

*Lectures of the Theological Seminary,*  
PRINCETON, N. J.

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Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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Lectures on the institution  
of the Sabbath









LECTURES  
ON  
THE INSTITUTION OF  
THE  
SABBATH,

BY  
THE REV. JOHN S. STONE, D.D.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following Lectures were originally prepared not for the press, but for the pulpit. The object of the writer was, not to say all that might be said, or that has been said, on the subject of the Sabbath, but to present the main points in the argument for the perpetuity and divine authority of this religious institution. He wished to show that the Sabbath is an inseparable part of that divine system of arrangements, under which God has organized his Universal Church, in its downward passage, through all ages, towards its ultimate extension over all nations. And having shown this, not by dwelling on the numerous collateral points, which may be supposed to favor such a conclusion, but by going at once to the main grounds, on which such a conclusion rests, his prin-

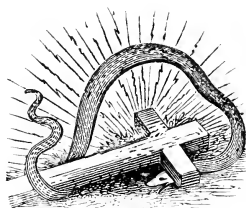
the Will of Christ, and accounting for the manner, in which it was introduced, by the considerations embodied in the fourth of the ensuing Lectures.

Nor, to this do we consider it a valid answer to say : “ The Church has departed from Christ’s intention in other things ; and therefore in this also may have been guilty of such a departure.” For, those other departures began to take place hundreds of years after the Church had been left to meet, and move through, the corrupting influence of the philosophies, and superstitions of the heathen world ; and, as those departures grew wider and wider, they were marked with more and more of Christ’s displeasure, and of a withdrawalment of his favor, till, at last, they brought on his visible body the most direful of all plagues ; whilst, on the contrary, the change in the day of the Sabbath took place almost under the very eye of Christ ; was, in a short time, full and complete ; and has, from first to last, been marked by the almost visible smiles of the Saviour.

This is the great fact, with which the argument, on this point, has to deal. Whether, in the Lecture referred to, it has been dealt with fairly, the reader must judge. To us, at least, it seems not only a fact, but also, a fact standing in the midst of light. We believe, Christ designed a change in the day for his Christian Sabbath ; and that, in this particular, his

Universal Church has but been walking, from the first, according to his own wise counsel. If, therefore, what has been said in these Lectures should be blessed to a more spiritual and effectual hallowing of this ancient and high Ordinance of God, to the great "Lord of the Sabbath" shall be all the praise.

*Brooklyn, June 8, 1844.*





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LECTURE I.

GENESIS II. 1-3.

“ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made. 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.”







I.

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THE institution of the Sabbath is a subject of prime importance. Among those external things, which, though they are not religion itself, are yet inseparably connected with the welfare of religion, this holds no second rank. In inviting to it your attention, therefore, I shall feel justified in giving it a somewhat prolonged examination. Upon this examination, however, let us not enter as mere speculating querists, but as humble, docile Christians, sensible of our need of Divine instruction in everything which concerns the truth or the welfare of the religion of the Bible.

There has been a time when the opinions on this subject, entertained by that highly respectable English moralist, Dr. Paley, and others familiar with modern Jewish writings, tended in no inconsiderable degree

to throw a laxity into the conscience, and a latitude into the practice, of many in relation to the Sabbath. By stripping it, under the Christian dispensation, of the character of a Divine institution, intended for universal and perpetual observance, and by investing it with the character of an institution having no other authority than that of expediency and apostolic practice, Dr. Paley left an open door to all who chose to follow him, which led to a weakened regard for its sacredness, and to loosened habits in its observance. The arguments, however, by which he endeavored to support his opinions, have been found inconclusive. His opinions, indeed, still exert a wide influence. Nevertheless, the soundest examiners have pronounced them erroneous ; and the most serious part of the Christian world have rejected them as dangerous. Throughout our own land, especially, the Sabbath is settling back upon its true foundation. It is received more and more extensively as a Divine, perpetual, and universally binding ordinance ; and, invested with this high and sacred authority of character, is taking its deep and firm seat in the religious conscience, affections and practice of the Church. I shall not, therefore, occupy your time in detailing minutely the various arguments and objections which have from time to time been urged on the one side and on the other of this great question ; but shall content myself

with setting before you its general features, its prominent points, under such arguments and observations as appear to me most conducive to a firm conviction and a rational belief that the Sabbath is a Divine institution, intended for perpetual and universal observance, and best calculated to enforce it in this character on the observance of every lover of either religion or his country.

With these few remarks, by way of introduction, let me spread the subject at once before your minds. Under the Jewish dispensation, every seventh *day* of the week was, by express Divine command, set apart as a Sabbath, or holy rest, to God. Under the Christian dispensation, a seventh *part*, though not the seventh day, of every week, has been set apart for a similar purpose, and made a Christian Sabbath, or holy rest to God. But the Jewish dispensation did not commence till the human race had been in existence two thousand five hundred years; and in about one thousand five hundred years after its commencement, or at the introduction of the Christian dispensation, it became totally extinct. Hence arise the following inquiries, which involve the whole subject: Was the Sabbath originally a Divine institution, designed, on the part of God, for universal observance, wherever a knowledge of it should come, from the creation of man to the end of time? Or, was it sim-

ply a positive ordinance, which God gave to the Israelites twenty-five hundred years after the Creation of man, and which was intended for that people alone, which was to begin and end with their ecclesiastical polity, and never to be observed by any other nation? And, if it was originally a Divine institution, intended for universal and perpetual observance, why, when the Mosaic economy closed, was the *seventh* day of the week omitted, and the first observed in its stead? These are the inquiries which the subject presents, and which we will now proceed to consider.

That the Sabbath was a Divine institution, there is no doubt even in the minds of those who would confine its binding authority to the Jewish Church. And that it was intended for universal and perpetual observance, wherever a knowledge of it should come, will be certain, if it can be shown that it was instituted immediately after the Creation of man. At that time, only two human beings, the progenitors of all our race, were in existence. Whatever, therefore, was instituted for them, and obligatory on their observance, must have been intended for all mankind, and obligatory on their observance, whenever and wherever such institution should be made known. The Israelites, it will be remembered, were not in existence as a nation till more than two thousand

years after the creation of Adam. They could not, therefore, in the nature of the case, have been any more interested in what God gave to Adam, than the Assyrians and Babylonians, the Medes and Persians. This point is so clear that it is conceded on all hands, that if the Sabbath were instituted immediately after the Creation of man, it must have been intended for observance, so far as it should be known, by all men in all ages. What, then, is the evidence of the institution, thus early, of a holy Sabbath?

To this question I reply, in the first place;—the same evidence which we have in favor of the position that man was the last work of the present visible creation; the evidence of sacred history.

The first chapter of Genesis gives a brief account of the work of this creation in six days. Into the bearings of Geological investigations on the meaning of the term “days,” as here used, it is not necessary in this examination to enter. Whether they are to be understood as literal days, or as successive and indefinite periods of time, this, at least, is acknowledged even by Geological interpreters of the Bible, that the Mosaic account of the Creation fixes accurately the order in which, so far as our earth is concerned, the different parts of the creative process took place. This process occupied six days, or periods of time; the last of which, closed with the formation of

man out of the dust of the earth. After having given an account of this process, then, in the order of its occurrence, the sacred historian proceeds, in the words of my text:—"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made; and he rested, on the seventh day, from all his work which he had made. 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."

This passage, it will be remembered, is found in a plain, though brief historical sketch of the first ages of the world. In detailing the events developed in the process of Creation, the historian gives full evidence that he observed accurately the order of time, in which those events transpired. Without any discoverable interruption of his narrative, without any discoverable change in his style, he then proceeds to relate what happened immediately after the close of those events. "God rested on the seventh day; and he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work." He closed the sixth day, or period, with the Creation of man. He commenced the seventh day, or period, with resting, or keeping Sabbath, as the Hebrew word implies, and with blessing or sanctifying it, because it

was the day, or period, of his rest. If, then, this whole narrative were taken by itself, and read for information alone, it is past all doubt that the reader would find in it, as fair an account of the fact and the time of the institution of the Sabbath, as he would of the fact and the time of the creation of man. He would find nothing that would even suggest the thought, that the blessing or sanctifying of the seventh day, or seventh part of time, did not take place in immediate connection with the rest, with which that day, or portion of time was begun, and to which, on the part of God, it was consecrated. This point is so plain that the institution of the Sabbath, immediately after the creation of man, could never have been questioned, had it not been for what Dr. Paley deems, the remarkable silence of the Sacred History on the subject for the next two thousand and five hundred years.

Here, in fact, is the objector's stronghold against the perpetuity and universal obligation of the Sabbath. "If," he inquires, "this institution had been coeval with the creation of man, and intended for perpetual and universal observance, is it not incredible that no mention of its existence is found, and no censure of either its abuse or its neglect recorded, in the Bible from the beginning of the first seventh of time down to the Exodus from Egypt?" This is at

least a plausible inquiry ; and I repeat, the fact on which it rests, is the objector's stronghold against that view, which I am now taking of the institution of the Sabbath. If, therefore, this alleged silence of the Bible on the subject of this institution, from the creation of man to the time of Moses, can be satisfactorily explained and reconciled with the alleged existence of the Sabbath during that period ; then the language of my text must stand as a fair, literal, undeniable account of the time when the institution was first established. Every other objection against this view is decidedly secondary to that now stated. While they have been sought out, in order to add strength to it, they do, in truth, derive their principal force from it. Let us, then, examine this point somewhat attentively.

1. In the first place, then ; although the Bible makes no explicit mention of the Sabbath from the time referred to in my text, down to the days of Moses, yet it is not so profoundly silent on the subject, as the objection supposes. A short time after the creation of man, probably about one hundred years, the two first-born sons of Adam, evidently according to custom, brought their offerings unto the Lord. The incident is thus mentioned. " In process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And



Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." It is remarkable that what is here rendered "in process of time," is, in the Hebrew, "at the end of days;" and the inquiry is not without pertinency; at what "end of days" were these evidently customary offerings brought unto the Lord? On what occasion would these first-born of the human race be so likely to present these their religious services unto God, as on that day, which God himself had blessed and sanctified; the Sabbath, the end of the week? Such an allusion to the Sabbath and the division of time into weeks is at least natural, and as much as could be expected in a historic sketch, which, for brevity, is wholly unparalleled among the writings of men.

This, however, is not all. In the days of Noah, more distinct references to the division of time into weeks, of seven days each, are made by the sacred historian. "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain on the earth," was the language of God to that patriarch, in warning him of the near approach of the flood. "And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark," was the conduct of Noah, in endeavoring to ascertain whether the waters of the flood had abated. "And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more,"

was his repetition of the act in carrying his endeavor to a satisfactory result. Now, why this mention of seven days, and this repeated waiting for the beginning and end of that particular portion of time? Evidently, because God had, from the first, established the division of time into weeks by the institution of the Sabbath; and because men had been accustomed, in their more serious transactions, to observe this division. To Noah, as well as to Cain and Abel, the seventh was "the end of days," the close of the week.

Again: Jacob, about two hundred and fifty years before the Exodus from Egypt, when serving Laban for his daughter Rachel, was told to "Fulfil her week;" which is immediately explained to mean, a period of "seven years." Here a week is defined as characterized by the number seven; and a week of years is an undoubted allusion to the ordinary week of seven days. And finally; Joseph, we are told, mourned for his father, at the threshing-floor of Atad, "seven days," an entire week.

Now, although these various references to the division of time into periods of seven days do not amount to an explicit mention of the Sabbath, as a divine institution for religious observance, yet, occurring, as they do, in an extremely rapid survey of the leading events only in the early history of the world,

and connected, as they are, with actions and incidents of a religious or serious character, they cannot but be regarded as something more than accidental expressions. They must be regarded as allusions growing out of actually existing circumstances, and as carrying with them a strong inference in favor of the institution of the Sabbath at the commencement of the first seventh period of time, immediately after the creation of man at the close of the sixth. And they go far in weakening the force of the objection, which has been urged against this early institution of the Sabbath, on the ground that the Bible takes no notice of the day from the mention of it in the text down to the days of Moses. It does not, indeed, mention the Sabbath by name ; but it does impliedly recognize its existence.

Had there been no previous and introductory mention of six days, or periods of time, occupied in the process of creation, and of a seventh devoted to rest ; had there been no foregoing account of blessing and sanctifying of the seventh, as distinguished from the others ; had there been no antecedent assignment of the cause, why God thus signaled the seventh day, then, indeed, all these references to the division of time into periods of seven days might have been considered as less remarkable ; though even then they would have been deserving of notice, inasmuch as

there is nothing in astronomy, or the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, nothing in the ordinary movements of the year, nothing in the whole compass of nature, to suggest such a division. The distinction of time into days, months, and years, is a natural one, made by the unvarying revolution of suns and worlds. But its division into weeks, or portions of seven days each, is perfectly arbitrary. There is nothing in the whole ordained movement of things, which can be made to point towards such a division. Even, therefore, if the first two chapters of Genesis had been wanting, there would have been something quite remarkable in these references to "the end of days," to successions by sevens, and to a week of years. Such language could hardly be explained without supposing some previous, important transaction, from which so arbitrary a distinction had arisen. But, when we have an account of such a previous transaction, a transaction great, solemn, infinitely momentous in its character; a transaction, too, which suggests this "very arbitrary division of time;" I think it must be found extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that the references, which we have examined, do point back to the Mosaic account of the creation, and prove by strong implication the existence of the Sabbath from the very days of Adam. They show that the objection, which we are canvassing, has much

less force, when subjected to a little examination, than it appears to have, when merely urged in broad, naked, and general terms.

In completely invalidating this objection, however, other and stronger considerations are to be presented, for which the present does not furnish us sufficient opportunity. This Lecture must be regarded as little more than introductory to what is to follow. If it has succeeded in bringing the subject fairly before your minds, and in giving your thoughts a movement in the direction which that subject is to take, enough has been effected for my purpose at this time. The whole subject matter before us is of vast importance, and we must be willing to approach its more absorbingly interesting portions by clearing our way through no little of mere argumentative detail. This may not, all at once, bring you out into view of the connection, which it has with the more spiritual and living things of our religion; with "Jesus Christ and him crucified," that grand, central theme of the Gospel ministry. Nevertheless, this connection will at length become apparent; and the more so in proportion to the thoroughness with which, at the outset, we settle the elementary truths of the subject, by clearing away everything which may obstruct our distinct perception of them. May I not hope, then, that you will exercise patient thought and prolonged attention upon

what has been and may be offered ? He who rightly understands and appreciates the Sabbath, has gone far on his way towards excellent attainments in religion. He is not distant from the kingdom of God. He is ripening already for a Sabbath on high.



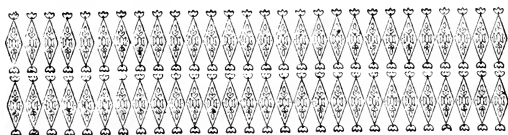
LECTURE II.

GENESIS II. 1-3.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made. 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.”







## II.

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I HAVE already introduced to your attention the subject of the Sabbath as one among the external institutions of our religion ; as having its origin at the creation of man ; as being therefore of divine authority ; and as intended for universal and perpetual observance. The main objection, so far as argument is concerned, against this view, arises from the alleged fact, that the Bible history takes no notice of the existence of the Sabbath, from the time specified in the text, till the days of Moses ; and that, therefore, the mention, which is made of it in the text, must have been by anticipation ; by a sort of figure of speech, in which the historian, when recording that great event, the Creation of the world, alludes to a commemoration of it, instituted twenty-five hundred years

afterwards. Had Moses, in giving his account of the Creation and of the rest which God observed, immediately subjoined: "And this is the Event, in commemoration of which our Sabbath has been recently instituted;" he would have said what this objection supposes he ought to have said. But when he writes, in the same breath, and in the same simple style of narration, "God ended his work;" "and rested on the seventh day;" and "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it;" the supposition of such a figure as that just named, is a startling force upon language. Everything in the structure of the narrative shows that the sanctifying, or setting apart, of the Day took place in immediate connection with the Rest, which God observed.

Passing from this, however, and looking more attentively at the Bible, we find that the Sacred History is not so profoundly silent, as the objection asserts, on the subject of the Sabbath, from Adam to Moses; but that it contains various references to the division of time into weeks, which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for without admitting the institution of the Sabbath immediately after the Creation of man. Upon these topics I dwelt at length in the former Lecture.

In proceeding now, still further, I find myself opposing an objection, the force of which is already

weakened by the considerations that have been adduced. I trust that force will be entirely invalidated by others now to be presented.

1. On the ground, then, that the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation of man, we have no reason to suppose, as Dr. Paley evidently does, that it would be regularly observed from that period down to the Exodus from Egypt. That was a period of general, nay almost universal wickedness; a period, in which moral corruption set so deep a stain upon our nature that the Waters of a Deluge were sent to wash it out; a period, in which men forgot God, and left us, therefore, without reason to wonder that they should forget his Sabbath also.

Nor have we any reason for supposing, as the same author plainly does, that, if the Sabbath was instituted at the time mentioned in the text, but afterwards neglected, either during the sojourn in Egypt, or under any other emergency, permission of such neglect must have been given and recorded. For, if it had its origin at the creation of man, it was designed for mankind in general; and it would not have been proper either to give or record a permission of neglect in favor of any nation, under any emergency. If neglected at all, its neglect was unjustifiable, and of course, without permission.

Nor, finally, if the Sabbath was instituted at the

Creation of man, have we any reason, from the circumstances of the case, to suppose that the Sacred Historian would notice explicitly, either its observance or its neglect. What were those circumstances ?

The time, which intervened from the Creation of man to the call of Moses, may, for the purposes of the present argument, be divided into two periods ; the former reaching from Adam to Abraham, and including more than two thousand years ; the latter, from Abraham to Moses, and including about four hundred and thirty years. Of these two periods, let it be remembered, the former is more than one-third of the whole time which has yet elapsed since the days of Adam ; and yet Moses has condensed the entire history of that vast lapse of time into the first eleven chapters of Genesis. In this extremely brief summary, he has recorded the Creation of the world, and the setting apart of the seventh day ; the state of man in Paradise, and his apostasy from God ; the promise of a Saviour, and the multiplication of the human family ; their universal corruption, and the consequent judgment of the Deluge ; God's covenant with Noah, and the second dispersion of the race from Babel ; and, scattered through the whole, a kind of genealogical account of those families from Adam to Abraham, through which the Promised Seed, or Messiah, was to descend. The whole of this was

evidently intended as a mere glance at those particular events and characters, which would best serve to show how the history of our redemption by Christ was linked back from the promise made to Abraham with the fall of man and the first promise to Adam. In a historical sketch of such unparalleled brevity, the historian, after recording the original institution of the Sabbath, could not, with any propriety, be expected to record anything further respecting it, except in the way of that general censure, which we know he so emphatically cast upon the awful depravity of the antediluvian and postdiluvian ages.

This remark fully accounts for the alleged silence of the Bible respecting the Sabbath in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, or during the first two thousand years. With regard, now, to the remaining period of the four hundred and thirty years, which reach from Abraham to Moses, I remark: that, although the historic narrative becomes more particular and domestic than in the former case, yet there will be found no reason for surprise at the silence, during this latter period, if we take into account the following considerations.

First: The history of this period is still but a mere sketch of a particular family, marking the line of descent towards the Messiah; a sketch, too, of times which preceded the special appropriation of the Sab-

bath to the Israelites as a peculiar sign of God's covenant with them.

Second: When this history finally expands and spreads itself over the whole breadth of the Israelitish state, both civil and ecclesiastical,—though the Sabbath had then been formally recognized and solemnly given to that people for their observance in particular, and though it was often mentioned during the life of Moses; yet, for nearly five hundred years after his death, there is not, on the sacred record, a solitary mention of the subject; of the existence, the observance, or the neglect, of the institution. The first notice of it which occurs, and that, perfectly incidental, containing no description of the Sabbath, and no account of its duties or its abuse, is in the days of David.

Third: The history of the former period of four hundred and thirty years, from Abraham to Moses, containing a short account merely of the three individuals, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the sojourn of their posterity in Egypt, occupies, it will be observed, but a part of the single book of Genesis. But the history of the latter period of five hundred years from Moses to David, including circumstantial accounts of the following important particulars: the wars of the Israelites with the seven heathen nations, and the final conquest of Canaan by Joshua; the set-

tlement of the twelve tribes, and the division of the land by lot ; the administrations of their numerous judges, with the wars and captivities which happened under them ; the important transactions which filled the life of Samuel ; the final change of their government under Saul, from a theocracy to a monarchy, and a revolution in the throne, which ended in the elevation of King David ; the history of this period, instead of being crowded into a part of a single book, occupies the whole of the following : Joshua, Judges, First of Samuel and Second of Samuel, together with part of the First of Chronicles ; and yet, in all this, there is not a single mention of the Sabbath.

Fourth : The four hundred and thirty years from Abraham to Moses came immediately after that long moral night of twenty centuries, which the fall of man spread over the world, and which was filled with a general oblivion of religion amidst the abominable things of idolatry. But the five hundred years, which succeed the death of Moses, come directly after a solemn recognition and establishment of the Sabbath, and after all that splendid array of miracles and means which God exhibited and designed for a revival and dissemination of his religion through the world. And yet, through this long age, not a single mention of the Sabbath is made by the

Sacred Penmen, of its existence, its observance, its neglect, or its abuse.

Taking all these considerations, then, into account, I ask—Which is the more unaccountable—the silence which the Bible observes in relation to the Sabbath during the lesser and more rapidly sketched period from Abraham to Moses, or that which it observes during the greater and much more minutely narrated period from Moses to David? The question needs not an answer. If we are to look in either of these periods for a frequent mention of the Sabbath, or even for an occasional censure of its abuse, we ought, undoubtedly, to look in the latter, that which followed its imposing recognition and establishment on Mount Sinai, and the numerous means which were taken to impress it on the observance of the Israelites. But as we have seen, not a word on the subject is found in all the circumstantial records of that long age. I conclude, therefore, that the absence of all mention of the Sabbath, from Abraham to Moses, carries with it no weight against the argument from my text. And as the absence of such mention, during the still earlier period from Adam to Abraham, is precisely what we might have expected from the circumstances of the case, I come with great confidence to the conclusion, that the silence of the Bible during the whole interval, from the mention of



the Sabbath in the text to the renewed recognition of it under Moses, furnishes no solid objection against the position, that it was instituted at the beginning of the first seventh day, or portion, of time. When the historian, after detailing the order of events during the progress of creation, immediately adds: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished;—and on the seventh day God—rested from all his work; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all his work;" we have satisfying evidence, that he records both a fact and the time when it happened. This fact is: that, on the beginning of the first seventh portion of time, God kept sabbath from all his works and, therefore, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, or set it apart for holy uses. And there appears no more room for doubt that the whole, both the rest and the sanctification, took place at the same time, than there is, that the act of sanctifying, whenever it did take place, was the actual institution of the Sabbath. The silence of the Bible, after what is said in the text, till the renewed and public recognition of the institution under Moses, is not even a plausible presumption, much less positive proof, that it was never established till this latter event. It is easier to account for this silence, than for that, which we have noticed for nearly five hundred years after the death of Moses, or for the fact, that

the first censure, which was cast on the abuse of the Sabbath, fell from the lips of Isaiah, seven hundred and thirty years after the transactions on Mount Sinai ; and that there are but few explicit references, of any kind, to the institution from the time of Moses to the close of the Babylonish captivity, a period of one thousand years.

2. Having thus, satisfactorily I hope, explained the silence of the Bible on the subject of the Sabbath from the mention of it in the text to the days of Moses, I proceed to examine another view which has been taken.

In the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, just before the memorable transactions on Mount Sinai, we have an account of the miraculous supply of food. The Israelites had murmured for want of bread, and God had promised that he would rain them bread from heaven. Accordingly, next morning the ground about the host appeared covered with a small, white substance, which, for want of a known name, they called Manna. They were ordered to gather according to present necessities only, except on the sixth day, when they were to gather twice the usual quantity. They were also directed never to leave of it from one day to another. In this, however, some disobeyed, and for their disobedience were punished. When the sixth day came, they gathered, according to direction, twice

as much as usual. The elders of the congregation, laboring apparently under some kind of doubt, came and told Moses. Then follow these words: "And he said unto them, This is what the Lord hath said: To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade. And Moses said, Eat that to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See; for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you, on the sixth day, the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; and let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

Now, it is supposed by the writer already referred to on this subject, that this passage records the first actual institution of the Sabbath; that, hence, being given to the Israelites alone, it was designed specially for their observance; and that the words of my text

may be reconciled with this view, by supposing that they record—not the time, but the reason, of the institution.

This, however, is evidently beginning the argument at a wrong point. It takes for granted that the silence of sacred history, which has been noticed, is conclusive against the institution of the Sabbath at the creation of man; and then endeavors, by straining the apparently plain historical narrative of the text into the mere remark of a commentator, to reconcile it with the theory built on this passage in the sixteenth of Exodus. Whereas, the argument ought to take for granted that my text contains the account of the actual institution of the Sabbath, and then endeavor to reconcile the subsequent silence of the Bible with the fact of such an early institution. If that silence could not be reconciled with this alleged early institution, then the ground of the argument might have been changed; the first institution of the Sabbath might have been dated in the wilderness; and the language of my text must have yielded to such reconciling explanation as it would best bear. But I have already shown, satisfactorily I hope, that the silence in question is susceptible of a full and fair explanation; and that it, therefore, affords no ground of objection against the position, that my text re-

cords not only the reason, but also the time, of the institution.

Let us now see whether the passage from Exodus, just read, does not also favor the same position. If it does, it will leave the ground of my argument clear, without the fragment of a difficulty in the way of the conclusion, that the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the Creation of man.

What, then, is the amount of this passage from Exodus? The Israelites murmured for want of bread. God gave them Manna; but directed them to gather, except on the sixth day, for present necessity only. On what they probably supposed to be that sixth day, therefore, the people, according to previous direction, gathered twice the usual quantity. The rulers of the congregation, probably in doubt whether this was the true sixth day or not, repaired to Moses for explanation. He informed them that the morrow was "the rest of the Sabbath;" and that, therefore, the TRUE sixth day for the double gathering HAD been rightly selected. He directed the people, accordingly, to save half their sixth-day gathering for that season, as none would then be found in the field. Some, however, seemingly curious to know whether there would not be Manna on the seventh day likewise, went out to the field. At this, God was displeased; although, so far as appears, he had not, on that occa-

sion, specially prohibited labor on the Sabbath. Immediately, therefore, he inquired of Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" evidently referring to commandments and laws which had been long in existence, and which they had been in the habit of disobeying. "See," he adds, "Because the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days."

Now, I ask, does this look at all like the first institution of a great, public ordinance, to be observed by a whole people throughout their generations, and to be observed with splendid ceremonies and costly rites? Had any notice been given that such an institution was then about to be established? Was any surprise expressed by either the rulers or the people, when informed that the morrow was to be the Sabbath, as though some new thing were coming? Did they make any inquiries concerning the nature, objects, or duties of that new, that before unknown, season? No. None of these things. The whole circumstances of the occasion do not at all favor the idea that here we find the account of the first institution of the Sabbath.

Let us then take another view, and suppose that the Sabbath was actually instituted at the Creation of man; that a knowledge of its existence and some

idea of its nature and duties were still kept alive among the Israelites ; but that, from their long, debasing bondage in Egypt, or from criminal carelessness, they had become uncertain as to the precise day on which it was to be observed. Do the circumstances connected with the gathering of the Manna, fit in with this view of the origin of the Sabbath ? I answer ; evidently they do. The whole transaction bears convincing proof that the people were familiar with the division of time into weeks by the recurrence of a seventh day. The people, according to direction, gathered a double quantity of food on what they probably supposed to be the day previous to the Sabbath. The rulers, after informing Moses what the congregation had done, went away satisfied, without reply or inquiry, when reminded that the true day of rest was at hand. And finally, when some went out on the seventh day to look for Manna, though God on that occasion had issued no special injunction against labor on the Sabbath, yet he was displeased, and, through Moses, addressed them with the severe rebuke : “ How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws ? ” as though this were not the first instance of their disregard for the Sabbath. The whole circumstances of this transaction, I repeat, do agree with the position, that the Sabbath had then been long in existence. The gathering of the Manna

was doubtless regulated with reference to an institution, which, having its origin in a previous age, was at that time particularly called to their remembrance.

In ascertaining the period when the Sabbath was instituted, I have been somewhat minute in my examinations; because on this point rests much of the force of the remaining argument for the perpetuity and universal obligation of the institution. It is certain that the Sabbath was instituted either at the Creation of man, or at this gathering of the Manna; because at this latter period it was unquestionably in existence; and if not instituted then, its origin must be referred to the former era; inasmuch as there is no intervening period at which it can possibly be dated. If it was first instituted at the gathering of the manna, then there will be some plausible reasons for considering it more specially a Jewish ordinance; though, even then, there will be evidence sufficient to convince impartial thinkers, that it was intended to endure to the end of time, in all its holy distinctiveness of character, a Christian as well as a Jewish institution. But, if it was instituted immediately after the Creation of man, then all further argument in favor of making it a specially Jewish institution is at an end. It was designed for Adam and for all his posterity. It stands at the top of time, a day to be



religiously observed by all who should pass, with a knowledge of it, down the course of time.

Such being the true state of this question, I am willing, Christian reader, to leave it with your own judgment. After the observations which have been made, can you feel any hesitation in deciding at which of the two specified periods the Sabbath was actually instituted? For one, I acknowledge that the case appears too plain to admit a doubt. It was instituted at the time specified in my text. It was the first of God's acts after closing his labors of creation. Coming immediately after the formation of man, it justifies the Saviour's observation to the Pharisees; "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." It was founded on that authoritative example of God's holy rest, in which all mankind are equally interested, by which they are all equally bound, and which is held up for imitation, so far as it may be known, to the whole offspring of Adam.

In this conclusion I rest for the present. The argument shall be pursued, if God will, in the next lecture. Carry then in your minds the result at which we have now arrived. The holy rest of the Sabbath was instituted on the morning of time; and, belonging to that period, which, from its sublime elevation, overlooks the whole down-flowing course of history, its authority is divine, its nature is perpetual, and its

obligations spread themselves, with the spreading tide of humanity, over the whole human race. We have a full knowledge of its existence. We are therefore bound to sanctify it truly, and are answerable for the guilt of all our actual violations of its sanctity.

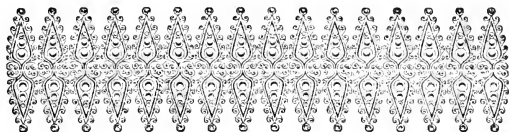


LECTURE III.

EXODUS XX. 8-11.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”





### III.

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IN the remarks already offered on the subject of the Sabbath, I trust it has been made evident to your minds, that the true era of its institution was immediately after the Creation of man; and that hence it must be allowed to be, not only divine in its origin, but also perpetual in its nature, and universal in its obligations. My remarks, however, have thus far been mostly in answer to objections against this position. Allow me now to lay before you some more direct proofs of the designed perpetuity and universality of this religious institution.

1. One of these proofs is the simple fact, mentioned in my former text, and inserted again in the fourth commandment, which I have chosen for my present, that "God rested on the seventh day." It

matters not whether this be considered a literal day, according to the present known measure, or the first seventh portion of time, according to some other measure, now unknown. The fact in point is the rest, which God observed immediately after the Creation of man. This is uncontested. Whoever may deny that the Sabbath was actually set apart or sanctified at that time, none who acknowledge the historic authority of the Bible can doubt, that then God actually rested from his work of creation. But why did he thus rest? Because he was wearied with his stupendous operations? This were an impious supposition of Him, who had only to say, "Be light, and light was." No. God rested not by way of repose from fatigue, but by way of repose for example. His intention evidently was to operate, through the authority of example, on the actions and religious interests of men. To this end, his act of resting, which was secret with himself, and would else have remained unknown to us, was made a matter of record, so soon as human life became abridged in such measure as to weaken the certainty of traditionary history. In the nature of the case, we can assign no other reason for either this rest, or its record in the Bible. We are not, however, left to mere deductions from the nature of the case. God has himself instructed us, that his rest carries with it the force and authority of an ex-

ample. In the fourth commandment, he requires those to whom it is addressed to keep the Sabbath day holy ; and the reason assigned for the requisition is this : “ for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : *wherefore*, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” This is but saying, in other words, that he rested for the sake of example, that, upon the divine authority of such example, he might build the great command, which requires a similar holy rest on every Sabbath day.

But, if God rested immediately after the creation of man, for the sake of example, the question at once arises, Upon whom was that example intended to operate ? Upon the Jews alone ? a race of men who did not appear on the earth till after the lapse of twenty-five hundred years, and whose numbers, when reckoned from the first rising of their national star in Abraham, till its final setting amidst the blood and fires which finally overwhelmed Jerusalem, would scarcely be missed if stricken out from that mighty mass of beings who have already lived on the earth ? This, surely, is not conceivable. But if his example was not intended to operate on the Jews alone, if its authority reaches at all beyond the limits of either their ancient land, or their national existence, it reaches over the whole amplitude of earth, and along

the entire tract of time. All men are alike concerned in all the public, general acts of God; and every thing, that is imitable in his example, binds to imitation every creature to whom he makes it known. It is not, then, conceivable that his example of resting on the Sabbath, which is both imitable and designed for imitation, was intended to operate upon one only among the multitudinous family of nations. It was intended for the universal Church of God, from the beginning to the end of time; for all to whose knowledge that example ever has, or ever shall come.

2. Another proof of this position is found in the fact, that the command which enjoins the observance of a Sabbath is enrolled in the Decalogue.

The Decalogue, or ten commandments, is denominated, by way of excellence, "The Moral Law." Now, the moral law of God is his universal will, binding on all men, of all ages. If, then, the fourth commandment be a part of the moral law, as it is of the Decalogue, the Sabbath is unquestionably of perpetual and universal obligation.

But if the fourth commandment be not a part of the moral law, why was it, in connection with the other nine, delivered by the great Jehovah, on the summit of Mount Sinai, and in an audible voice, from the midst of those thunderings and lightnings, of those thick clouds and heavy earthquakes, which, together,



constituted one of the most awful, august, and impressive scenes ever exhibited to the eye and the ear of man : a scene which drew from the awe-struck Israelites this earnest entreaty to Moses : " Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." This utterance of the law by the voice of God, amidst sublime displays of his power, is a distinction conferred on no other part of his revelation to man. Why, then, was the fourth command associated with the other nine in this distinction, if it did not constitute a part of the same moral law to which they belonged ?

Again : if this commandment be not a part of the moral law, why was it associated with the others in that record, which, to use the strong figure of Scripture, God engraved with his own finger on two tables of stone ? This substance, when used as a monument simply, or as a tablet for an engraving, has in all ages been emblematic of the perpetuity intended for the thing thus signalized. And this, evidently, was the design of God in selecting two stone tables as the material for receiving the engraving of his moral law. It was to signify the intended perpetuity of that law ; to intimate, by way of symbol, that it comprised those imperishable principles of truth and duty, on which his throne, his moral government amongst men, was founded. Hence, this act of engraving was repeated

when Moses, indignant at the idolatries of the people during his absence, "cast the first tables out of his hand, and brake them beneath the mount" from which he had just descended. "These tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven on the tables." When, therefore, Moses had broken them before the people, he was commanded to "hew two other tables of stone, like unto the first;" and then God renewedly "wrote on them the words which were in the first tables, which Moses brake." Now, why was this? No other answer can be given than that the tables of stone were originally selected, and the commandments engraven thereon by the finger of God, in order to express their designed pre-eminence over all other precepts, moral or judicial, whatever; to signify that they were intended for perpetual and universal obligation; and that, therefore, rather than this intended perpetuity and universality should fall into oblivion, God condescended to repeat the act of solemnly engraving them, on the substituted tables, with his own finger.

But, if this transaction was intended to express a distinction between the moral law and all other precepts, why, if the fourth command does not belong to that law, was it associated in this distinction with the other nine; and why was it thus associated a

second time with the repetition of such solemn formalities ?

The circumstances, which have been noted, do seem to me to prove beyond all doubt, that the precept, which requires the sanctification of the Sabbath, constitutes an inseparable part of the moral law of God. It was uttered from the top of Sinai, in the same awfully distinct and audible voice of God, amidst the same magnificent displays of divine power and grandeur ; and it was engraven, and renewedly engraven, by the finger of God upon the same significant emblem of perpetuity, with the other parts of that law. All this, too, was the result of previously declared design on the part of God. It was not accident. It was not unmeaning pomp. But it was a preconceived and deeply significant exhibition ; and being so, it is plain that if the fourth commandment had not constituted an inseparable part of the moral law of God, a distinction between it and the other nine would have been expressed in the body of the commandment itself. But no such thing is done. It is couched in the same absolute and universal terms with all the rest. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." "Honor thy father and thy mother." Here is no limitation of the fourth commandment to the Israelites, while all the rest were intended to bind the consciences and

the wills of all who should hear them. It shares with them, as in all their other distinctions, so in this, their entire absoluteness and universality of terms. It belongs, therefore, to their body ; God has inserted it as an integral part into their code.

But, if it belongs to the moral law, it was designed for perpetual and universal observance. It belongs to a system, published amidst that tremendous display of God's majesty and glory which was designed to express its pre-eminence ; to say to the human kind : "This is my law. Let it be obeyed wherever it comes and as soon as it is known."

The only way, in which this conclusion can be evaded, is by saying, that though no distinction is expressed in the body of the fourth command, between that and the others, yet one is implied : that, while the others are all evidently and essentially of a moral character, applying themselves with a binding force to the consciences of all men, so soon as they are made known, this is as evidently of a merely positive kind, carrying with it no inherent authority, and imposing no other obligation than that, which is derived from the single circumstance of its being a command.

To this I answer, in the first place ; it is as easy to see the moral character of the fourth commandment, as it is to discern that of the second. An unenlight-

ened heathen would as soon feel the reasonableness of keeping a seventh day holy to God, as he would the reasonableness of not using images to help his conceptions of God.

In the second place, I reply, the objection is vague. It does not point out, with sufficient clearness, the difference between a positive and a moral command; and therefore is not entitled to consideration. Let us look at this point carefully. What is the difference between a moral and a positive precept? The two have been defined with great precision and justness, as follows:

“A moral precept is one which regulates the moral conduct of intelligent creatures, and binds the will and the conscience.” “A positive precept is one requiring conduct of moral beings, which, antecedently to its promulgation, was not their duty, and, independently of it, never would have become their duty, but would have remained for ever a matter of indifference.” Thus, the precept which requires us to worship God, is a moral precept; while that which required the Jews to build booths at their Feast of Tabernacles, was a positive precept.

Moral and positive commands being thus distinguished, I ask; to which class does the fourth belong? To answer this inquiry, let us look at the spirit of this command.

It is not, then, that we should spend every seventh day as a mere vacation from ordinary business, but that we should spend a seventh of our time in a special attention to all holy duties. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it HOLY."

The Sabbath contemplates man in his true character, as a dependent and as a sinful creature. As a *dependent* creature, it calls him stately to worship and adore his Creator, by commemorating the stupendous process of Creation. Hence a reason why the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the close of the work of Creation. And hence the fourth command points to the same work as a reason why the Sabbath was instituted at all. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." By pointing man stately to the work of Creation, the Sabbath reminds him that he is a created being, and as such, dependent on his Creator, and bound to worship and adore him. As a *sinful* being, the Sabbath calls man, through the medium of this stated remembrance of God and his works, to overcome the power of sin within himself; to regain and perfect holiness of character; and thus to secure the salvation of his immortal soul. This is the great, ultimate end of the institution. To this end mainly "God blessed and

hallowed it." To this end mainly man was commanded to "keep it HOLY."

Such is the true spirit of the precept, which requires the sanctification of the Sabbath; and in its end or design, as well as in the duties which it requires, it is as highly moral as any other part of the Decalogue.

Should any object here that the duty of contemplating the perfections of God as displayed in the works of creation, and that of acquiring and perfecting holiness of character, though moral duties, yet belong not exclusively to the Sabbath; that they constitute the great end, in attaining which the Sabbath was only a means adapted peculiarly to the Jewish dispensation; and that now other means to the same end have been provided, more congenial with the spirit of the Gospel, I should reply: though these duties do not belong exclusively to the Sabbath, and though under the Gospel we have a great and appropriate variety of means for promoting the worship of God and true holiness of character, yet the Sabbath was not, in this respect, adapted peculiarly to the Jewish economy. It is an institution which, like religion itself, is happily fitted to every state, and to all the circumstances of man; and if the beauties of this, its universal fitness to our condition, shine more conspicuously in one dispensation than in another, it is in the dispensation of the Gospel, and not in that of

the law. There need be no hesitation in saying, that even now, with all our rich variety in the means of grace, no single one of them is practically more necessary to right views of God and to complete holiness of character, than the institution of the Sabbath.

This is not the proper place to examine this point at large. It will, I trust, be made fully evident at a future stage of the discussion. For the present, it must suffice to say, that the Sabbath is the great appointed means of keeping in existence and operation all other means of grace whatever; of preserving alive all our knowledge of God and all our love for his service; that, if it were once universally and permanently abolished, neither the word of God nor the ordinances of his Church, nor yet the ministry of his Gospel, would be long retained in knowledge; and that thus all that is moral in truth and justice, purity and mercy, would become essentially dimmed in its lustre—perhaps blotted from the human mind.

Further: the appointment of a day for the stated observance of a holy rest, is as necessary as the establishment of the Institution itself. For many of its duties are social; they belong to assemblies of men; and if no stated time were fixed for its observance, such is the disinclination of the natural heart to everything holy, that neither these assemblies would be gathered, nor those duties performed.



Further still : it is as essential to the case that this stated time be fixed by divine authority, as that it should be fixed at all. For if it were fixed by human authority, no one would regard it, and thus the whole end of the Institution would be lost in the depths of human depravity. If the appointment were left to men, they would not be likely to “agree on any particular day; or, if they should agree, it would always be doubtful whether the time chosen by them was the best; and a day appointed by men would have neither authority, sacredness, nor sanction. In a matter of merely human institution, all, who pleased, would dissent; and in such a world as ours, most, if not all, would choose to dissent. The whole duty therefore, would be left undone, and the glorious perfections of God, as unfolded in the works of Creation, would be wholly forgotten.”

From the distinction, which has been drawn between moral and positive precepts, and from the view, which has now been taken of the spirit of the fourth commandment, I come back to the inquiry; to which of the two classes of precepts does it belong? Is it a positive, or is it a moral precept?

“A positive precept,” it will be remembered, “creates a duty: it requires of moral beings conduct, which, independently of the precept, was not, and never would have become, their duty, but would have

remained for ever a matter of indifference." Is this the character of the fourth commandment? Does it create a duty? Is the duty of hallowing a seventh of our time to God—that God from whom we have received our very being—a duty which would not have existed without the publication of this precept; but would have remained for ever a matter of indifference to the human race? This cannot, for a moment, be admitted. The fourth commandment is not a merely positive or ceremonial precept.

Look, then, at moral precepts. They, it will be remembered, "regulate the moral conduct of intelligent beings; and bind the conscience and the will." Is not this the character of the fourth commandment? Do not the relations, from which its duties arise, those of dependent and sinful beings, embrace all men, and reach through all time? Are not the duties themselves, which grow out of those relations, everywhere, and at all times, binding on the conscience and the will? And, from the indispensably necessary connection, which we have shown to exist between these duties, and a divinely instituted day of Rest, is not this also, whenever and wherever known, similarly binding on all men, in all ages? Is not the fourth, then, as properly a moral precept as any other part of the Decalogue? Of course, nothing can be more essentially moral than a devout contemplation of the

Works, and a holy love for the perfections of God ; or than deliverance from sin and perfection in holiness. But, if these Ends are thus pre-eminently moral, are not the Means also, by which they are secured, and without which they would not be attained ? In a strong sense, they are. The duties and the design of the Sabbath are pre-eminently moral. The connection between these and the day itself is indispensably necessary. The precept, therefore, which enjoins an observance of them all, is pre-eminently a moral precept.

So really without weight is the objection, which would throw the fourth commandment out of the moral law, by the plea that it is merely a positive, or ceremonial precept. Every view of it, from first to last, proclaims the contrary. The previous conclusion is therefore doubly confirmed. The solemn utterance of this precept, in connection with the other nine, in the audible voice of God, and amidst the fearful wonders of Mount Sinai ; its solemn and repeated inscription by the finger of God on the same tables of testimony with the rest ; and finally, its own highly moral nature and spirit, unitedly and undeniably prove, that it is an inseparable part of the moral law of God. It has, with the highest propriety, been associated, in a series of distinctions, which mark no other precepts, with that divine code, which embodies

the leading principles and policy of God's Moral Government among men. This conclusion being reached, it needs not another word to prove that the Sabbath is of perpetual and universal obligation; so far as it is known, it binds the consciences and wills of all men, in all ages. It concerns not the Jew more than the Gentile; nor the Disciple of Moses more than the Disciple of Christ.

Besides the satisfactory proof, then, given in the former Lectures, that the Sabbath was instituted at the Creation of man, we have in this two others, which, even by themselves, are sufficient to show that its character is perpetual, and its obligations universal; but which, when added to the proof of the former point, are sufficient to reduce my conclusion to one of the clearest of moral certainties.

In view of this conclusion, how amazing is the fact, that men can hear the fourth commandment read every Sabbath day, and yet suffer its words of authority to pass by them, "like the idle wind, which they regard not!" Most men, when they hear such commandments read, as the third, the sixth, the eighth and the ninth, have an inward feeling of respect and reverence for their authority; and would shudder at the idea of being thought guilty of their violation. But, when they hear the fourth, it remains in their mind as long as it is on their ear; and then passes

off into forgetfulness amidst the most reckless breaches of its high and sacred spirit. So powerful is the sway of custom, when favored by the prevalence of erroneous opinion and false notions. Be it ours, then, to "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Let us break loose from the tyranny of popular error and popular practice on this subject. The Sabbath is God's day. Let us tremble at the thought of its violation. God asks at our hands the consecration of its hours. Let us beware of the curse, which is hanging over its wanton or its careless desecration. The same authority, which enacted the sixth, enacted also the fourth. The same hand, which framed the one into the Moral Law, fitted the other by its side. The same vigilance, therefore, which watches over the former, watches over the latter; and the same powerful Justice, which avenges the infraction of the one, will avenge the breach of the other. "Remember, then, the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." When this precept strikes our ear, let it reach also our heart. Its words are words of inspiration. Its place is in the Law, which will finally judge the world! Aye! when we come to be judged, we shall look up and behold written, as on a mighty scroll, hung high in the sight of assembled nations, those eternal rules of right and of duty, according to which the judgment shall proceed; and there, in the very centre of the gloriously

luminous law, we shall see written this very precept, which perhaps for a whole life we have wantonly violated; "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Then, while we go away to taste in sadness the eternal fruit of disobedience, the children of God shall rise up before His throne, and begin, with great joy, to keep their everlasting Sabbath! Remember: there is always Sabbath in heaven: and if you love not the holy day on earth, you cannot be happy where it shall be kept holy for ever!



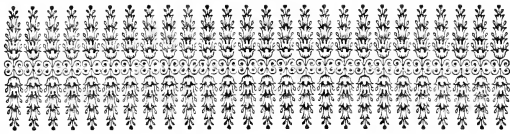
LECTURE IV.

MARK II. 27, 28.

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”







#### IV.

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I HAVE already entered at some length into the argument, which supports the perpetual and universal obligations of the Sabbath ; and at every step it has appeared clear, and, to my mind, convincing. At this point, however, a new inquiry arises. If the Sabbath be not an exclusively Jewish institution, but intended for the Christian dispensation also, why, when the Mosaic economy closed, was the seventh day of the week omitted, and the first observed in its stead ? This question presents the only difficulty which remains to be removed, before I proceed to a more practical view of the whole subject : and this difficulty is important, not because it cannot be removed, but because it has furnished one of the most plausible of the reasons urged by the opponents of the

perpetuity of the institution. By its very plausibility it has caught and satisfied many minds less disposed to think justly than to live carelessly.

I. Dr. Paley, who, however, must be excepted from the remark just made, who was in general a most just thinker, but whose opinions, when erroneous, have for that very reason been the more mischievous, contends, that "if the command, by which the Sabbath was instituted, be binding on Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties, and the penalties; in none of which it is received." But this is evidently an unsound position. It supposes what is not true, that the day on which the Sabbath is observed, the duties to which it may be appropriated, and the penalties by which its observance is enforced, are unalterable parts of the institution itself. The unsoundness of this position will, I trust, be apparent on a little attentive consideration.

1. The penalty, by which the Sabbath was enforced on the observance of the Jews, was temporal death. This, surely, forms no part of the institution itself. The penalty, by which the fifth commandment also was enforced on the observance of the Jews, was temporal death: the disobedient child was ordered to be stoned. And yet we are under this commandment. Are we under its penalty also? Must our irreverent and disobedient children be stoned to death? No.

Because the precept and the penalty have no necessary connection. We may be laid under the one, yet not under the other. The same is true of the fourth commandment. The precept, and the penalty by which it is enforced, are not inseparable. The penalty was peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation. The precept was of universal authority and of perpetual obligation. The former, therefore, was dropped when that dispensation ceased. The latter was retained, as common to all dispensations. Sabbath breaking, under the Gospel, is threatened, and if persevered in will be visited, like all other sins, not with present, but with future inflictions.

2. The duties of the Sabbath are, in like manner, separable from the Sabbath itself. There are indeed some duties, which are of universal importance and obligation, and never to be separated from the day allotted them. But then, evidently, the day may from time to time have been allotted to other and additional duties, which were merely temporary, both in their importance and in their obligation. And this, in fact, has been the case. Under the Patriarchal dispensation, the duties of the Sabbath were few and simple; consisting, probably, of a commemoration of the great work of Creation, with religious exercises of prayer, perhaps of sacrifice. Under the Mosaic dispensation these duties were much increased. Rites of sacrifice,

both ordinary and extraordinary, were multiplied ; the commemoration of the Exodus as well as that of Creation was enjoined ; the weekly ceremony of the "shew-bread" was added ; and, as the dispensation waxed old, a long list of ceremonies was brought in, till the Sabbath became encumbered with duties almost too numerous for observance by even the most scrupulous. Under the Christian dispensation other duties still have been added ; the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the Christian sacraments. All this shows that the duties, to which the Sabbath may from time to time be appropriated, are not inseparable parts of the institution itself. When, therefore, it is remembered that the Jewish economy was emphatically one of ceremonies, typical of something to come, it will at once be perceived, that when it was brought to a close by the ushering in of a new and better dispensation, all those ceremonies would of course be dropped, and that those duties of the Sabbath, which were designed to be peculiar to the Jewish church, could not pass with the Sabbath itself into the Christian Church. The Sabbath itself, like the Church of God and the ministry, and worship thereof, with which it is inseparably connected, is common to all dispensations. But the numerous rites of sacrifice, the ceremony of "shew-bread," and others of traditional origin, were designed for but one

dispensation. With it they began, continued, and ended ; and we can only wonder that a writer of generally great acuteness should have been so far biased by his theory as to have lost sight of a distinction so palpable as that, which has now been pointed out.

3. We come now to the other part of his position ; that “ if the command, by which the Sabbath was instituted, be binding upon Christians, it must be binding as to the day.” This is the point to be examined in the present discourse ; and we are in some measure prepared for it by the brief notice, which we have taken of the other two. The institution, as a stated season of holy rest, is evidently separable from the particular day in the seven, on which it is observed. “ Six days,” says the fourth commandment, “ shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath,” or rest. Six days of labor for this life, followed by a seventh of rest for holy purposes, is the main point of order and proportion sought to be established, so far as time is concerned. Six days shalt thou labor ; on the seventh thou shalt rest. The Christian Sabbath is to us the seventh day, as much as the Jewish Sabbath was to them. The institution consists of two parts ; a holy rest to God, and the day, on which it is observed. The former, holy rest, constitutes the body of the ordinance, and is unchangeable. The latter, a day for its observance, is a neces

sary adjunct, but susceptible of change, by divine authority, from one day of the week to another.

II. By way of preparing for a further illustration of this change of the day under the Christian dispensation, let us a moment contemplate the aspect, in which Christ himself looked on the institution. My present text has been regarded by some as a kind of intimation, that the Sabbath was to be done away under the Christian dispensation. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." A few words however will, I think, show that it has a directly contrary bearing.

The occasion on which the text was spoken was this. The indigent disciples of Christ, while following him, probably on his way to the synagogue, happened to pass, on the Sabbath, by a corn-field; and being destitute of other means to satisfy the strong demands of hunger, ventured to pluck and eat some of the ears as they passed. For this, as an alleged breach of the Sabbath, the Pharisees rebuked them. Christ however immediately vindicated their conduct, by reference to the conduct of David on a well-known occasion; and then added the words of the text: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

In this language he taught the Pharisees, that they had put a wrong construction on that ceremonial law, which defined the duties of the Sabbath under the Jewish dispensation; that this law, being ceremonial, ought to be observed by the Jews on all ordinary occasions; but that, on occasions extraordinary, when absolute necessity or mercy required, its requisitions might be dispensed with; and that he was clothed with full authority, as "Lord of even the Sabbath day," to define and limit its duties, the manner in which it ought to be observed. The Pharisees seemed to suppose that man was made for the Sabbath, or that the Sabbath was the superior object in importance; and therefore must be observed with the utmost strictness, whatever might be the consequences. He taught them that the Sabbath was made for man, or that man was the superior object in importance; and that therefore, when his real welfare must necessarily be sacrificed by a strict observance of the institution, such observance might for the time be dispensed with.

The text thus explained virtually recognizes the institution of the Sabbath at the era of the Creation of man. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." In other words, man was not created for the purpose of honoring the Sabbath; but when created, in order to secure his religious welfare

the Sabbath was made for him. It was instituted, not for the Jew alone, but for man, for the spiritual benefit of the race.

Moreover, when Christ, on such an occasion, and with such a design, calls himself "Lord of the Sabbath," instead of intimating that he was about to exercise his Lordship in abolishing it, he rather declares his intention to continue it, in all its perpetual authority and obligations. The very act of authoritatively regulating the duties of the Sabbath, was an authoritative recognition of the institution itself. It was, in fact, an official purification from abuse of that which he designed to retain for proper and perpetual observance. The idea that he was merely defining the manner, in which a Jew ought to observe the Sabbath, while at the same time he intimated his intention of setting it aside under the Gospel, is evidently at variance with the spirit of the passage. If the Sabbath was made for man, we can see no reason why it should be confined to the Jew; but we can see abundant reason why it should be stripped of Jewish abuse, and left to stand, in all its simplicity and purity, to the end of time.

Similar remarks will apply to all those cases, in which the Pharisees maliciously endeavored to prove him guilty of breaking the Sabbath. He was not preparing to abolish the institution. But he was evi-



dently disabusing it of its perversions, and preparing it for his own simple and spiritual dispensation.

To show that he intended it for a perpetuity under this dispensation, it will be sufficient to remark that, on several occasions, he recognized the Decalogue as the everlasting moral law of God, without specially excepting, but rather virtually including, the fourth commandment.

Thus, when the "lawyer," with an evidently crafty design of inducing him to draw an invidious distinction between the different parts of the Decalogue, asked him: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" he gave him an answer, which was as evidently designed to be a summary of the whole, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." That is: the first four commands regulate our duty to God, and were designed to secure to him supreme love. The last six regulate our duty to man, and were designed to secure to him universal benevolence. Christ virtually answered the designing Pharisee thus: "You wish me to exalt one part of the great moral law above another, that you may entrap me in my speech. But I make no

such distinction. They are *all* the commands of God ; they lie at the foundation of his revealed will in the law and in the prophets ; they are all, therefore, of equal authority ; and, thus far, of equal importance."

Thus, too, when "the young man" asked him, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" he replied, "keep the commandments." When the youth inquired, "which?" he specified the last six. But why? Because they were more important than the first four? or because obedience to them alone would ensure him eternal life? By no means. But because he wished to convince the youthful querist, that he was in imminent danger of losing eternal life by depending for it on his own doings. Hence, when he boasted, "All these have I observed from my youth," Jesus rejoined, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross and follow me." The spirit of the whole passage is this: "Keep all the commandments as of equal authority; but trust for salvation to the keeping of none; for, instead of perfectly obeying all, you have left out the very spirit of what, in the last six of their number, they require towards your neighbor, love for your poor fellow creatures; much more then have you failed, both in spirit and in letter, of your

duty to God, your great and glorious Creator, as enjoined in the first four precepts of their code.”

Thus, then, instead of intimating that the divine authority of the Sabbath was drawing to an end, we see that Christ undeniably recognizes the ten commandments, the fourth not excepted, as the great moral law of God, that imperishable code upon which, as their foundation, rest all his other requirements, whether in the law or in the prophets. Would he have done this, had he designed to abrogate the original character and obligation of the Sabbath? Unquestionably not. He knew that the precept which enjoins the observance of the day had been enrolled, and repeatedly enrolled, with the other nine, in the Decalogue, amidst every solemnity of circumstance, and every peculiarity of distinction, which could mark its identity with that indestructible law; and, therefore, if he had not intended to transmit the institution, untouched in its divine authority, to the Christian Church, he would have expressly abolished it; he would have erased it from the Decalogue; he would have pointed out its merely casual connection with that universal law, and thus have delivered all succeeding ages from their danger of falling into a gross error concerning the religious institutions of his Church. But this he has not done. On the contrary, he has plainly recognized the authority of the entire

Decalogue. It is, therefore, abundantly evident, that he intended to transmit the Sabbath, untouched in its essential character, to the observance of the Christian Church; and to leave it, unimpaired in its original genius, amongst the institutes of his own Gospel kingdom.

III. We are now ready to examine more particularly the change, or transfer of the Sabbath, from Saturday or the last day of the Jewish week, to Sunday or the first day. It has already been remarked, that the institution consists of two parts; a holy rest to God, and a day on which it is statedly observed; that the former constitutes the body of the institution, and is unchangeable; and that the latter is an adjunct, changeable by the authority or approbation of the institutor.

1. To show that the Sabbath, or holy rest, is thus separable from the day on which it is observed, I remark, first, that it is possible to bring it upon different days of the week, even while observing the strictest calculation of time. Let two Christian circumnavigators leave this port on the same day, pass round the globe in opposite directions, the one against the apparent motion of the sun, the other with it; observe the Sabbath with the strictest accuracy as to time; and at length meet together at the port of their departure: they would find, at meeting, that the Sabbath

of the one was two days asunder from that of the other; the one having lost, and the other having gained a day, by the contrary directions in which they sailed. This is not idle theory. When Pitcairn's Island was visited, a few years since, by an English ship, the crew, who arrived on Saturday, found the islanders keeping Sunday, or the Sabbath. The reason was, that the crew and the islanders had arrived there by sailing in opposite directions. Each observed the most accurate calculation of time on the way; each, therefore, was right in the day appropriated to the Sabbath; and yet each observed it on a different day from the other. They had actually and unavoidably effected a change in the day for observing the stated holy rest.

Suppose, then, instead of two ships, two colonies, the one from Protestant England, the other from Papal France, moving round the world in providentially opposite directions, and reaching, not the same island, but two neighboring islands, belonging to their respective governments, and now for the first time to be occupied by the frame-work of civilized and Christian society: the Sundays of the two colonies would fall on different days; each would be right in its time of keeping Sabbath; and neither could blame the other for the difference, nor require from the other conformity in the point of time. They might, indeed, adjust

the difference by mutual consent ; though, in such adjustment, the one party or the other would be compelled to change its own regularly observed day of rest.

2. I remark, secondly ; it is highly probable that the original reckoning of time, by the notation of every seventh day, was lost before the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt ; and that thus, when the Sabbath was revived at the gathering of the Manna, it was not on the seventh day according to that original reckoning. To this result two circumstances were likely to contribute : the imperfect state of the science of astronomy in its early bearings on the reckoning of time ; and the degrading bondage and heathenish practices, into which the Israelites fell during their long sojourn in Egypt. Hence it is highly probable that a change in the day had actually been made, long before that effected by the introduction of Christianity. The account of the giving of the Manna, as already examined, contains apparent evidence that the Israelites remembered the Sabbath, but had forgotten the day, on which it had formerly been observed. The fourth commandment, as given on Sinai, shows that the Sabbath was originally observed on the seventh day, in remembrance of God's rest from the work of Creation. But the same commandment, as repeated near forty years afterwards, shows that the institution

had been more specially and strictly enjoined on the Israelites in commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm : therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the *Sabbath* day ;" not the *seventh* day, but the *Sabbath* ; probably, by a Divine intimation to Moses, on the day of the week on which their deliverance from Pharaoh had been effected. It is thus highly probable that while, under the Patriarchal dispensation, the Sabbath was observed on the seventh day, in commemoration of God's rest from his works of Creation, under the Mosaic dispensation, it was observed on a different day of the week, commemorative of his people's deliverance from Egyptian bondage ; and that, therefore, under the Christian dispensation, it would be observed on still another day, commemorative of Christ's completed work of redemption, which was at once a new and moral creation, and a deliverance from worse than Egyptian bondage. Thus each of the three great dispensations, under which the Church of God has existed, will be found to have its own day for the Sabbath, and its own reason for the assignment of that day to its observance.

IV. The day of the Sabbath, then, being change-

able, let us look at the reasons why a change should have been made from the day of the Jewish to that of the Christian Sabbath.

1. On this point I remark, first; that, at the introduction of the Gospel, the whole state of the Church of God underwent a revolution. Almost everything was changed in some way, or to some extent. The Mediator was changed; Moses for Christ. The Priesthood was changed; the Aaronic for the Christian. The Law was changed; the Levitical for the Evangelical. The promises were changed; those, which looked apparently to temporal blessings, for those which look expressly to eternal. The worship was changed; the stately and solemn ceremonies of the temple, for the simple and spiritual devotions of the Christian house of prayer. The sacraments were changed; the Passover for the Lord's Supper, and the bloody rite of circumcision for the unbloody laver of Baptism. The whole dispensation was changed; the entire frame-work of the Jewish being taken down and laid aside, and the whole structure of the Christian being constructed and set up in its stead. With all these changes, then, with everything thus made new, is it wonderful that the day of the Sabbath also was changed? The mode of its observance was certainly altered. What reason, then, is there to wonder at the alteration in the time of its observance?



2. I remark, secondly, and as the main part of the reason why the day should have been changed, that the events, which gathered around the close of the work of Redemption, were such as to render the change in the highest sense proper. Why was the Sabbath originally fixed upon the seventh day? Because on that day God rested from the work of Creation, and ushered in the first age, or dispensation, of his Church. And if, as we have seen it is highly probable, when the Sabbath was revived in the wilderness, the old seventh day had been lost, and a new one was substituted: of what event was this new day of the Sabbath commemorative? That glorious event, in which God rested, or ceased from his work of delivering his people from the power of their haughty enemies in Egypt; and thus ushered in the second age, or dispensation, of his Church. On what day, then, and in commemoration of what event, should the Christian Sabbath have been fixed, but the day and the event, in which the Lord rested from his work of a new and spiritual creation, the work of delivering mankind from the thralldom of sin; and thus ushered in the third age, or dispensation of his Church?

That this is a satisfactory reason for the change of the day, on which the Sabbath was observed, will be evident on a reference to the superior importance and glory of the work of redemption, over that of either

Creation or the Deliverance from Egypt. I remark, then, that in all these works the Agent is the same. The Scriptures of the New Testament afford abundant proof that the Son of God was the Agent, by whom the world was created, and who was with his Church in the wilderness. He, too, is the Agent, by whom the Work of Redemption was completed. In a weekly commemoration, therefore, of all these works, the same Being is honored. But, in the first two, only part of the moral character of God is unfolded. In the last, the whole of that character is displayed, and that in its most glorious effulgence. Moreover, by the work of Creation, man was merely brought into being; and by the deliverance from Egypt, he was merely redeemed from temporal bondage. But by the work of Redemption, he is brought into a new and spiritual being, and redeemed from the certainty of eternal ruin. And again; the work of Creation is a subject of change and decay; the very earth which we inhabit shall be burned up; and the deliverance from Egypt was but a type, which vanished at the appearance of its antitype. But, the work of Redemption will be gathering brighter and brighter glories around itself and around the character of God, throughout eternity. With the fullest propriety, therefore, was the day, on which Christ "entered into his rest" from the labors of Redemption,

the day of his Resurrection, the first day of the week, set apart, thenceforward, as the day for the weekly Sabbath, or holy Rest to God. It is the most glorious of all the Divine works ; and standing at the head of this Dispensation, as each of the others does at the head of its own, it not only might, but ought to, have been commemorated by fixing the Sabbath on the day of its occurrence.

But, there are other events, which stand near the close of the work of Redemption ; the crucifixion of our Lord, and his resting in the grave. And these render the old day as unfit for a Christian Sabbath, as that just mentioned renders the new day appropriate. From the beginning, the Sabbath was a festival, a day of holy joys. But, on the old Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, the crucified Body of Christ lay in the sepulchre, while his Infant Church was wrapped in the sackcloth of fasting and mourning. From that period, therefore, it became an unfit day for the celebration of a weekly Sabbath. On the next, or first Day, however, Christ rose from the dead, by divine power, and thereby reanimated his Church with joy and gladness. From that moment, therefore, the first of the week became a fit day for the celebration of this feast of Rest, both on account of the glad event, which happened on it, and because

of the pre-eminent glory of the work, which that event completed.

That this was the reason why the first Christians observed this and not the old day of the Sabbath, appears from the most ancient ecclesiastical writers. Hence Barnabas, who lived during the Apostolic age, says in his Epistle ; “ We joyfully celebrate the eighth day,” or first of the week, “ in memory of the resurrection of our Saviour ; because it was on this day that he rose again.” And hence Ignatius, the Martyr, a disciple and friend of the Apostle, “ would have us honor this day of the Lord, this day of the Resurrection, as the most excellent of days.” (Calmet’s Dict., Art. Sab.)

V. Having thus looked at some of the reasons for the change, let us now attend, a moment, to the warrant for it. It has already been said, that when the day of the Sabbath has once been fixed by Divine authority, it requires the sanction of the same authority to effect a change. This sanction may be given in either of two ways ; by express precept, or by clear example and approbation. That we have no express precept for the change is readily granted : and the reason why we have not will soon be given. But we have a clear example and approbation, equivalent in authority to an express precept. This example and approbation begin with Christ himself.

The time during which his crucified body lay in the sepulchre, was, in great part, the seventh day of the week ; and for the whole of that day, his disciples were in deep mourning and fasting. Thenceforward the seventh was never regarded as a proper day for Christian observance ; but, immediately after his resurrection, Christ began to transfer to the first, by his own example, all the sacred duties of his own Evangelic Sabbath. Hence, on that day, “the first day of the week,” when the disciples were gathered together, at even, Jesus, the risen and the glorified, came into their assembly, breathed on them the Holy Ghost, and invested them with the commission of his Gospel Ministry. Hence, on the eighth day afterwards, or next “first day of the week,” they were assembled again ; and again Jesus vouchsafed his presence in the midst of them. Hence, six weeks later still, on the first day of the week, the day of Pentecost, “they were all with one accord in one place,” and Jesus shed on his assembled Church the Holy Ghost, to the conversion of three thousand souls. Hence, too, during the ministry of Paul, “the disciples,” following the now clearly intimated will of their Master, “came together upon the first day of the week, to break bread,” or administer the Lord’s Supper, at which time the Apostle preached to them the word of the Gospel. Hence, he instructed the Co-

rinthians to "lay by in store on the first day of the week," or to collect alms for needy saints, because their stated religious assemblies on that day afforded a favorable opportunity for that charity. And hence, the Apostle John, when he was about to receive the Revelations of Christ, "was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," the day on which the Lord rose from the dead—the first day of the week—a day already grown into notoriety, and crowned with its appropriate name.

In all these facts, we have satisfactory proof that the first day of the week was, immediately and uniformly, after the resurrection of Christ, set apart as a weekly Christian Sabbath, and thus set apart with most decided expressions of Divine approbation. For the author of this change was the Son of God himself, followed by those inspired Apostles, by whose divinely imparted authority many things in the first organization of the Christian Church were established; the Christian assemblies on the first day of the week were honored by the repeated presence of Christ and three of his most solemn acts; and the day, thus set apart, was signalized by the conversion at one time of three thousand souls, and at others, by the stated assemblies of Christians for the holy Communion, and the preaching of the Gospel. Now, we ask, if the Sabbath, under the Christian dispensation, ought to have been observed on the seventh, and not on the

first day of the week, why was the former never signaled by Christians after the resurrection of Christ : while the latter was so frequently noticed and so solemnly honored, by both Christ and his disciples ? No satisfactory answer can be given. The facts, which have been mentioned, are a loud expression of the Divine approbation, ratifying the removal of the Sabbath, under the Christian dispensation, from the seventh to the first day of the week.

But there is another set of facts tending to the same result. When God originally established the Institution, he “blessed the Sabbath day ;” and afterwards, Christ instructs us that “the Sabbath was made for man ;” or blessed to his benefit. In beautiful accordance with this, the Institution since the Resurrection of Christ, and, as observed, on the first day of the week, has been blessed as an instrument and a season of the richest, most copious, mercies to mankind. On this day, more specially than on any other, has God refreshed his Church by the effusion of his Spirit ; blessed his word to the salvation of unnumbered multitudes ; and set forwards, towards their result, the kingdom and the glory of Christ. If, then, it has been proved, as I think it clearly has, that the Sabbath is an ordinance of perpetual obligation, designed for observance in the Christian Church, the fact now mentioned is an undeniable and long-pro-

tracted expression of the Divine approbation in favor of the transfer of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. For, we must admit, either that the transfer was made with full Divine approbation, or that God has, for nigh eighteen hundred years, bestowed marked blessings and honor on an act, in which the whole Christian Church in the most favored age of the world, have concerted together to alter a fundamental Divine Institution. The latter part of the alternative is an utterly inadmissible supposition ; the former, therefore, is true. The change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, was at first introduced by Christ and his Apostles, and has ever since met with a full Divine approval and sanction.

VI. Having thus shown that the Sabbath, as a *holy Rest*, is *unchangeable*, while the day, on which it is observed, has been, under a Divine regulation, the subject of change ; having also stated the reasons for this change, and the warrant, under which it has been made, I come now, to one closing inquiry,—the only one, which leaves a shadow of difficulty on this branch of the great subject. Why, if there was to be a Sabbath in the Christian Church, and if the day for its observance was to be changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, why is there no mention of



this in the writings of the New Testament ; no precept either enjoining or justifying the change ?

To this question, which really presents the whole difficulty of the case, I reply : No precept enjoining the change was given, for the very reason, evidently, that Divine Wisdom saw it was not best to issue such a precept. This, upon looking below the surface, appears wondrously and beautifully clear.

The Jews were God's chosen, covenant people, and had been the subjects of God's wonderful dealings for long generations. It was therefore desirable that as many of them as possible should embrace and honor their Messiah and his Gospel. Hence, his first prof- fers of eternal life were to them ; and hence, the Apostles were restrained from going to the heathen, so long as there appeared a shadow of hope that a further number of Jews would receive the Gospel. But they were exceedingly prejudiced against this Gospel, and against the Messiah, who preached it. Look at the whole history of his life, and see how often they were enraged against him for his supposed violations of their Sabbath, and how eager they were to put him to death for the same. What, then, would have been the effect on their feelings toward him, and on their own eternal salvation, had he attempted by express precept, to change the day of their most re- verenced Institution ? Judge by their conduct towards

him, on the occasion of his uttering the text, when the consequence of infringing, even under the pressure of necessity, on one of the duties, which the Ceremonial Law had connected with the day, was to draw forth against him their bitterest persecution. Judge by an analogous case, growing out of the Apostles' attempt to change the obsolete rite of Circumcision for its evangelical substitute, Baptism. The result was a serious contention and division among the Jewish converts, which could be composed by nothing short of an Apostolical Council. Nothing can be more evident than that, if either Christ or his Apostles, had published an express precept for the change of day, on which the Sabbath was observed, it would have embittered against them and against the Gospel the feelings of the whole nation, and thus have prevented the salvation of many, who afterwards repented and believed.

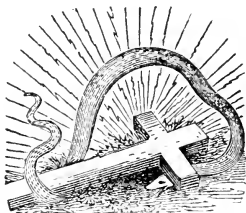
But look now, at the beautiful operation of the mode in which the change was actually effected. It was exactly analogous to the change of the Passover for the Lord's Supper; and that of Circumcision for Baptism, at least after the Council just mentioned had adjusted the difficulty which arose. The Jewish converts clung with eager fondness to their old but dying rites and ceremonies. They were willing to observe the Lord's Supper, and Baptism, provided

they might be allowed still to observe the Passover and Circumcision. They were also willing to observe the Lord's Day, provided they might be permitted to observe their ancient Sabbath likewise. All these things the Apostles wisely permitted them to do, and occasionally mingled with them in it. Thus the Christian Sacraments and Sabbath gradually, silently and inoffensively, grew into credit and reverence ; till, finally, the mighty judgments of God came over the nation, swept their loved city and their lingering tribes from their ancient resting-place, and left their empty rites and Sabbath without observers, to drop away and vanish from the new and vigorous fabric of the Christian Institutions, which then, with its included Sacraments and Sabbath, rose peacefully and unopposed into universal observance in the Church.

Instead of finding matter for difficulty and doubt, then, in the absence of express precept on this point, I find in it the strongest reasons for satisfaction. I see in this withholding of precept, the very hand of God. I see in it bright traces of infinite wisdom and mercy, adopting a course, by which the day of the Sabbath was finally changed, consistently with the best good, the eternal salvation of many of God's ancient people. This course was that of a silent change, gradually introduced through the power of inspired

example, and the force of noiselessly growing custom ; a change which fixed itself more and more securely in the affections and habits of the whole Christian Church ; till, finally, before the Apostles were all called to their peaceful rewards, it became triumphant. "The Lord's Day" received its appropriate name, and Jesus stood at the Head of not only His spiritual Body, the Church, but also its primary Institution, THE SABBATH OF THE FIRST DAY.

In the next Lecture I purpose to enter, by God's permission, on the consideration of a less argumentative, and more practical, part of our subject.

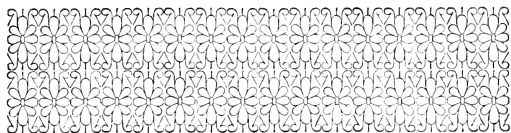


LECTURE V.

EXODUS XX. 8.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”





v.

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HAVING, in the last Lecture, seen the reasons and the manner of the change from the Jewish to the Christian Sabbath, we are now prepared to enter on a more practical consideration of the whole subject. My object, in proceeding, will be, to take up the institution, as of Divine authority and perpetual obligation, and to show its true character, as associated and identified with the being and welfare of the Christian Church. I shall retain the use of the word, Sabbath, because its meaning, as a sanctified REST, is as appropriate to us as it was to the Jews ; and the institution is to us, as it was to them, a beautiful type of the REST, the SABBATH, which "still remaineth to the people of God." While, in common speech, we may use the term, *Sunday*, and, in ordinary writing,

may, with the highest propriety, adopt the phrase, "*The Lord's Day*," it would seem more proper in Lectures, like the present, where the institution is considered as but ONE, to apply to it, throughout, no more than ONE name ; meaning thereby, THE CHRISTIAN REST ; THE SABBATH OF THE LORD'S DAY.

The words quoted from Exodus xx. 8, comprise the general precept of the fourth commandment. This commandment is part of the moral law of God ; of that divine code, which God, in most special manner, engraved on tables of stone ; of those universal statutes, which, on Mount Sinai, he clothed with the highest possible authority. Our obligation, therefore, to sanctify the Sabbath, is the same with that which binds us to have and to worship but one God, or to abstain from the crimes of murder, theft, also witness, and covetousness. It is simply the obligation to obey God's command. Any other doctrine than this on the subject must be founded on partial views of the true nature of the Sabbath, and upon a partial estimate of the dreadful moral evil of either its abuse, or its neglect.

But, if such be our obligation to sanctify the Sabbath, it must be a matter of the highest importance to have a clear idea of the duties, by which it may be sanctified. To this point, therefore, I shall now address myself. And may the Spirit of the living God



be near, and impress the subject effectually on our minds.

In what, then, does the proper sanctification of the Sabbath consist? In ascertaining this, nothing can be more evident, when we consider the relations between God and man, the nature of religion, and the true design of religious institutions, than the position, that the intended sanctification of the Sabbath requires not only rest from everything worldly and sinful, but also action in everything heavenly and holy. It is characteristic of the Decalogue, that each of its commands is a general precept; including under it a whole class of duties, such as flow naturally from one known principle, and as a conscientious man, therefore, may easily discover. Hence, though the duties, in which the Sabbath should be spent, are nowhere summarily and connectedly enumerated, yet they are by no means left in obscurity or doubt. The general precept is, "Keep the Sabbath holy:" Devote it to holy uses. Here is a known rule of action; and all the duties, which would naturally flow from it, or would render the Sabbath subservient to holiness, are included and enjoined.

Keeping in mind, then, this leading principle, that the great end of the Sabbath is to promote the interests of holiness, it is evident that this end may be secured by duties of two kinds; positive, and nega-

tive : or by the performance of some things, and the avoidance of others.

I. First, then, the *positive* duties of the Sabbath. These may be distributed into Public Worship, private religion, and works of necessity and mercy.

1. The object of *public worship*, in all its duties, is ; to secure the great design of the Sabbath ; that of contemplating, praising and adoring the infinite perfections of God, as displayed in the works of Creation, and in the wonders of Redemption ; to make public confession of sin ; to offer social supplications for mercy ; to listen to the reading of the sacred Scriptures ; and to receive a preached Gospel and the Christian ordinances. These are all eminently subservient, and indispensably necessary to the interests of holiness. It is morally demonstrable that, if these duties were never performed in public, the influence of religion would scarcely, if at all, be felt in private.

Would you, then, dear reader, uniformly hallow the Sabbath ? Attend conscientiously and constantly to the duties of stated public worship. You are under the most impressive obligation, from the authority of God's commands, and from your participation in the blessings of the Sabbath, to devote this season to holy uses. How serious, then, is the guilt of that individual, who habitually, or frequently, or occasion-

ally, abstains from public worship, without the least possible necessity for such abstinence ; and who, so far, does his part in throwing the commands of God into sinful disregard, and leaving the ministry and ordinances of the Gospel in cold neglect ! And how fearfully is this guilt aggravated, when abstinence from public worship has no other excuse than a love of indolent ease, or that fashionable indifference to the vitality of religion, which can content itself with those occasional morning hours in the sanctuary, which are cloudless and serene !

“ Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is ; ” is an Apostolic injunction ; and, in general, its observance is attended with very slight inconvenience. Suffer me, then, to press it on your more prayerful and unremitting consideration. Never suffer slight causes on the Sabbath to keep you from the house of God. The delinquency is always of dangerous tendency by way of example to others ; and is many times connected, as a kind of leading sin, with fatal consequences to the delinquent himself. To how many awful desecrations of this sacred rest, to how much blindness and hardness of heart, and consequent ruin of soul, and to what crush of even temporal interests and reputation, have men been led by needlessly, and, at first, occasionally, refraining their feet from the way that

leads to the sanctuary ! If the confession that such has been the cause of their ruin be not made, as it too frequently is, on the eve of an ignominious death ; still the result is quite as sad, when the conviction, that such is the fact, is felt at the close of an irreligious life. I entreat you, beloved reader, never let the principle of occasional abstinence from public worship, under the plea of some slight inconvenience, influence either your feelings or your conduct. I conjure you to take this stand, as you hope to appear guiltless before the judgment-seat of Christ of a profanation of God's holy Sabbath. Nothing but positive necessity or plain impropriety should hinder your presence in the sanctuary, whenever the day of rest calls you to the exercise of public worship. What a grave satire is it upon all pretensions to the Christian name, when the customary visit to the theatre, or to some other place of evening entertainment, is made, in a state of health, or under circumstances of weather, which would be deemed an ample apology for leaving vacant your seat at church !

2. But the duties of public worship may all be outwardly attended, and yet the Sabbath remain entirely unsanctified. To these, therefore, must be added the duties of private religion. These consist in serious and habitual preparation for the public exercises of the day ; strict self-examination ; acts of deep self-

abasement over discovered sin ; close watchfulness against known infirmities, and against the intrusion of the world into the mind ; secret prayer and devout meditation on the character and works of God, on the high things of eternity, and especially on the rich mercies of redemption ; careful study of the divine oracles, particularly of those portions which have been explained in the public exercises of the day ; an endeavor thoroughly to understand what is revealed, and practically to incorporate what is understood with the moral affections and principles of the soul ; in short, all those secret exercises of the mind, which are calculated to give effect to the duties of public worship, to bring the soul to a knowledge of the way of salvation, to break the power of its unholy affections, to form and fortify it in gracious habits, and to set it forwards towards that perfect stature in holiness, which constitutes a perfect preparation for heaven.

These duties of private religion are of the utmost importance to a thorough sanctification of the sacred rest. If they were uniformly and devoutly performed by every member of the church, how soon would this season be changed from a day of listless, heavy stupidity, to a day of sweet and refreshing delights ! And how quickly would the interests of religion be raised from their ordinarily low, motionless and dispiriting condition, to a state of high and heart-cheer-

ing prosperity ! But, so long as these duties are neglected, too much, it is to be feared, by Christians themselves, and altogether by those who are yet out of Christ, what more can be expected than that the duties of public worship, even though attended with the utmost constancy, will be robbed of their appropriate blessings and delights ; the remaining intervals of time be passed in idle vacancy, in worldly moods of thought, or in sinful courses of action ; and the souls of multitudes be lulled and locked in those fatal slumbers, which will convey them, amidst the dreams and the hurried flight of time, into a seriously waking, but sadly unblest, eternity !

Let, then, the private duties of religion occupy you much, whenever this season of spiritual harvest, as well as of spiritual rest, returns. Engage in them with fervency of mind. Be as much as possible “in the Spirit on this, the Lord’s Day.” And, while it passes by, set the whole current of your thoughts, affections and wills, with all practicable steadfastness, towards God and heaven.

In the right performance of these public and private duties consists the chief part of the positive sanctification of the Sabbath ; and to the godly man, such performance brings the chief part both of the profit and the pleasure of this delightful season. Bear in mind, then, that, if you have no real, heartfelt delight

in these duties ; if you esteem the performance of them a kind of tax on your freedom, and feel pleasure when they have once more passed by ; or if, while engaged in them, you are habitually spiritless and formal, and, when the routine is finished, can contentedly forget the whole ; your hearts are assuredly not right with God ; you have never yet kept a Sabbath holy ; but are under the guilt of as many of its profanations as you have spent weeks of accountability !

3. But there is another class of positive duties, for which the Sabbath, even when properly sanctified in the public and private exercises of religion, often affords sufficient leisure. I refer to works of necessity and of mercy. For works of pure necessity, the nature of the case makes allowance. For works of mercy the example of Christ affords warrant. On this part of the subject, however, I shall make but few remarks.

With regard to works of necessity, then, be cautious that a selfish and a worldly heart do not deceive you. "Set God always before you ;" and then be sure you never fancy a work necessary when it is only profitable, or pleasant.

But, as to works of mercy ; whenever they come in your way, especially when they press on your religious and benevolent sympathies, you may freely

perform them ; provided, they do not subtract from the time necessary for the great duties of public and private religion. Works of this kind require not much search. Enough will lie in your way to occupy at least those moments of the Sabbath, which might otherwise be spent in sin. If neither poor nor sick call for your religious charities, or your religious counsel, still there are always, in the Sabbath School, immortal minds to be instructed and saved ; in the family circle, precious jewels to be polished for a future crown of rejoicing ; and in every department of society, prodigals in sin to be reclaimed to holiness and God. And surely, if the healing of a “withered hand on the Sabbath-day” were an acceptable work of mercy in the Saviour, an endeavor to be instrumental in cleansing a leprous soul on that day will prove acceptable service in a disciple of the Saviour. If, then, from the faithful discharge of your public and private duties, you still find a remnant of unoccupied time on the Sabbath, suffer it not to lie waste on your hands, so long as you have such interesting objects at your doors, in the care of which you may fill that time with holy service and with heavenly delights.

II. But I have said the duties of the Sabbath are both positive and negative ; or that it requires not only things to be done, but also things to be avoided.



In these latter duties, we get a fuller and a clearer idea of that REST, which enters into the nature of the Sabbath. Let us, for a moment, examine them.

1. The proper sanctification of the day, then, requires us to abstain from the indulgence of impure and worldly thoughts.

Voluntary indulgence of such thoughts is totally subversive of both the attainment and the increase of holiness. How can the Sabbath be kept holy, how can the soul be either made, or preserved holy, so long as sin and the world are permitted to thrust themselves into the mind at the very moment when it is, if ever, most necessary that they should be thrust out? The thoughts are the issues of the soul itself. If they are wrong on the Sabbath, all will be wrong; no matter how much, in outward seeming, all may appear right. A sanctified control of the thoughts, like the sanctified government of the tongue, is one of the most difficult attainments in religion. Here, then, is the very point, at which to begin a proper sanctification of the Sabbath. Here, too, it is to be feared, is the very point at which a most awful failure in duty begins to prevail. How many times, not only in the familiar relaxations of home, but even amidst the solemn worship of the sanctuary, do immortal souls find their thoughts running rapidly into the scenes and occupations of this lower world: one

thinking complacently of dress and personal charms; another, of visiting and rounds of amusement; another, of schemes for business and prospects of gain; and another, of plans for secret iniquity, or designs of open sin! What makes this a deep profanation of the Sabbath is, partly, the voluntary indulgence of these unholy thoughts, when they have once entered the mind; but chiefly, the building up, in the affections, during the week, of those idols of vanity and pleasure, of gain or of guilt, which strongly preoccupy, and, therefore, on the Sabbath, irresistibly possess, the thoughts and feelings of the soul. This evil must be cut up by the root, or it will never die. The heart must be changed, and its affections taken off from mere personal beauty, and its ornaments, from earthly pleasures and amusements, from worldly gain and interests. In no other way shall we be able to avoid the guilt of a repeated violation of one of the most important divine commands. The proper business and enjoyments of life can be pursued without making them idols of the heart; while, for the vanities and amusements of time, religion furnishes, in exchange, a powerful overbalance of full, satisfying, eternal pleasures.

2. But thoughts in the heart are apt to become language on the tongue. In the next place, therefore, the proper sanctification of the Sabbath requires us

to abstain from vain and worldly conversation. This is what Isaiah means, when he speaks of hallowing the Sabbath by "not speaking our own words;" words, to which our own wicked hearts and worldly interests would prompt us. And if, as Christ himself declares, "for every idle word that a man speaks, he shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment," whatever the occasion on which it be spoken, surely that account must be seriously aggravated by indulgence in vain and worldly conversation on the Sabbath.

And yet, how strongly are we exposed, how frequently guilty, on this point! To this breach of the Sabbath even sober-minded persons are often carelessly led by the slight associations, which exist between some subjects partly serious, and others merely moral; and again, between these and others purely vain and worldly. But if the sober-minded are thus drawn into a violation of the Sabbath, into what extremes of abuse will not the giddy and thoughtless naturally rush! Beware, then, dear reader, when you begin, on the Sabbath, to talk about the sermon, or the preacher; the deaths, or the accidents of the week; beware, lest you slide from the preacher and his subject into mere idle criticism upon style, manner, and attitude; and from these, into either praises or invectives, either flattery or calumny, heaped not

only on the object with which you began, but also on a hundred others, which have been brought into your minds. Beware, lest, when you begin with deaths and accidents, you pass, in an unguarded moment, into the news of the day; and from this again into your ordinary pleasures and business; into schemes for amusement, and into calculations of gain; into debate upon politics, and into discourse about stocks. Beware, professing Christian: beware, thoughtless children of the world, lest, from remarks merely critical or curious, you run into the most flagrant violations of the Sabbath, by all that is disgusting in frivolity, and all that is unholy in scandal; by all that is irritating in dispute, and all that is dissipating to seriousness in worldly discussion. Again I say; Control your thoughts by influences sought from the sanctuary above, that your thoughts may control your conversation, in a manner sanctifying to the Sabbath below.

3. Once more: indulgence in impure and worldly thoughts and conversation on the Sabbath tends to sinful and worldly habits of action on that day. Its proper sanctification, therefore, requires abstinence from every species of sinful and secular occupation.

That we must abstain, on this day, from all the common business of the week, bodily or mental, is so plainly enjoined, that I shall not spend time in

urging it on your attention. He, who, in a Christian country, allowedly carries through the Sabbath the ordinary labors of the week, has already prepared himself for possible ignominy and misery here, and for probable shame and fiery indignation hereafter. There are, however, other kinds of secular and sinful occupation, by which the rest of the Sabbath may be violated ; more creditable, indeed, but not less criminal, than open attention to trade, or unconcealed devotion to the world. I allude to travelling on business ; posting and settling accounts ; making bargains ; writing letters of business or ceremony ; visiting the Post Office or the News Room ; reading books that tend to corrupt or deaden religious principle and feeling ; riding or walking for mere worldly pleasure or sport ; spending the day in attention to dress, in providing unnecessary and expensive luxuries for the appetite, or in giving and receiving visits of business and ceremony. All these modes of disposing of the hours of the Sabbath, though they may, by some, be esteemed allowable and even creditable, are, nevertheless, in God's esteem, and in the eye of reason, as real desecrations of its rest as regular business, or a Sabbath-day's resort to the theatre !

On some of these modes, not more criminal, but

perhaps more common, than the rest, allow me to pass a more particular remark.

The habit of visiting the post-office on the Sabbath is an evident violation of the fourth commandment ; as much so as employment in the counting-room or at the counter, in the office or in the workshop. It is attention to the secular business or pleasures of the week. It tends to frustrate the great design of the Sabbath, the promotion of holiness in the hearts of men. It is, moreover, part of a system, in which government either teaches, or forces thousands and tens of thousands of its subjects to disobey a known command of God. This is itself a great subject. We cannot here do it justice. Neither may we pass it entirely without remark. It is freely granted, then, that government has no right, under our institutions, to compel men to sanctify the Sabbath. But, then, we contend most earnestly, that it has still less right to compel even a portion of its subjects to profane the Sabbath. No government has a right to trample on the laws of God, or to compel its subjects to violate them. This however it does, when it imperatively requires its numberless vehicles to run, its numberless offices to be opened, its countless mails to be assorted, distributed, and delivered ; and its myriads of servants to toil in working this immense machinery on the Lord's day. How, then, can a Christian consent to bear a part in

this legalized sin against God, by either frequenting the post-office on the Sabbath, or by accepting employment under this department of his government? Ought he not to say, when thus tempted to offend, "No, my country! if in this thing thou hast determined to set at nought the law of the Eternal, I must here take my stand; and though the humblest of thy subjects, must lift my voice to testify against thee, and to warn thee of the consequences of thy guilt." To my mind, there is evidently this twofold sin in the habit, now in view, of paying these Sabbath-day visits to our various marts of intelligence; it is a secular attention to our own ordinary business; and a participation in the guilt which a nation contracts, when it presumes to issue requisitions at war with the commandments of God.

Again: the custom of providing sumptuous entertainments, for either family or friends, on the Lord's day, cannot but be considered as utterly inconsistent with a due sanctification of the season. In the first place, it changes a day of holy rest into a day of mirth and feast. In the next, it compels those who indulge in it, either to leave their afternoon's places at church vacant, or to fill them, after a luxurious dinner, with the dull and heavy forms of the listless, the drowsy, and the inanimate. And finally, it obliges one part of the

family habitually to remain at home and provide delicacies for the dying bodies of the other, to the neglect of that substantial, spiritual nutriment necessary to the well-being of their own undying souls. And who, it may be asked, has a right, before God, to exact this at the hand of any fellow-mortal? Is heaven a dream, and eternity a blank, and the soul a vapor, and salvation a vain conceit, that one man may thus induce or force his fellow man to occupy, in providing for the dainty appetite, the very portion of time, which God has set apart and consecrated to the work of securing his soul's everlasting welfare? When—if the week is to be filled with the cares and business of the world, and the Sabbath to be loaded with household duties and family festivities—when is the time to be found for repentance and seeking after God? Where, amidst all this crowded scene of days, and weeks, and years, shall the soul of the tasked domestic find one little, unoccupied corner, into which it may retire, transact its concerns with God, and adjust itself for its eternal state? How, then, in view of these things, can any family, in a Christian land, make its domestic arrangements for the Sabbath so as to include the cares and convivialities, of which we have now spoken, and yet remain guiltless of a violation of this great day of the Lord?



Once more : the practice of riding and walking for mere pleasure, and of giving and receiving visits of ceremony, or otherwise, on the Sabbath, is wholly inconsistent with a right sanctification of the day. With these things the streets of our cities, the thoroughfares which stretch into their vicinity, and the houses of their countless inhabitants, are lamentably familiar ; and under the influence of these, religion languishes, the spirit of the Sabbath sighs, while all the means of holiness are, to myriads amongst us, rendered neutral and void.

It is in these and other Sabbath-day amusements that vain and worldly thoughts vent themselves in idle and profitless conversation ; and that the themes of pleasure and of fashion, or the affairs of a family or a neighborhood, are sought and discussed with eagerness, perhaps with acrimony, in order to pass what would otherwise be a vacant and a heavy hour. The leisure of the Sabbath ought to be spent in profitable thought and self-discipline ; in giving religious instruction to children or dependents ; in a serious pondering on the words of eternal life, and in endeavoring, faithfully and spiritually, to imbibe their power, and thus to form and fix both the heart and the life in habits of holy feeling and action. But how different from all this is the method of spending the leisure of

the day now under consideration! A more effectual method of obliterating from the mind every good, and tender, and serious impression, which may have been made during the religious exercises of the season; a more unfailing device for shutting all the glorious and solemn things of eternity and of heaven from the thoughts, as soon as the doors of the sanctuary are closed upon its worship—could not be devised. Those who go from this worship to the vain and dissipating scenes of pleasure, or of a visit and its ceremonies, do virtually say by their actions: “Away from our minds, ye thoughts of God and of eternity; we are afraid of becoming religious; we are afraid of being separated from a gay and thoughtless world; we are not yet willing to be fitted for a blessed and a holy heaven.”

The duty of abstaining from every species of secular and sinful occupation of time on the Sabbath, might be urged further. But in stating the negative duties of the season, I have only time for a single remaining particular.

4. I mean the abstinence which a due sanctification of the day requires from indolence.

The Sabbath is indeed a season of rest, but it is of holy rest, not of literal inaction of either body or mind. It is a rest from all sinful engagements, in order to

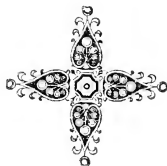
give time for action in all holy duties, in whatever can tend to promote a holy regard for God, together with holiness of heart in man. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it HOLY."

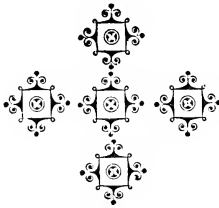
Some persons seem to act on the principle, that, in order to avoid the violation of the Sabbath, by doing, saying, or thinking what is wrong, they had better cease, so far as is possible, from every mode of being, bodily and intellectual. Accordingly, they usually devote it to sloth and idleness. Their slumbers are long in the morning, and frequent during the day. Personal neatness and domestic order are neglected, and sluggish indolence is spread through the family scene. The house of God stands unvisited. The Bible lies unopened. Thought stagnates, if it does not die; and if bad feelings are not awakened, at least all good ones fall asleep. All this, however, is odious, most offensive to God. It is not to sanctify, but to annihilate, the Sabbath; to convert its sacred rest into a species of existence, in which the powers of the man rise but little above the functions of the vegetable! He, and he only, honors the Sabbath to acceptance, who, during its consecrated hours, is "not slothful in its proper business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

In concluding this part of the subject, do you think,

beloved reader, that the duties of the Sabbath, as now enumerated, require too much at your hands, and that a day thus spent must be an irksome and a spiritless day? Assuredly, then, your decision is that of utter inexperience. Try such a course of duty. Try it as a Christian; and you will find the Sabbath not a weariness, but a delight, extensively favorable to true cheerfulness and enjoyment of mind. Your language concerning it would be that of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up unto the house of the Lord." "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "O God! thou art my God; early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Besides, while thus honoring the Lord, thus hallowing his Sabbath, if he, in fulfillment of his promise, should deliver you from sin, and prepare you for an everlasting rest in his holy heavens, you would not then think the duties now required either too serious or too numerous. Then the young and the gay, the man of business and of the world, and the slave of sensuality and sin, regenerated and rendered holy, would rejoice

before the Lord with solemn mirth, for ever, over the happy decision which secured to them full and perpetual glory above, at whatever sacrifice of self, or ease, or vanity below.





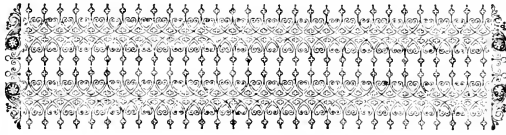
LECTURE VI.

EXODUS XX. 11.

“ The Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”







## VI.

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IN the Lectures already given on the subject of the text, I have endeavored to present an idea of the general character, and the prominent duties, of the Sabbath. A foundation has thus been laid, on which I may stand, while urging reasons, or motives for a due sanctification of the day. In the present Lecture, therefore, the principal benefits of the Sabbath shall be exhibited, as one of the reasons why it should be kept holy.

In the text, we have the record of the Father, that he has blessed and hallowed the Sabbath : and in the Gospel, we have the word of the Son, that it was thus blessed and hallowed for the benefit of man. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The institution has not failed of its intended

effect. Designed for the use of man, the benefits which flow from it are absolutely incalculable. Of this, the proofs will meet us, as we proceed in the examination.

1. I mention, first, the benefits which flow from the Rest of the Sabbath, both to men and to beasts of burthen.

It was not without weighty reason that the fourth commandment extended the privilege of a seventh day of Rest to men-servants and maid-servants, to cattle and strangers in the land. That rest is necessary both to the body and to the mind. Enlightened experience has shown that, at least as often as once for every six days of toil, weary nature needs repose. This weekly suspension of the fatigues of life prevents, in a measure, what the daily rest of sleep is found insufficient to do, the inroads of exhaustion on the strength and spirits; and by the invigorating refreshment which it brings, adds a new impulse to laudable action and industry; while industry, in its turn, is a great promoter of health and long life, two of the most valued blessings ever mingled in the cup of mere temporal enjoyments. Taking in the compass of their ordinary lives, both men and beasts of burthen can perform more labor, and to better effect, when the stated rest of the Sabbath is enjoyed, than they can when it is withheld. This point has been made abundantly clear by

the most careful observation ; as is attested by such authors as Schoolcraft and Drs. Rush and Spurzheim ; and by such investigators as Dr. Farre before the British Parliament. Moreover, the avarice and rapacity of human nature sometimes incline men, and even parents, to tyrannize over their dependents and children, and beasts of burthen, by compelling them to drudge incessantly in their service. From such the Sabbath stately wrests the rod of oppression ; and like a presiding angel of mercy, "bids the oppressed go free," and for one seventh of their lives enjoy the blessings of repose vouchsafed them by a more merciful Master, and a more affectionate Parent.

2. The observance of the Sabbath is a powerful promoter of the kind feelings and gentle manners of refined and social life.

This remark may not appear weighty to those, who are almost constantly engaged in the civilities of society. But, taking into account the most numerous, and, in some respects, the most important, part of the population of every country, its laborers, its agriculturists, and its mechanics, the remark will appear entitled to serious consideration. Those kind feelings and gentle manners are called into exercise chiefly amidst the decorums and restraints of civilized life. They are cultivated by the intercourse of good society. But, the laboring agriculturist and mechanic

are often, to a considerable extent, forced to lead a kind of separate and secluded life; and even when they are brought into the intercourse of society, it is still infrequently, and too often, under circumstances which leave their better feelings and habits unimproved. Hence, every thing which brings them together with suitable frequency, and under favorable circumstances, is so far, a means by which they are able to realize their share in the blessings of civilisation. Such a means is the Sabbath. When properly observed, it is a season of social existence. It brings mankind together, weekly, in a most pleasing and harmonious contact, and under the most salutary, yet gentle restraints; and thus, while it removes something of the harshness and rudeness of solitary being, it throws, exactly where needed, a good portion of the decency and decorum of society. These remarks are founded not on mere theory, but on sustaining fact. Select either a community, or an individual, from the laboring classes of society, with whom the neglect of the Sabbath has become habitual, and you will generally find a repulsive neglect of the tender and beautiful civilities of life.

This effect of mere weekly association under peculiarly salutary restraints, is increased by other and more powerful causes. In the exercises of the Sabbath the affections of men are frequently addressed

and brought within the influence of all that is subduing and meliorating in the tender charities of a religion, which breathes into the heart of man the pure spirit of heaven. In the tender sympathies of a social worship, common sorrows for sin and common praises for mercy are sent up, mingling with those fervent strains of devotion, which "enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath," the compassionate and benevolent, as well as just and righteous, Father of mankind. In all this, it is impossible for men to be habitually associated, and yet to remain in all respects unblessed. Though religion itself, as a right temper of heart towards God, should not be the result, yet the severe and rugged feelings of our nature must, more or less, give way to the softening, humanizing power of the scene; and society will find those who honor the Sabbath, more kind and gentle members of the human family, than those who do not.

There is another feature, too, in this influence of the Sabbath, which deserves consideration. Wealth and other distinctions lift men above the natural level of life. Poverty and obscurity sink them below it. The former too often beget a proud and overbearing spirit. The latter sometimes produce an abject and desponding state. Hence, the elevated need humility; and the humble, elevation: an effect, to which the proper observance of the Sabbath is decidedly favora-

ble, by bringing the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the prince and the peasant, upon one common level before that "High and Lofty One," in whose presence earthly distinctions are annihilated, and where they are all addressed in the one character of sinners, with the same voice of warning, and in the same language of instruction. Here, indeed, "the lofty looks of man are humbled, and the haughtiness of men is bowed down;" and here, "they of low degree are exalted," because "the Lord is the Maker of them all." The rich imbibe a meekness, which becomes their ornament; the poor, a self-respect, which proves their support. From this one level, where they all meet, the different ranks of men carry away a community of feeling, which disposes them to engage in the mutual offices of life with more kindness and condescension on the one part, and with more alacrity and respectfulness on the other; and thus, while the Sabbath leaves undiminished all the benefits which spring from distinctions in society, it counteracts and removes some, at least, of their evils.

The benefits of the Sabbath now enumerated are, as in the former case, varied and vast; and they show with what minuteness the wisdom of God has adapted the Institution to the good of all men, at all times.

3. A proper observance of the Sabbath operates favorably on intellectual character.

I refer not now to the benefit, which the mind receives from the Rest of the Sabbath, in soothing and recruiting the excited, and often exhausted, nerves of the brain ; this has been already mentioned ; but to one of a more direct character. Instruction of whatever kind, cannot but affect favorably the various mental powers. It must expand, invigorate and refine them. Now, a proper observance of the Sabbath secures no inconsiderable amount and variety of instruction and information. One seventh part of the ordinary life of man properly spent under the teachings of the Sabbath, would alone be sufficient, even were other opportunities for instruction wanting, to raise him to a valuable respectability in intellectual attainment. Besides, to us, as moral and accountable creatures, the instructions of this day are of the most salutary and necessary kind. They bring us to an acquaintance with the being of God and his attributes ; with the providence of God and his operations ; with the Church of God and its institutions ; and with the duty of man and his destiny : besides furnishing us with some knowledge of the history and antiquities of more than two-thirds of the past existence of our race ; including the most of what is, with certainty, known of the entire national career of the Jews, the most interesting race of men that has ever appeared.

Such being the kind and amount of information secured by a proper observance of the Sabbath, its favorable effect on intellectual character must be apparent. Every seventh day, the regular attendant at the Sanctuary has his mind occupied in receiving what, to the great and comparatively uneducated mass of men, must be considered valuable information; and in following out important, and often interesting, trains of thought; an exercise clearly salutary and perfective of his mental powers. But the effect does not stop here. The subjects discussed on the Sabbath are calculated to seize and sustain attention, and to incite, during the rest of the week, to a further process of thought, perhaps to voluntary research; thus supporting, not a vexatious and fatiguing, but a pleasant and healthful, action of mind during a still greater portion of life. And besides all this, there is a favorable effect produced on public taste and sentiment, by many of the instructions given on the Sabbath, considered as merely literary productions. This influence is of no inconsiderable importance, when exerted on those classes of society, which do not come within the correcting and improving power of higher mental culture.

From these circumstances, we see in part, why it is that those countries, in which the Sabbath is duly observed, maintain, among the common classes, a



decided intellectual superiority over those in which it is habitually profaned ; why it is that the individuals of the former exhibit so much stronger traces of thought, research and reflection, and so much less repulsive proofs of vitiated taste and neglected minds, than the individuals of the latter. The valuable instructions of the Sabbath tend to elevate mankind towards all that is dignified and delightful in the high and refined enjoyments of taste and intellect.

4. A due observance of the Sabbath tends to form and sustain in the public mind an enlightened moral conscience, and a purified moral principle, of incalculable importance to society.

Deprave the public moral conscience and principle, and you unsettle all social institutions, and leave them to totter and fall amidst the whirlwinds of passion and the floods of crime. Correct, refine and confirm that moral conscience and principle, and you place, on its only permanent foundation, that noble fabric of neighborhood, society and government, in which virtue, good order and peace will permanently dwell. These points being incontestible, it needs not argument to prove, still further, that a race, composed of such depraved beings as man, has a strong tendency to a depraved state of the public moral conscience and principle ; and that powerful and frequent efforts are required to counteract that tendency, to throw a new

and quickened moral life into the conscientious feelings and principles of men, and to maintain that life, sensitive and undecaying, amidst all the deadening influences of self and of sin.

Here, again, the due observance of the Sabbath comes in and furnishes precisely that kind and degree of influence, which are required. The sacred character, in which it stands invested, and the sacred feelings with which, in a well ordered society, it is regarded, do, of themselves, give it a powerful check on the public conscience, and a most salutary influence on public principle. This character of the Sabbath erects around society a beautiful as well as formidable bulwark, which restrains within the limits of peace and justice multitudes, who would otherwise transcend them; and through which few habitually break, save the openly shameless and licentious.

The peculiar exercises, which are connected with the observance of the Sabbath, strengthen still further this public safeguard of virtue and good order. The assemblies convened for public worship, are brought into a consecrated atmosphere, and their minds surrounded with all that is salutary and quickening in the presence of holy devotion. They are addressed, too, on subjects of the most powerful and heart-moving interest. In order to give the public conscience a quick, discerning eye, and to pour upon it the only

steady and unerring light, that of divine truth, the fixed and eternal distinctions between moral and religious right and wrong, are clearly and strongly defined; not only in the case of those which are broad and palpable, but also in the case of those which are minute and delicate; so that men, if they will, may walk with safety through even those regions of action where the separating grounds between right and wrong are most narrow. Moreover, to give public principle enduring strength and stability, the immense benefits attendant on right action, and the boundless evils entailed upon wrong, are earnestly stated and enforced; and men are urged to duty by all that is tender and affecting, as well as by all that is powerful and alarming, in the motives drawn from the constant presence of a heart-searching God, from the solemnities of a future judgment, and from the unutterable realities of eternal happiness, or eternal misery, of heaven, or hell!

Another circumstance still gives to a duly observed Sabbath a most salutary control over public moral conscience and principle; the regularity and accessibility, with which its exercises and instructions recur. Men are not now, as the heathen were, obliged to travel to foreign lands, and to visit distant schools of philosophy, in order to discover, through a dubious light, whereabouts lie the boundaries between right

and wrong. Nor are they compelled to devote any separate and considerable portion of their lives to the study of a theory of morals which, after all, they would seldom be called to practise. But the instructions, which they require, are brought to them, almost carried round to their very doors, embodied in the clearest light, based on the highest authority, and enforced by the most moving sanctions. They fall in with those very seasons, which nature itself requires for refreshment, and which experience proves favorable to interest. They require less trouble and less expense than many of the most useless pleasures of the world. Above all, they return with a frequency, and freshness, and life, which prevent the mind from losing its salutary impressions, and the conscience from falling into sear stupidity; and which cherish and maintain and circulate throughout the public body, a vitality and tenderness and permanency of moral feeling and principle, which furnish it with its best health and vigor.

Do these remarks need confirmation from fact? It may be brought from a thousand sources. But from one only can I draw at present.

In one of our cities, some time since, the Sabbath was openly neglected and generally profaned. Few sanctuaries had been erected and fewer still frequented. To an alarming extent the worship of God was

unknown, and the sound of the Gospel unheard. In that city, were taken, in one year, eight licenses for gaming houses, at a cost of \$33,000 ; while the nett income of the houses exceeded \$174,000. This whole sum, too, was gained on one side, and lost on another, amidst frequent occurrences of riot, intoxication and despair.\* Now, what must be the state of public moral conscience to require or even to tolerate, by municipal regulations, such establishments as these? On what principle must a vast amount of property be acquired, and with what feelings and effect must it be expended? On what footing of purity, integrity and justice, must a great share of the mutual intercourse and business of society rest? Or what barrier is there erected against the rising floods of dissipation and crime, confusion and misrule? Not the barrier of a regularly observed and well sanctified Sabbath, clothed in all its holy associations, and operating with all its life-giving influences. It is by the abuse of this institution that much of the extreme corruption of public morals has been introduced ; and it is only by completing, among other things begun, a general and due observance of the Sabbath, that the

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\* See New York Spectator, for 1827, I think, just after which these Lectures were first written.

ordinary measure of moral strength and purity can be infused into the public mind.

5. The proper observance of the Sabbath is a chief means in the conversion of men, and in the promotion of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Here the benefits of the Sabbath rise at once into vast magnitude.

In passing over the ascending scale of benefits, which flow from a well sanctified Sabbath, we have been like travellers, gradually approaching a tall mountain, whose ascent over beautiful fields, though constant, is yet not steep. Here, however, we reach a point, at which the acclivity becomes more abrupt, and like those travellers, we see the mountain swelling more toweringly and more steeply towards heaven. The proper observance of the Sabbath is a chief means in securing the salvation of souls.

It is a chief means to this end; because, as I shall hereafter show, all the other means of grace, which now operate so perceptibly and vigorously, depend largely for their use, if not for their existence, on this one institution, the Sabbath. For the present, I merely remark, that everything connected with the proper observance of this day is specially intended and happily calculated, to secure the conversion of men and the cultivation of holiness. The control which the institution, when generally sanctified, ex-

erts over the public moral conscience, has a strong tendency to bring men stately to pause, and reflect on their ways. Attendance on all the solemn rites of public worship and sacraments, brings them, at least, within the action of their social sympathies, and prepares them for the great scriptural change. Attention to faithful and affectionate appeals from "the ministry of Reconciliation," declaring to them their sin, and beseeching them, for the sake of the Crucified, to repent and turn and live, alarms their consciences, awakens inquiry, and advances the change towards its completion. While the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, "dropping as the rain," and "distilling as the dew," crown the work, and perfect the renewed in heart in all holiness and godliness of living. Without this change in all the moral tendencies of his nature, wrought by those means which God brings into operation on this his own holy day, leading to faith in Christ and to salvation by grace, man would remain perpetually under condemnation, spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins."

Estimate, then, the benefits which are here secured by the observance of the Sabbath. Run your eye along the line of past ages, from the commencement to the present hour; and mark the various times and countries, which have witnessed its exemplary sanctification. Gather into your thoughts the whole of

that vast multitude, who, on this day, have been brought to a knowledge and sense of their sins ; to repentance and faith in Christ, either as a Saviour to come, or as a Saviour already exhibited on the cross ; and to sanctification of heart and holiness of life by the gracious influences of the Spirit ; and who, “ being justified by faith, have obtained peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and are now removed beyond the vicissitudes of this life to mansions of heavenly rest and glory. Think of the mighty moral influence, which this host of the redeemed have embodied in the example of their lives, thrown on the mass of sin and misery around them, on government and on society, and left to operate there in a succession of purifying and peaceful and blessed results, to the end of time. Think, too, of the happy, heavenly hours, which they have spent on the Sabbath, and in the Sanctuary ; how often they have gathered there around a mercy-seat, and lifted up their souls in the calm, delightful exercises of prayer and praise ; and how often God has graciously met them there, confirmed them in his covenant, made his promises precious, and rendered his word and ordinances quickening, refreshing and comforting to their spirits. Think, finally, from what toil and suffering and tears in this life they have been released, and of the rest and joy on high, which they are now receiving, and



will for ever continue to receive, as the fruit in a great measure of the precious seed sown on this holy day. And then, from all these considerations, collect and sum up, if you can, the entire amount of benefit secured by the observance of the Sabbath, in the conversion of men and in the promotion of holiness.

6. Finally : the regular and perpetual observance of the Sabbath is the main instrument, which is to preserve in existence and operation a knowledge of the true Religion and of the Name and worship of the true God.

Here, the benefits of the Sabbath rise, at once, into illimitable height, as well as into overpowering magnitude. The ascent before us becomes precipitous ; the mountain springs suddenly up ; and its pinnacle is lost from view in the light of the upper world.

It is plain, that, great as is the moral influence of the Sabbath, and many as it has been a means of gathering into the fold of Christ, yet with all the authority in which God has clothed it as a divine institution, and all the sacred feeling with which it is associated in the minds of Christians, it still leaves a majority of those, amongst whom it exists, destitute of the power, and regardless of the claims, of religion ; and many of this majority either careless neglecters or open contemners, of the Sabbath itself. Self-love, acting on the interests, the pleasures, and the honors

of the world, has fortified them so strongly in sin, that even this potent engine of divine contrivance has failed to dislodge them from their works. They live almost as though there were no God, no religion. What, then, would be the state of our world if the Sabbath, as a divine institution, were once abolished? From all Christendom would be gradually and finally banished a knowledge of the true religion and the worship of the true God!

It is vain to say that, in the absence of the Sabbath, expediency and the necessity of the case would lead men to establish a stated day, and to devote it to the same objects, which the Sabbath now contemplates. For if avarice, rapacity and the love of pleasure can influence such multitudes to break through the obligations of a divine institution, it is plain that a mere human appointment would not oppose against those passions the slightest barrier, but, in their overwhelming torrent, would be utterly swept away and lost. One would object to the particular day selected; another, to the frequency of its recurrence; and another to the necessity of any such appointment at all. The result would be, that not even a feeble human substitute for the Sabbath would exist. Then would follow the rapid decline of religious feeling and principle; accompanied by the equally rapid fall of those benevolent, evangelical operations, which that

religious feeling and principle now sustain ; and followed at last by the extinction of the true religion and of the knowledge of the true God from the human mind ?

Yes ; abolish the Sabbath, and you obliterate from the soul that crowd of delightful, holy and sanctifying associations, which now cluster around the peaceful day, and throw into its evening meditations, and on the memory of its scenes, the godly man's fairest type and brightest anticipations of his REST in heaven. Abolish the Sabbath, and the ordinances of grace close their channels and cease to bless ; the sound of social and public prayer is hushed ; and the authoritative publication of God's Word sends no ray of light, no arrow of truth, into the darkened sinner's heart. Abolish the Sabbath, and the blooming promises of the Sabbath School are blasted, the minds of its myriads of young immortals revert again to untaught, unblest ignorance and sin : asylums and hospitals, those offsprings of Christianity, fall into ruins ; and the blind, and deaf, and dumb, the diseased, and lame, and lunatic, wander the earth once more, with scarce a gift from charity ; while institutions for the spread of the Gospel through Tracts, and Bibles, and Missionaries of the Cross, perish, with the zeal that now supports them, from the Church of Christ ; and the dark clouds of error, superstition and blood, which we

now see rolling away from heathen lands, settle back again to drench those lands in misery. Abolish the Sabbath, and how shall I finish the picture? Man forgets or denies his God; the Bible is burnt amidst the orgies of blasphemy; religion is banished from earth to heaven; and human society either reverts to the barbarism of idolatry, in which the soul, rendered almost irrational, offers its prayers and praises, bows down in blind adoration, and presents its sacrifices and human victims and spoils of chastity, to molten images, and reptiles and devils; or falls back upon that state of civil anarchy and confusion, in which, though the light of science and philosophy may shine, yet the light of heavenly truth is extinguished, and the wild passions of men let loose, while crime and bloodshed and war shake thrones and kingdoms, and confound the elements of society in one wide waste of moral chaos!

All this is not bare conjecture. The world has already looked with the eye of sober experience on a great part of the scene, as connected with a temporary abolition of the Sabbath near the beginning of the French Revolution, yet fresh in the memory of living multitudes. That abolition was not, indeed, the single cause of all the atrocities which followed. But the Sabbath was one of the great barriers, which stood in the way of their furious outbursting; and it must

needs be swept down before the floods of irreligion, impiety and civilized butchery could rush, unopposed, through the land. And if its abolition had become both universal and perpetual, nothing could have saved the human race from all that has been described, but as plain a miracle as that, in which "the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the Valley of Ajalon!"

The Sabbath, in the sanctions of its divine authority, and in the influence of its stated sanctification, is one of the main props that uphold the existence of the true religion, and of a knowledge of the true God; that sustain a good public moral conscience; and that support the broad and lofty fabric of human society and of civil government. To the Church of Christ the Sabbath is an Ararat amidst a deluge of sin. So long as it stands unmoved, the ark of the Christian's hope rests in safety on its top, bearing high the families of the faithful above the wasting flood, and preserving them for a renovated world in eternity. And to the whole race of man, it is a Bethel on the plains of Canaan. It opens to them not only "the House of God," but also the gate of heaven. Annihilate the Sabbath, and that gate is shut. The influences of God, like angels of mercy, no longer ascend and descend to comfort and to bless his creatures.

Would God, then, that this subject could be im-

pressed, in all its solemnity and power, on the hearts of all orders of men ; upon rulers and subjects, upon high and low, upon rich and poor. The result would be peace, prosperity and permanency to all the institutions of our country, civil and religious. A day, bright with hope, would dawn on the world. And the example of statesmen, of philosophers, and of humbler Christians, would make the Sabbath what it was designed to be, and from its blessed influences draw down millennial rest and glory upon man !

To you, dear reader, I can only add, at present, Revere the Sabbath. Make it, in thought, word and deed, a holy day ; and cherish it in the best affections of your heart as you would your last, bright hope of heaven.



LECTURE VII.

NEHEMIAH XIII. 17, 18.

“What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.”







## VII.

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MY great object in these Lectures has, from the first, been, to recommend a due observance of the Sabbath. The benefits which, in the last Lecture, were seen to flow from it, are alone of such nature and extent, that a right consideration of them must at least prevent the open and habitual violation of the day. Philosophers, statesmen, and even mere men of the world, cannot but respect and outwardly observe the Sabbath, so soon as they have once adequately comprehended its immense importance.

But, a right sanctification of the day requires something more than outward respect and observance. It requires an inward and pious regard, and an appropriation of the day to its proper duties, from the influence of religious conscience. To this none can

be brought, unless convinced, not only of the vast importance of the Sabbath, but also of the peculiar sin of its violation.

That the violation of the Sabbath is peculiarly sinful, it can hardly be necessary, at this point of the discussion, to prove. It follows from the fact that God has enjoined the sanctification of the day; and that, wherever the existence of the institution has been known, he has repeatedly visited both its neglect and its abuse with conspicuous judgments. It was, principally, for a long series of such neglect and abuse that the judgment of the Babylonish captivity fell upon the whole Jewish people. God had given them his Sabbaths, and they had profaned them. This was not forgotten. The Jews were plunged defenceless into the midst of their enemies; and their desolate, unpeopled country, was left to enjoy the rest of which it had been sacrilegiously deprived. (See 2d Chron. xxxvi. 21; comp. Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, 43.) Then for seventy years the Holy Land kept to the Lord its solemn, solitary Sabbath; while its hapless tribes were in distant bondage, weeping in lowly posture by the rivers of Babylon, hanging their harps on the willows there, and, in reply to the taunts of those who wasted them, sending up their piteous wail to heaven.

To this fact and its cause Nehemiah referred in the text. He had been instrumental in restoring the Jews

to their country, and in rebuilding their city and temple. After the completion of these great works, and the formal restoration of the worship of God to its ancient seat, his zealous heart was almost broken when he saw his people once more relapsing into an abuse of the Sabbath; that very sin for which they had just been so terribly chastised. "Then he contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them; What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus; and did not God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

Nor is the Babylonish captivity the only judgment, which has visited the violation of the Sabbath. In numberless other instances, has the displeasure of God fallen on the profanation of his holy day. Does it not follow then, both from the express command to hallow the Sabbath, and from the punishments which have been inflicted on a transgression of this command, that such transgression is exceedingly sinful?

To admit this, however, and to feel it, are two distinct things. A mere admission of its sinfulness is easily reconciled with a continuance of the sin. But a sense of it will produce repentance, and thus secure the true sanctification of the Sabbath. If then, the view which has thus far been taken of the origin and design, the duties and benefits of the Sabbath, should

produce no other effect than mere esteem and outward observance of the day ; although even this would prove a blessing too great for calculation, yet I should feel as though my chief object were still unattained ; as though a valuable safeguard had been thrown around your temporal interests ; but still, as though your eternal welfare had been left insecure and in jeopardy.

Supposing, then, that the sinfulness of violating the Sabbath will be generally admitted, let us, in order to a proper sense of the same, proceed to examine some of the circumstances by which it is aggravated.

1. First, then, the sin of Sabbath-breaking is committed in disregard of the solemn character, which God has been pleased to throw around the Sabbath.

At the moment, when in the order of the Divine ways, God said to material things, " Begin," he commenced his great work of Creation. Under the efforts of Almighty power, the realms of darkness filled with the elements of things, formless, confused, chaotic. He spake to light, and it shone forth, disclosing the wondrous work. His informing Spirit brooded over the deep of matter, and it took its shapes. The waters assembled. The dry land appeared. The firmament rose. The sun, moon, and stars, began their rounds. All things were clothed with beauty, filled with life, and wrought to action. At last, man stood

up in the image of God, to survey, admire, and praise the glorious scene; and the Creator himself, looking down upon the whole, smiled approvingly on his work, and pronounced it "very good." Thus six primordial days passed. At the commencement of the seventh, God entered on his rest; and "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." "The morning Stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." For then the fresh and blooming Earth first felt the step of newly-measured Time; then, in hope of an eternal rest in heaven, a new race was created; and then, as type of that eternal rest, the Sabbath was set apart and hallowed. It was a solemn day; a day of holy rest and of holy joy.

But man soon sinned, and God as soon disclosed his purposes of grace. The redeeming Seed was promised; and, in faith of his future advent, the altar was erected and the sacrifice begun. Meanwhile, the earth was overspread by man, and sin followed wide his way. The worshippers of God became few, and the worshippers of idols many. These perished in the flood; those lived to stock the earth anew. They carried with them the altar, the sacrifice, and the Sabbath; and, in connection with these, began a second race. The earth was again overspread by man; and again sin followed wide his way. Once more the worshippers of God became few, and

the worshippers of idols many. Then Jehovah chose a nation as his own, disciplined them for himself, and finally, in solemn state, gave them all his ordinances. Then, when Sinai shook, and the earth trembled at the presence of the Lord; when the people removed and stood afar off at the tokens of his coming; and when none but Moses could endure the sight; then, from amidst all the signs, which nature could express, of reverence for her God; from amidst the heavings of the earth and the burnings of the mount; from amidst the cloud and smoke, the thunder and the lightning, came forth the Law. On its first table, wrought and engraved by the Divine hand, was written: "I am the Lord, thy God; thou shalt have none other gods; thou shalt neither make nor worship any graven image, nor the likeness of any conceivable thing; Profane not the name of God; and REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY."

Brought thus again to remembrance, and amidst such awful circumstances, the Sabbath became, with new emphasis, a solemn day, invested with new proofs of consecrated character. In these it stood till the Seed of promise came. Long had He been seen through types and shadows; and long had the moral world, as it "lay in darkness and in the shadow of death," awaited his approach in new transforming power. At length he came; unfolded the purposes

of the Father; and entered visibly on the work to which (from the beginning) he had been appointed. He showed the way, which had been devised for reconciling Truth with Mercy, and Righteousness with Peace; and for sustaining the authority of the law, while from the contrite believer was removed its penalty. "He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He entered the tomb and took captive the powers of death and of hell; and, audibly commissioning the Eternal Spirit to apply his labor of love to the hearts that would receive it, he completed and put into visible and perceptible action the great work of restoring the soul from sin to holiness, from Satan unto God. Thus he added, to the work of creating, that of redeeming man; a new and spiritual creation, to which the first was both introductory and inferior.

This stupendous transaction was closed, and its Almighty Agent entered on his rest, on the morning of the Christian Sabbath. While, as yet, the grave held the Crucified, while as yet he was vanquishing there the powers of darkness, "behold, there was a great earthquake." It was the signal of completed triumph. Then "descended the angel of the Lord." "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men." He came and touched

the sealed sepulchre, and the Lord arose. He rose in glory, and he rose to rest. With the darkness of that night ceased his last, his mightiest work, and with the rising of that day commenced his best, his holiest repose. That, too, was a solemn day; a Sabbath sanctified anew, and given with higher holiness to man.

In this character it passed, till, with a few returns, it brought the Pentecost. Then, when the holy band of the disciples "were all with one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." At that time "there were dwelling at Jerusalem, devout men out of every nation under heaven;" "and they were all amazed" when they heard the spiritually-invested Galileans speak, in numerous foreign tongues, "the wonderful works of God."

This was the last special distinction conferred by Jehovah on his own holy Sabbath. The whole God-head had now taken a visible part in rendering it a solemn, a consecrated day. The Father had sanctified it by resting thereon from his work of Creation; the



Son, by resting from his work of Redemption; and the Spirit, by pouring out upon the seed of the Church those powerful and promised influences, without which the labors, both of Creation and of Redemption, had, so far as our salvation is concerned, been in vain. As the eternal purposes of grace to man were more and more unfolded, the Sabbath was hallowed to higher and higher uses, till, finally, it stood in all the sacredness, with which God could invest it; a day consecrated to the outpourings of the Divine Spirit on the Church; a moral monument, anointed with the unction from on high; a column between earth and heaven, securing and supporting the salvation of man, and lifting high before the world the glory of God.

Such is the Institution, the holy pillar, which, with sinful hands, men touch and endeavor to shake, when they either refuse, or knowingly neglect, to hallow God's Sabbath day. No wonder, then, that the judgments of God have been so often let loose to chastise a sin of such peculiar turpitude! Here is an Institution, around which God has thrown indescribable solemnity of character; the observance of which he has endeavored to secure in all possible ways, by the most awful commands, and by the most alluring promises, by making it a season for the most sublime displays of himself, and for the most astonishing exhibitions

of his ways; and the profanation of which he has sought to prevent by every method consistent with the free agency of man; by warnings in terror, and by threatenings in wrath; by blasting judgments, heaped on provinces and nations, and by fearful visitations sent upon individuals and families. And yet multitudes, in Christian lands, habitually disregard the day. All that God has done impresses them with no deep-felt reverence for his ordinance; with no inward contrition for its violation! Their hearts are not pained at the thought, their eyes weep not at the sight of their offences. How sad a disagreement of result with the measures which God has devised for influencing the conduct of men! We live not, as the Jews did, under a dispensation, in which this sin was visited with explicitly designated temporal judgments. But let us not, for this reason, forget that, as we live under a more spiritual dispensation than they, so the punishment for this sin is but transferred to a more spiritual state of being; and will be more signal than theirs, inasmuch as the patience of God is now longer in waiting, and as the sin is committed against increasing light.

2. But this is not all. In the second place, the sin of Sabbath-breaking is aggravated not only by the circumstance of its being committed in disregard of the high solemnity of character, which God has imparted

to the institution, but also, by the fact of its being perpetrated in disregard of all the benefits, which its proper observance confers.

Upon these benefits it is needless again to expatiate. From what has already been said, I trust they are still fresh in your memory. In a former Lecture, you saw that, in the blessings with which it is crowned, the Sabbath is connected with the best interests of man and the exhibited glory of God. You saw it intimately associated with individual comfort and prosperity ; with the peace and good order of society ; with the purity of public conscience, law and justice ; with the permanency of civil, judicial and ecclesiastical institutions ; with the stability of governments and the peace of nations. You saw it closely linked with the existence and prevalence of pure religion and the worship of God ; with the production of holiness in the sinner, and its cultivation in the saint ; with the downfall of the kingdom of sin and error, and the universal establishment of the cause of Christ and his Truth. In a word, you saw it inseparably connected, by the promise and the providence of God, with a system of means, intended to promote and secure all that is pure and peaceable, good and glorious ; a system which is the only shield from heaven to protect our world against the hostilities of hell ; the only minister

of love for securing "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men."

And yet, we live in a country and an age, in which the Sabbath never returns without its accompaniment of the most flagrant profanations. Whether by any who read these pages, it is ever thus violated, God knows. The writer needs not inquire. It is sufficient to remark, that every time we knowingly profane the Sabbath, whether openly, or secretly, whether from a love of pleasure and of profit, or from an utter indifference to the Institution, we do virtually declare ourselves opposed to the peace and prosperity of society; to the laws and government of our country; to the interests of mankind and the welfare of the world; to the prevalence of religion and the purity of the Church; to the salvation of our own souls, and that of our fellow creatures; to the Saviour of men and the glory of God; whilst those, who openly contemn the Sabbath, do what they can, by the strength of their example and influence, to deprive mankind of all the innumerable and infinitely precious blessings, which a due observance of the day confers; to pour upon them vials of wrath in the extinction of the Institution itself; to tear away that heavenly shield which God has given to protect, and to send back that minister of love which he has commissioned to bless

the world ; and thus to leave our earth, unguarded, to the ravages of sin and the triumphs of evil.

That all this does not actually follow an abuse of the Sabbath is, not because that abuse tends to produce no such effect, but because God reigns, not man. In mercy, He overrules some of the evils of violating the Sabbath. But the sin of such violation he leaves, in all its magnitude, and with all its aggravations, for future punishment ; committed, as it is, in disregard of the peculiarly solemn and consecrated character of the Sabbath itself, and of the inconceivably vast and valuable blessings, which it is designed to confer.

3. But what will it avail to measure the sinfulness of violating the Sabbath, if we do not feel and penitently mourn the sins which, by such a violation, we have contracted ? Can a future sanctification of the day be possible, while we feel no pang of contrition for its past neglect or abuse ? And yet, who can touch the heart and make it feel ? Who can unsheathe the sting of sin, and leave it to wound and waken the dull and drowsy conscience ? Almighty God ! The prerogative is thine. Do thou show us our transgression, and plead with us, for our sin. Yet, dear reader, there is one thing which we can do. In reference to the subject before us we can examine our hearts, and meditate on our ways.

Let us look at the character of the open and reck-

less Sabbath-breaker ; that presumptuous mortal, who separates from God and goes forth into the world to trample down the temporal and the eternal happiness of man ; who steps, during consecrated time, into the Spiritual Vineyard, and from the trees which the Lord has planted "for the knowledge of good and evil," endeavors to pluck and waste that fruit, which is "medicine" to the soul, and to scatter and destroy those leaves, which "are for the healing of the nations ;" and who, while engaged in his evil work, sometimes feels the judgments of God lighting on his head ; and is never shielded from them, except by the patience of the very Being whom he provokes, and who, perhaps, kindly spares to save ! Oh, who would willingly take a step which might, by even a possibility, lead to the formation of such a character as this ? Who would seek consolation in the thought that he has never openly scorned the Sabbath ; and that his improprieties thereon have only been such as are common and not esteemed discreditable ! Will such pleas be accepted with God ? May not the Sabbath be as really broken by levity and unholy thoughts in the house of prayer, as it is by rudeness and licentiousness in the house of mirth ? Is there not much less distinction than is usually supposed between an open and undefended abuse of the season, and that disregard for it, which is more secret and creditable ? If the former

springs from hostility, does not the latter arise from indifference, towards religion and religious duty? Between these two states of mind does God make so wide a distinction as man? If hostility wage open war, does not indifference look down with cold neglect, upon this great ordinance of revealed Religion?

Let us meditate upon these things. Let us, both writer and reader, examine ourselves. Let us, each for himself, look into his own mind, and see how far, on this important point, he is in fault. Let us "not judge according to the appearance," but let us "judge righteous judgment." Especially, let us not think to find safety by concealing the truth in our own hearts. We may hide it from our fellow man, but not from our all-searching God. He closely inspects, and faithfully records, all our neglect or abuse, whether secret or open, of his holy day. In the books of the Judgment the record lies, and we must, one day, meet it there. In order to meet it in peace, let us now seek to be reconciled to our Father in heaven. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." Let us, as we all have need, apply to this for cleansing from the guilt, which we may have contracted on this day of sacred, instituted REST. Let us flee to Jesus; and, at the foot of his Cross, pour out acknowledgments of sin, and plead for the gift of his Spirit, that we may be enlightened, renewed and

sanctified, and hereafter enabled to keep the Sabbath holy, to the glory of God, and the salvation of men !

And now, should there be, among the readers of these pages,—God forbid there should be,—*one* careless, sorrowless, determined profaner of the Lord's day, to that one let me affectionately address a single closing consideration.

I speak what has been certified by the records of criminal jurisprudence, as well as by the voice of common observation, when I say, that Sabbath-breaking frequently proves a *leading sin*. It has led to crimes, which have sent thousands to an ignominious death, which have brought multitudes into shame and wreck of reputation, and which have cost innumerable myriads the worth of their souls. From this consideration, then, connected with another, that God closely inspects and faithfully records all profanations of his day, let the reckless Sabbath-breaker step forward in spirit to the hour, when he will “stand before the judgment-seat of Christ,” surrounded by angels, and by the spirits of the human race, and realize the emotions with which he will then reflect on his grievous violations of the Sabbath. Looking back on the course of his life, perhaps on what his last earthly Sabbath witnessed, with what grief and anguish will his heart be filled ! Methinks he will be ready to exclaim in bitterness of soul : “How rash has been



my folly ! How many precious seasons for repentance have I enjoyed ! How many kind invitations, and warnings and strivings of the Spirit have I despised ! To what hardness of heart, and to what final impenitency did my abuses of the Lord's Day lead me ! And now, to what endless, unrelieved despair ! Oh ! that those Sabbaths, ONE, at least, might again return ! But, no ! No Sabbath will ever dawn and shine on all my desolate and dark Eternity ! In HEAVEN, indeed, ALL will be Sabbath, all holy REST, for ever. But HERE, there will be no peace, no quietness to me. I have refused counsel, and despised reproof ; and now I " eat for ever the fruit of my own way."

Dear reader, if, by a possibility, I address such an one as is here contemplated, let these feelings, as they come fresh from a scene, which may soon be realized, live awhile in your mind. Keep your eye fixed on that scene, till, by God's blessing, you discover and feel the sins, of which your Sabbath hours have been witnesses ; and till you can resolve, in a strength not your own, that, hereafter, you will " REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY." Thus you will be saved from sorrow without end, and introduced to a blessedness unmeasured and immeasurable !

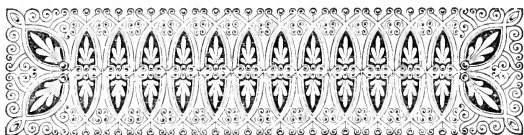


LECTURE VIII.

ISAIAH LVIII. 13, 14.

“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 Honorable; and shalt honor 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.”





### VIII.

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THESE words I consider the best summary in the Bible of the leading views of the Sabbath, which I have hitherto taken. They allude to its nature and design, as a "holy" rest, to be kept "honorable" to the Lord. They epitomise its duties, as they require "honor" and worship to God, with their included attention to personal religion, and abstinence from all that is impure and selfish, sinful and secular, in doing our own ways, finding our own pleasure, and speaking our own words. They hint, too, at the benefits of the Sabbath; at its spiritual blessings, such as conversion from sin, growth in grace, joy in the Spirit, and ripeness for glory, intimated in the phrase; "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord;" and at its temporal favors, such as personal comfort, prosperity and es-

teem, expressed under the idea "of riding on the high places of the earth;" and such as national peace, strength and permanency, shadowed under the figure of being "fed with the heritage of Jacob thy father." And finally; they strongly and necessarily imply the exceeding sinfulness of violating the Sabbath, as stated and urged on the conscience in the last Lecture.

And now, dear reader, if the examination of this important subject, through which we have passed, and which is so happily condensed in my present text, has, through God's blessing, had the effect of elevating your views of the character of the Sabbath, of deepening and fixing its hold on your religious conscience and affections, and of convincing you of the sin of either its neglect or its abuse, our time will not have been spent in vain; the results of our attention will tell happily on the account, which we shall all soon render at the great tribunal in Eternity.

In concluding the whole series, there is one point of peculiar interest, to which I would for a moment invite your consideration. I refer to the conflict, which is now carried on in Christian countries for and against the institution of the Sabbath.

On the one hand, for several years past, the Christian public, both in this country and in England, have been making special exertions to secure a due sanctification of this holy day. These exertions have been

prompted by the serious and increasing abuses of the Sabbath, which are openly tolerated ; such as travelling in all its various modes, the opening of shops for traffic in cities and large towns, and a resort to places of public amusement and dissipation ; and by the dangers to the Sabbath, which are to be apprehended from various sources ; such as the great influx into this country of European foreigners, who have been educated with little or no regard for the sacredness of the day, and the current circulation amongst us of European literature, some of it excellent of its kind, but much of it filled with lax and unscriptural notions of this Institution. Looking with a careful and a sorrowing eye on these and kindred evils, multitudes of serious and reflecting Christians, both in the United States and in England, many of whom are alike distinguished by character and by station, have been awakened to their growing magnitude ; and, firmly relying on the providence and grace of God, have resolved to exert their whole influence in favor of a due observance of the Sabbath, of making it, wherever known, a day hallowed to the God of all the earth. Filled with the spirit of the text, they desire to turn away every foot from doing his own pleasure on God's holy day ; to lead every man to call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; thus bringing them to delight themselves in

the Lord, to ride upon the high places of the earth, and to be fed with the heritage of Jacob their father, as the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.

For the attainment of this divine object, their great resort is—not to arms—not to legislative enactments—not to penal inflictions. They raise not the arm of government—they lift not the sword of law. The theory of some governments is indeed such as to admit the enforcement of the Sabbath; whilst that of others is unfavorable to such a resort. It is a resort, however, which judicious Christians are not, in any cases, fond of making. Their resource lies in moral argument and action. They would embody and concentrate all good moral influences, whether in the labors of the pulpit, in the power of the press, or in the energies of example; and they would throw these influences, openly and with a prayer to God, into that scale, which will make the great balance, whereon are suspended the two opposite destinies of every Christian land, turn in favor of private and public good order, peace and permanency; into that scale, which will elevate the whole mass of public prosperity and happiness, of political and judiciary institutions, of the religion of the Gospel and the Church of Christ—a measureless quantity of mercies for man—out of that yawning gulf of destruction, into which they will inevitably descend, if abuse and profanation



of the Sabbath should once pervade and possess Christian nations.

On the other hand ; while the friends of the Sabbath are waking, its enemies are not sleeping. In Europe it has been brought into extensive discredit as a divinely authoritative institution, and has numberless enemies, who sleeplessly seek its utter desecration. In this country the opposition is equally virulent, and scarcely less extensive. I will state a fact. In the principal city of our Union open efforts have been made for the subversion of the Sabbath not only, but also of the religion which it supports. In that city, a cause involving the offence of Sabbath breaking, was brought, some years since, for trial before jury. In his defence, the advocate for the accused stated, that "he rose to justify what was termed a violation of the laws of God," or a profanation of the Sabbath ; that his client was a man who "had read much and studied deeply," and who had "wisely arrived at the conclusion that every faith and all religions, are false, fraudulent and superstitious ;" in other words, that he was one of those beings, "without God in the world," who deem religion and the Sabbath alike worthy of contempt ; and that, in "advocating and disseminating these opinions" there were engaged "in that city two societies, and one printing press," the defendant being "a member" of one of

the societies, and of course an eager learner in the principles, which that press is, in common with others in the country, pouring forth.\*

Here, Christian reader, we get a view of something appalling in relation to the subject, which has so long occupied our attention. The combination, which has been mentioned, against religion and the Sabbath, is not feeble, nor unsupported. Its desecrating assemblies HAVE been held in mockery, on this day of God; and the wild sounds there uttered HAVE been caught by the ears of many beautiful, fashionable, and polite. Its laboring presses have collected their matter from wide extremes of our population, and sent out their poisoned pages to be read and studied throughout the land. These operations were but the heart of a once spreading system, indications of whose working are still given in numerous directions, and proofs of whose yet deleterious agency are not wanting in the very midst of ourselves.

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\* Philadelphia Recorder, Vol. VI., No. 15, July 5, 1828; about the time when these Lectures were first written. Since that period, much has been done in correcting public opinion, and what had become, too, public practice, on this subject. God grant that the Work of Reformation, which has been begun, may become complete, not only in this, but also in every Christian land.

In truth, the ranks of Christendom, in our own country especially, have been distinctly taking sides on the subject of religion and the Sabbath. Our land has become a field of moral combat, on this, as well as on other subjects. Two opposing hosts have gone out to the issue. On the one hand, the friends of religion and the Sabbath are endeavoring to erect around the peace and happiness, the morality and religion, the law and government of the country, the impenetrable bulwarks of this divine institution. On the other hand, its enemies are, if less publicly, yet not less strenuously, than in other years, struggling to pull them down; and in so doing are endeavoring to prostrate a fabric, which, if it fall, must fall on the ruins of our country, on the wreck of all that is dear and valuable and holy. If they succeed, some at least of the scenes of Revolutionary France will return and be acted over even in America; on the plains, which have been consecrated to the steppings of freedom and of religion. In the words of Dwight; "The Sabbath will" again "be changed into the Decade, and the house of God into a stable; the Bible" will once more "be paraded through the Streets on an ass, or consumed upon a bonfire; immortal existence" will again be theoretically "blotted out of the Divine kingdom; the Redeemer be postponed to a murderer; and

the Creator to a prostitute, styled, The Goddess of Reason!"

Which side in this conflict will ultimately prevail, my mind suffers not a doubt. It will be the side of the Sabbath and its supporters. But why—when its opposers are so subtle, so active, so combined? Because on the side of the Sabbath fights that "High and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy." "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest Thou?" He is our only, He is our sufficient ground of trust. "He will work and none shall hinder." He will cast disunion, or trembling, or curse into the midst of his enemies; blast their designs; and finally, through what brief, or prolonged vicissitudes of conflict, He only knows, give his people victory. Through what brief, or prolonged vicissitudes of conflict He only knows. We are, and must be, ignorant. Of one thing, however, even we may be assured. He works by the instrumentality of human agents: and in those whom He has already raised up and employed in this service, and in the success with which He has thus far crowned their labors, He calls on me, on you, on all who would not contend against God, to engage in the same service; to stand forth honestly on his side, and to "come to

the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

And I pray that all, in our country, of every name and every rank, may hear, and feel, and follow this call from God ; and with all their might and soul and strength, by word and action, by example and influence, engage in the work of promoting the observance of the Christian Sabbath. This may be done in various ways.

1. It may be done by the co-operation of religious and reflecting men in public stations and professions. The extent of their influence in favor of right public opinion and practice may become almost incalculable. Let them form a just estimate of the sacredness and the value of the Sabbath, and then pledge themselves to their consciences and to God, that they will use all proper and Scriptural means for securing the season from neglect and profanation ; that they will at all times, and in all places where they may be, cherish and inculcate in others, sentiments of affection and reverence for this holy day ; that they will uniformly discountenance men and companies of men, who are known to employ their influence, their dependents, or their capital, in habitual and sinful violations of its rest ; and that they will as uniformly encourage those who are known to regulate all their conduct and business by a conscientious regard to its sacredness ; let

them regularly and unostentatiously do these things ; and it is impossible to calculate the extent to which they may be the means of swelling the impulse of that moral sentiment and action, which are necessary to render the Sabbath, throughout our land, a consecrated day, and to secure to ourselves and our posterity the manifold blessings of which it is designed to be the instrument.

As examples of the manner in which this influence may be exerted, let me mention a few facts.

Dr. Johnson, that great pride of English literature, was a strict and conscientious observer of the Sabbath. Being once asked by a lady, whether he did not think a certain cleric, whose observance of the day was notoriously lax, to be a very agreeable man, he made her no answer. The question, however, being repeated, he replied with his usual honesty and superiority to the requirements of a false civility ; “ Child, I will not speak in favor of a Sabbath-breaker to please you or any one else.”

On his death-bed, the same great man sent for Sir Joshua Reynolds, the celebrated English painter, and after conversing seriously with him for some time, said he had three favors to ask of him, which, as a dying friend, he hoped would not be refused. The second of these requests was, that he would read the

Scriptures ; and the last, that he would abstain from using his pencil on the Sabbath.

A similar, though more striking fact is mentioned of Dr. Porteus, one of the most excellent of the Bishops of London. When sick of the disease of which he died, he happened to hear that one of the London Clubs, at the head of which was the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., had agreed to hold meetings on the Sabbath. He requested an interview with the Prince, which was courteously granted. Assisted by two servants, the feeble but holy man entered the Prince's apartment, and with all the impressive eloquence of godliness in high station, and within view of death, besought him that the meetings might be held on some other day than the Sabbath. The Prince was seemingly much affected, and promised to use his influence in favor of the Bishop's request !

In view of illustrative facts like these, it is only necessary to say to every one who occupies a post of public influence, "According to thine abilities, station, and opportunities, 'go, and do thou likewise.'"

2. Again : the observance of the Sabbath may be promoted not only by the influence of public and professional men, but also by the example and endeavors of private Christians.

Professed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, let

us try the standard by which we have hitherto regulated our observance of the Sabbath, and try it by the measure of God's word. Can we conscientiously exhort others to walk in this particular "so as they have us for an example." Nay, can we ourselves conscientiously consent to walk for the future on this day by the rule of our former lives? This trial of ourselves can hardly fail to bring us to humbling views of our Christian course. Let us, then, sink into contrition over the low and worldly spirit, which we have too often carried through our hours of holy time; over the cold and wandering affections, which we have so often indulged in our Sabbath duties; and over the irregular and imperfect example of hallowing the day which we have thus been led to set before the world. And let us look earnestly to God for the gift of his Spirit, that we may be able hereafter to enter on every returning season of his sacred rest in a higher and holier frame of mind; with more fixed and ardent affections in devotion; and in the exhibition before the world of a more unvarying and consistent Christian example. Whenever we think of the day, ourselves, or speak of it to others, let us never fail to esteem and describe it as a day which stands high in our affections, and the universal sanctification of which we are earnestly desirous to promote. Let us uniformly "call the Sabbath a delight,



the holy of the Lord honorable." Let us never cease to "honor him," on the Sabbath, "not finding our own earthly pleasures, nor doing our own selfish ways, nor speaking our own idle words." "Then shall we delight ourselves in the Lord;" the blessing of the God of Jacob will rest upon us; we shall be the means of elevating around us the standard of the Sabbath; and we shall quietly exert, and silently send forth, a purified moral influence, which will operatively coalesce with more public efforts for its observance.

And now, in dismissing the whole subject, I would fain leave a word with a few distinct classes of individuals.

1. Let, then, the man whose loose and unsettled notions of the Sabbath lead him to its occasional violation, reflect how seriously he impedes the efforts of those who are solicitous to secure for our country and the Church the full blessings of this institution; and how directly he assists the efforts of those who are its determined enemies, and who, if they should succeed in abolishing it, would, to a moral certainty, put out the light and banish the blessings of religion from amongst us. Let him reflect from whom he separates, and with whom he joins, every time he misspends these sacred hours. The holiest individuals, the most devout families, the most religious communities are always most conscientious observers of the Sabbath.

But the villain never regards it ; the irreligious family never sanctify it ; the licentious community never “remember to keep it holy.” Let him reflect on these things, and resolve, on principle, to join the friends of truth and happiness, and to come entirely over “to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

2. Again : let the man whose selfish and worldly views have led him into the careless, needless, constant habit of violating the Sabbath, of spending it in idle inaction, in strolling the fields, in examining his business, in looking to his flocks and herds, or in studying voluptuous pleasures, consider how pernicious is his example, and how stoutly he counteracts the blessed influences of this holy day. Such an one generally pleads in excuse that “he has labored or studied hard for six days, and needs the seventh for rest.” But, let him remember, that the rest which either the body or the mind needs on this day, is not indolence, but the casting off of the burthens of life for the light and pleasing duties of religion. Let him remember that many a toilsome and indigent child of God has such a delight in the Sabbath as to make its holy exercises his most refreshing and invigorating rest ; and even the labor of attending them through lengthened distances and inclement airs, seem light and pleasant ; and that if he himself were as much engaged in seeking the kingdom of God as in amass-

ing the treasures of earth, he would speedily find in the sanctification of the Sabbath, both to the body and to the mind, the best of all refreshings.

3. Once more : let the poor man, who breaks the Sabbath, and then pleads that "the necessities of poverty know no law, and that the mouths of famishing offspring must be filled with bread, even if it be earned on holy time," remember, for his encouragement in duty, that bread earned on the Lord's Day satisfieth not the hungry soul, and that God never lets the bodies of his children suffer for obeying his commands. It is the testimony of Sir Matthew Hale, one of the greatest of English judges, and one of the best of English Christians, when writing to his children : "I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of this day hath ever joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time ; and the week so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me ; and, on the contrary side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments. And this I do not say slightly, but upon a long and sound observation and experience." Let this noble testimony be remembered. It is not to him who violates, but to him who sanctifies the holy Rest, that God makes the promise of my text : "If thou turn away thy foot from doing thy pleasure on

my holy day ; and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honorable ; then thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the Earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." Let the poor remember that no man ever permanently bettered his worldly circumstances by spending the Sabbath either in habitual labor, or in the contrivance of plans for the improvement of his condition. Such endeavors to grow rich, or even to gain comforts, generally constitute the most certain way to grow poor, and to perpetuate hunger. Such labors are a moth to the poor man's substance. Why ? Because the curse of God is in them, and cleaves to them like rust to the blighted harvest. Let him cast them away, and worship his Maker. Then shall he be prospered in his six days' toil. The dews of the divine blessing shall descend on his temporal lot. His children shall flourish in his sight, and beneath his example. While both he and they will be permitted to enjoy a reputable competency ; perhaps even to "ride on the high places of the Earth."

4. Finally : let the youth of our country, of both sexes, who are soon to go forth into active life, and under Providence, receive into their hands and practically control the wealth, the business, the influence now in the hands of their parents, reflect seriously on

the course of duty before them, and on the high responsibilities, resting on them, in relation to the Sabbath. My dear young friends, look out upon the moral field which the present situation of our country exhibits, and see the two opposing hosts which have there gone forth to conflict. With the one are inseparably associated the God of our Fathers, his blessed religion and his holy Sabbath ; our laws, our government, and all that is excellent in the land. With the other, are as inseparably associated atheism, vice and crime ; and their united aim is, to render our country the dreary home of such doctrines as these : “ oblivion to the Gospel, abolition to the Sabbath, extinction to immortality, annihilation to the soul.” When you go out to action, as, if life be spared, you inevitably must, with which of these hosts will you enrol yourselves ? Youth of my Country, will you precipitate yourselves into those dark and desolating ranks, and help them, either directly or indirectly, either openly or secretly, to tear down all that is good, and happy and holy in the midst of us ? Will you help them to dig down the bulwarks and break up the foundations of the Holy Sabbath ? I cannot believe that you will. Go, rather, and, while your hearts are susceptible of kind, and amiable and virtuous impressions, place yourselves nobly on the side of God. Identify yourselves with that band of benevolent Christians who are toil-

ing and struggling so nobly to establish this invaluable institution, with all its kindred blessings, on an immovable foundation. Their efforts will eventually be crowned with success, and their influence shall yet be remembered in the best days of our history. Go, then, ingenuous youth, and take to yourselves the elevated satisfaction of being co-workers with them. In such pure and worthy association, may you be enabled to seize not only those temporal benefits, but also, those Eternal Crowns, for which they are striving. May yours be the delights of early and of pure religion; of useful lives and of happy deaths. May yours be the lofty pleasure of exerting a salutary influence on the cause of the Sabbath; of spreading its rich lights, its multiplied blessings, over all our land. And may you thus be the means of imparting to our national character such a brilliancy, and permanency and sacredness of lustre, as shall render it the fairest star that ever yet has shone on the firmament of nations.









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