly changes. It is always one day on one side of that line, and always another on the opposite. Hence steamers and trading vessels plying between San Francisco and Japan, on crossing that line immediately change their calendar, both going and returning. So it may be Saturday one half of the day and Sabbath the remaining portion. Whilst the inhabitants of the western group of the Aleutian or Polynesian Islands are enjoying their Sabbaths, their neighbors in full view of the eastern group are

still busy with their Saturday work. It is, in the very nature of the case, simply a physical impossibility for all the world to observe precisely the same period, unless one-half be required to change their calendar, and convert night into day, whilst at the same time arrangements be made to determine with mathematical exactness when the day will begin and close, at all the intermediate points. But "the letter killeth." The very fact that no such exactness is insisted on in the Scriptures, shows that the general principle of devoting one-seventh of our time is all that is demanded; which, for the sake of uniformity, and in honour of creation, was fixed first on what was then known as the seventh day, but now, in honour of redemption, is fixed upon what we call the first, and so to continue to the end of the world.

'Then after all, *where is the necessity for the suspension or abrogation of this law?* Law is always founded in reason. It is the outgrowth of necessity, and will, therefore, continue throughout the period of that necessity. If a necessity existed at the beginning in nature and the eternal fitness of things for this day of rest, so now, since the constitution and course of nature remain unchanged. If God needed this witness for Himself in the first, which was an idolatrous, He equally needs it now in the last, which is a materialistic age. If the Jew, in addition to all his other holy days, needed this rest,

this check to worldliness, this tie to bind him to God and heaven, surely we must also need it, as it is the only one of the kind now in existence. To say, then, in the face of an unchanged constitution and course of nature, and in the absence of all positive precept, that the ordinance has been abolished, is a most gratuitous assumption—yea, more, it is a blasphemous impeachment of the Creator's wisdom. It is to accuse Him of acting without reason: either that He made a law without a necessity in the first instance, or else repealed it without reason in the second. But our God is infinitely exalted above such mutations. He is absolutely unchangeable in nature and purpose. His plans are all progressive, not terminative. Annihilation is unknown in His empire. Death is only change. The body simply turns into dust; the burning wood into ashes and smoke. If matter be indestructible, how much more so a moral law? If there ever was a Sabbath, it must still continue, unless its design be fulfilled, or it has been changed into something else. But where the ashes to mark the spot? or the glorified body rising out of the tomb? Where the falling mantle of the ascending prophet? Where the polished bust, or even the marble chips, to tell the story of his own metamorphosis? The primeval existence of this institution carries in itself the overwhelming demonstration of its perpetuity.

VI. MANNER OF OBSERVANCE.

If this institution has never been abolished, it must still be in force; and if in force, there must be an obligation to observe it in some way. This is but the logical necessity of the appointment. If God has a day, it must be observed, otherwise the claim would be null and void; and if observed, it must be in a manner different from all others; for if not, the day would not be different, and the claim would be only a nominal and therefore a worthless one. If the day is to be observed differently, there must be some standard to guide us in the matter. The question, therefore, comes up, what is that standard? There is but one answer to this interrogatory. *The only rule for our guidance is the word of its Author and Owner.* Property carries with it the idea of control. If God owns the day, He alone has the right to say how it shall be observed. His word, and not our crude conceptions, must be the only measure of duty. It is not for us to say it shall be observed in this or that way; that this or that requirement is too strict. There is absolutely but the one rule. The day is to be observed only as He shall direct.

On turning to the Scriptures we find the whole duty summed up in the simple command "*to hallow it.*" To hallow is to separate from a common to a

sacred use. Separation is the first and leading element. The tithes, first fruits, the tabernacle and vessels, were all hallowed by being first separated. Israel was separated from all other nations, and Levi from all the other tribes. Separation was the evidence of ownership, and God's ownership sanctifies the property, as His presence the ground. Everything thus separated must be regarded as the property of the Lord, and treated in a different manner from ordinary things. Yea, God demands that everything that belongs to Him in this special sense shall be regarded as sacred, and treated as such; as His names, His titles. His attributes, His words, His ordinances. His name is not to be used in a thoughtless, irreverent manner, "For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." No one is to "swear by heaven, for it is His throne." Nor even "by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." The great principle underlying the whole of this legislation is simply this, that whatever God thus separates to Himself, and claims exclusively as His own, must be revered by being treated differently from all others. It is thus with the Sabbath. It has been separated from all the other days of the week, and claimed as the exclusive property of the Lord, and must, therefore, be used in an entirely different manner from the rest. If a common use of His name be sin, none

the less is a common use of His day. Hence we are expressly forbidden "to do any work," not simply "servile work," as in the case of other Sabbaths, but by way of eminence, "any work," either by ourselves or the members of our households. Nor yet are we to "think our own thoughts," or "seek our own pleasure." The Sabbath was more holy than the other festivals, and it was on account of its superior holiness that it was made a "sign" unto Israel.

Everything, therefore, that contravenes this great principle, and *reduces the day to a level with the rest*, and makes it common; everything that partakes of unnecessary labour, whether of a servile character or not, or of worldly pleasure, as excursion trips, business engagements, starting or continuing on journeys, secular correspondence, reading political newspapers, studying lessons, casting accounts, social visiting, frequenting taverns, card playing, worldly conversation, feasting, spending the day in idleness, and the like, are all clearly forbidden by the spirit of this law; so also every employment that would prevent communion with God and a proper attention to the great concerns of the soul. The day being the exclusive property of a holy God, must be kept holy; by which it is obviously meant, that we are to observe it in a manner becoming the character of its Owner, and thereby distinguishing it

from all others, and therefore that such **business** and recreations as are proper on other days would be wholly improper on this.

Not only is this the substance of biblical teaching on the subject, but it also flows necessarily out of the *very intention of the ordinance*. If that intention be to recuperate the body, then clearly there should be no labour. If it be its intention to advance the spiritual interests of the soul, and bring it into a closer communion with God, and elevate it to a higher plane of spiritual life, then it should be a day for religious exercises, and not simply of idleness. If it be the type of heaven, it should be observed as such, as anticipatory of the promised rest, and the exercises all anticipatory of the heavenly service; and every care and concern and pleasure of a worldly nature, that would interfere with and defeat this great end, should be thrust out. In one word, if it be a day that belongs to the soul, and its relations to God and the future, then the interests of the soul should be its main business.

There are those who, while they admit the necessity of observing it as a day of rest from daily toil, yet see no impropriety in making it also *a day of recreation and pleasure*. They are restive under what they are pleased to term "the rigid austerity of an old-time, strait-laced religion." Their key note is "progress." They are ever clamoring for

more liberty, under the vain delusion that change is progress, that lawlessness is the synonym of liberty. It is well that these advocates of new light be reminded, that while there may be progress in the arts and sciences, there is none whatever in truth. Truth is eternal. Truth is unchangeable. Truth is as old as God, the source from whence it emanates. The only progress in truth is in its apprehension and application; and this is always in the direction of God and heaven, and never in the direction of the world and sin. God in these latter days is drawing the world nearer and nearer to Himself, and not driving it farther and farther off. To require a holy observance at the first, and now to relax the rule, is retrogression, and not progress. It is to put His creatures farther and farther off, instead of drawing them nearer and nearer to His bosom, as He is obviously doing, preparatory to His final and permanent dwelling in them. Neither can we see by what logic the distinction is drawn between secular pursuits and secular pleasures, so that the prohibition is made to apply to the one and not to the other. If secular pursuits would interfere with the sacredness of the day, so would secular pleasures. If the hum of daily business and toil would distract the soul, dissipate all serious reflection, and thus defeat the object of the appointment, none the less would the giddy

scenes of worldly gayety and amusement. In this whole matter the advocates of a strict observance stand upon the incontrovertible ground, that if God has a day at all, nothing short of a hallowed observance will meet the imperative demands both of the theology and the practical uses of the appointment.

Besides, if the perverted and fallible judgment of man be the criterion for deciding how the day is to be observed, then how will it ever be possible to secure uniformity in the matter, when there is such an endless diversity in individual judgment? Who shall be umpire, to determine the boundary between human assumption and divine prerogative? Who is to decide where right ceases, and usurpation begins? If we have a right to take a part of the day for pleasure, we have an equal right to take the whole. If we have a right to take either a part or the whole for pleasure, we have the same right to take the day for business. This principle of "*private interpretation*," if allowed, amounts virtually to a total abandonment of the claim. The truth is, this whole idea of making a distinction between business and pleasure, is without a shadow of foundation, either in Scripture or reason, and all such appropriation is unwarranted, and therefore a downright robbery.

The plea so often on the lips of the thoughtless profaner of the day, that the "*Sabbath was made for*

man," is equally unavailing. It is a sophistical wresting of an important truth to say that, because the Sabbath was made for man, man has a right to determine how it shall be observed. It is a piece of interpretation akin to the following: Woman was made for man, therefore communism is allowable. Property was made for man, therefore it is right to steal. To say that a *rest*, (for that is the meaning of the word Sabbath,) was made for man, that it might be used for business and pleasure, is a palpable contradiction. And the contradiction becomes the more glaring when we remember that that rest has been hallowed. A hallowed rest made for business and pleasure, is a strange anomaly indeed in creation! The day was truly made for man, but, like everything else, only to be used lawfully. Every other than a lawful use would be a perverted, and therefore a sinful, one. The only prescribed or lawful use of the Sabbath is a hallowed one; and worldly recreation and pleasure form no part of a hallowed use, much less the vast amount of secular work that seeks justification under the cover of this plea. The day is declared to be one of hallowed rest, and anything inconsistent with this is a palpable violation of it, the only exception being works of necessity and mercy. And these are not real but apparent exceptions, as they clearly come within the scope and intention of the original law. To make the words,

“the Sabbath was made for man,” mean an abrogation or relaxation of the law, is a gross perversion. To construe them into a new law, instead of an explanation of an old one, is equally so. They were uttered by the Saviour in connection with the gathering of the corn by His hungry disciples, and just before His miracle of healing; and the very occasion of their utterance shows in what sense Christ intended them to be understood. To say, because the day was made for works of necessity and mercy, therefore it is also made for business and pleasure, is sophistical in the highest degree.

To make it more evident that undue stress is not laid upon the importance of strictly observing this ordinance, we have only to note the manner in which it was kept in olden time. And we should remember that as the Christian is but a continuation of the Jewish Sabbath, so far as the fundamental principle is concerned, the same general rules that regulate the one must also govern the other. On turning to the Old Testament we are struck with three things:

1. The great emphasis given the law *by its frequent repetition*. No law is oftener repeated. It is reiterated again and again. See Ex. xx. 9, 10; xxxi. 13-16; Lev. xix. 3, 30; xxvi. 2; Deut. v. 12; Ezek. xlv. 24; Jer. xvii. 21, 22. If repetition can

give emphasis and force to any statute, then we have it here.

2. This emphasis is increased *by the special blessings promised*. To the eunuchs and strangers who keep the day are promised “a place and name in God’s house better than that of sons and daughters.” (Isaiah lvi. 5.) To those who turn their foot away from the Sabbath, from doing their own pleasure and speaking their own words, the promise is that they shall “ride upon the high places of the earth, and be fed with the heritage of Jacob.” (Isaiah lviii. 14.)

3. Then, that emphasis is still more greatly enhanced *by the awful curses pronounced against the disobedient*. The Sabbath breaker was to be put to death. (Ex. xxxi. 15.) If the people of Israel would hallow the day, then kings and princes would ever be sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses; and they and their princes, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the city itself, should abide forever; but if not, then a fire would be kindled in the gates of Jerusalem, which would devour her palaces, and never be quenched. (Jer. xvii. 27.)

Surely a law that occupied such a conspicuous prominence in the Mosaic legislation; that was enforced with such rigid uniformity; that was supported by such glorious promises on the one hand,

and such awful maledictions on the other, cannot now be violated with impunity. Though the outward enforcement of the penalty has now been done away with, being purely a state regulation, the law itself still stands in its native integrity, as on the day it was first proclaimed with such awful majesty on the summit of the burning mount, and the wilful transgressor, whether an individual or a nation, is equally guilty in the sight of heaven, and shall not escape the righteous indignation of a jealous God.

While we feel profoundly thankful that the observance of the day is generally upheld and supported by our state and municipal authorities, still there is one respect in which, as a nation, we are guilty of a palpable violation of this law. We allude to *the Sunday mail system*. The running of cars, and the carrying of mails are neither works of necessity nor mercy. They fall neither into the category of leading the ass to water nor helping the ox out of the ditch. It is clearly legalizing the day for secular business on the part of the government, and thus not only violating the laws of God, but its own avowed principles as a Christian nation. These corporations run their conveyances, and carry the mails, not upon the ground of necessity, or from considerations of mercy, but purely for the gain that is in it. If it be right to allow one set of men to ply their vocation and get gain, upon what principle of equity and

justice can another be denied the same privilege? If it be right to legalize one kind of secular business, why not another? And when this legalizing once begins, where will the end be? This is emphatically the great national sin, for it has the broad seal of the nation's endorsement upon it. It is not only authorized but even enforced by special statute.

It would be well for those in authority, and those who are honoured with seats in the councils and legislative halls of the country, to consider the blessings promised, and the curses threatened, *upon the nation that keeps or break this law*, and realize the mighty responsibilities resting upon them as the custodians of the peace and prosperity of the people; and the responsibility becomes the more fearful, and the judgment the more certain, in view of the utter powerlessness of the church perfectly to obey this mandate of her King without assistance from the state. Governments are punished only in this life. This institution stands as the outward symbol and visible representative of Deity; and is just as much a "sign" now, of national reverence and obedience, as in the time of the Jewish theocracy. The express object of Israel's seventy years of captivity was that the land might enjoy her Sabbaths, of which she had been so long and unjustly deprived. If the law has been repealed, as some imagine, then its observance would be a species of

"will worship," and would be provocative of God's displeasure. But instead of this, the most prosperous governments upon the face of the earth—those most honoured, and those most abundantly blessed, are those in which this day is most sacredly observed; and the prosperity is in exact proportion to the strictness of that observance.

And we greatly fear that in *this matter much of the sin lies at the door of the Church*. The people of God have not been as decided in their testimony as they should have been. They have not lifted up their voice like a trumpet. Instead of this many of them are winking at the sin, and even encouraging it by their example. Many of them, whilst expressing regret at this flagrant violation of the day, yet give countenance to it by patronizing the post office and public conveyances, and thereby making themselves partakers of the nation's sin. Many are large stockholders in these corporations, and with the greatest complacency pocket their portion of the unrighteous gain, without one seeming scruple or single word of protest. And even *ministers of the gospel*, whilst preaching that men should "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," are themselves desecrating that day, and violating that very law, by using Sunday trains in going to and returning from their appointments. "O, consistency, thou art a jewel!" Brethren of the ministry, cease your

denunciations against Sabbath breaking, or else show more respect to God's day. Cease your preaching, or else sustain it with your practice. The plea, that "the cars will run any way," is utterly worthless, and even puerile. For the question is not whether withholding your patronage will arrest the evil, and stop the trains, but whether it will be possible for you to participate in the profanation, and clear your skirts?—whether you can be a faithful witness for God and the truth, and yet be a partaker of the sin? Neither will the *jesuitic plea*, that "the end will justify the means," cover the case. So thought Saul when he spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, but utterly unmindful of the deeper underlying truth, that "to obey was better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." So thought Uzzah when he, unbidden, presumptuously stretched forth his hand to stay the tottering ark, but paying with his life the forfeit.

The great principle to regulate in this matter is embodied in the Mosaic law, which enjoined that the hire of licentiousness, or the price of an unclean animal should not be brought into the house of God for any vow; that is, nothing in itself wrong, unclean, or impure, should be allowed in the Lord's service, or in the construction of His work. (Deut. xxiii. 18.) The strictest integrity from beginning to end is imperatively demanded. The springs

of action, as well as the actions themselves, must all be scrupulously exact. An impure motive vitiates the whole. It is impossible to see by what ecclesiastical quibbling theft could be justified in advancing the cause of missions, or robbery the cause of benevolence. This "robbing Peter to pay Paul"—this violating a positive law in efforts at over-zeal—this encouraging railroad and other corporations to violate the law of God, and trample His authority under foot in their greed after gain, and the vast multitudes of employees to do the same, and do servile work contrary to His express command, and at the same time depriving themselves of the means of grace; in one word, this dragging some souls to perdition in order to save others, is strange reasoning indeed, in the field of ecclesiastical casuistry. And when the ministers and expounders of the law show such utter disregard for the sanctity of the day, what better can be expected of the people? When ministers of the Word make a personal convenience of the Lord's day, professedly for Church purposes, we need not be surprised that ministers of state will make the same convenience for state business, and merchants, and tradesmen, and people generally, for commercial and secular purposes. There is a fearful responsibility resting upon the expounders of

the divine law in this matter! Let them take heed to the message themselves.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, we appeal to our countrymen of all classes and conditions,—to governors and rulers, and all in authority,—to those who make and those who execute the laws,—to all the friends of morality and religion, and the lovers of good order and government,—to the friends of the poor, and all true philanthropists,—to all the followers of Jesus, and lovers of His truth,—to the citizens of this mighty republic, north, south, east, west, irrespective of name, party, church, or creed; who not only feel an interest in the prosperity and perpetuity of this government, but in the cause of universal humanity,—to make one grand rally in behalf of a more scriptural regard for this divinely appointed institution. The enemy is coming in like a flood. Infidelity is open and defiant in its assaults. A sceptical and sensualistic age repudiates a Sabbath devoted to holy uses, and clamours for one of relaxation. Latitudinarian views are stealthily creeping into the Church itself. It is high time for the friends of this institution to rally to its defence. Instead of yielding to these unrighteous demands, let them stand firm in a united resistance. Instead of letting go, let them lay hold with a still firmer grasp

upon this precious priceless boon of heaven, alike the gift of rich and poor.—this stronghold of morality and religion.—this right arm of the Church,—this pillar of the nation,—this only brake upon the train of worldly care.—this only truce in the great battle of life,—this perpetual witness for God, which by its sacred stillness is ever telling of His presence, and by its silence pointing the soul to the everlasting mansions above. If the entire abandonment of the day would, as all must admit, be attended with the most disastrous consequences, then every departure from the true Scripture standard is but the sundering of another strand in the mighty cord, and the displacement of another stone in the majestic arch, the final overthrow of which must involve all that is lovely and fair in one common ruin. “*Obsta principis.*” The time to resist encroachment is at the beginning. The march of evil is like the falling avalanche, that only increases in volume and speed in its descent. The friends of the Sabbath can defend it most successfully when they plant themselves upon the high Scripture ground, and make it a day of hallowed rest. Then, and only then, can we claim the prophetic blessing pronounced so authoritatively and with such distinct minuteness and emphasis:

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honour-

able, and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.)