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THE

LAW OF THE SABBATH

STILL BINDING, AND WHAT IT FORBIDS.

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I ASK for a few minutes of the reader's time, while I reason with him concerning one of the laws of the world in which he lives. That law is found in Exodus, chapter 20, and reads thus: "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 man-servant, 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."

Here is a law claiming to regulate a *seventh* portion of human life. If a man lives twenty-one years, this law claims the entire control of three of them; if he lives fifty years, it disposes of more than *seven* of them. It is therefore important. But it also devotes this portion of time to *religious* purposes; and these are the highest ends of life. All other time is secular. This is holy. That *may* be occupied with things which perish in the using. This *must* be given to things which take hold on eternity. Many questions may be raised concerning this law; but one question is at the foundation of all the rest: "Is this law still

in force?" If it is not binding now, it never will be; and if it is binding now, it will bind while the world stands. The inquiry is of great practical interest. Public manners are vastly affected by the esteem in which the Sabbath is held. It is, therefore, right to look well to the foundations.

DOES THE LAW OF THE SABBATH BIND US?

It is evident that laws may cease to be of force; that is, they may cease to be laws. When this occurs, it must be in one of the following ways.

The condition of a people may be so changed as to render obedience to the law impracticable. In human governments such cases often arise, and the law, unless administered by tyrants, becomes a dead letter. No good government will inflict the penalty on the transgressor to whom obedience is impossible, even though the law remains on the statute-book. But the law of the Sabbath can as well be kept now as at any former period of the world. Indeed, when given from Mount Sinai, it was given to a people on a long journey, to whom were wanting many conveniences which we enjoy for its careful observance. If this law was in its nature ever practicable, it is so now.

Some laws *expire by limitation*. Such are many of the laws of every country. Such were many of the laws given by Moses. They were in force until Christ, who was their end, came; and then they bound no longer. Thus the whole ceremonial law ceased to bind after the death of Christ, to which it was limited. But no limit was fixed to the observance of the fourth commandment, either when first given or afterwards.

A competent authority may *repeal* a law, and thus its obliging power may cease. Every free government affords numerous instances of the repeal of laws once useful, but no longer so. In a regular government, the repeal must be passed by the power which enacts the law. The great

Lawgiver of the world is God. He ordained the law of the Sabbath, and he has never repealed it. Is any evidence of such repeal found in Scripture? If so, where is the book, the chapter, the verse containing it? All admit that the law was in force until Christ. Christ did not repeal it, for he says so, Matt. 5:17; nor did the apostles anywhere declare that it was repealed.

If this law, therefore, has ceased to bind, it must be in some way utterly unknown to us. It is still practicable; it has not expired by limitation; it has not been repealed.

THIS LAW IS PART OF A CODE WHICH IS IN FORCE.

It may also be said that this law is *in the middle of a code*, all the rest of which is acknowledged to be binding; and why not this? Were the other precepts of this code spoken by God from Sinai, amidst blackness and darkness, and tempest and terrors? So was this. Were the others written by the finger of God, on tables of stone? So was this. Were the others deposited in the ark of the testimony, in the holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim? So was this. No ceremonial or repealable law, given to the Jews, had these marks of honor put upon it. Did Christ say, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law?" He said it as much of this as of any other precept. Did Christ's most devoted followers keep the other commandments? So did they keep this. Luke 23:56.

THIS LAW ENACTED WITH GREAT CARE.

On the face of this law are found some things which prove that God, who gave it, regarded it as of great importance.

In the wording of it, a more full explanation of its true intent is given than in any other commandment. It is enacted both positively and negatively: positively, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy;" negatively, "In it

thou shalt do no manner of work.” No other precept of the decalogue is given in both these forms, although every fair rule of interpreting them requires, that when they enjoin a duty, we should regard them as forbidding the contrary sin; and when they forbid a sin, we should regard them as enjoining the contrary duty. Yet in this command, but in no other, both forms are used.

This command is also introduced as no other is. The very first word of it is a solemn memento—“Remember.” This word is not found elsewhere in the decalogue.

Moreover, this command not only addresses men in the singular, “Thou shalt,” etc., but it goes further, and tells who is thereby intended, namely, not only the head of the family, but also the son, the daughter, the man-servant and the maid-servant, the cattle and the stranger. No such particularity is found in any other precept of either table of the law.

In this command God also reasons with us on the equity of his demands. He says, he gives us six days out of seven, as if he had said, “I am no hard master; I do not act unreasonably. I give you ample time to do your necessary work. I give you *six* days; therefore, if you have any conscience, give me the *seventh*.” For, says he, “It is mine—it is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.” Surely, you will not deny to your God a right so equitable, a demand so fair.

It is also stated by God in the command itself, that he set us the example on the completion of the creation. And shall we not follow *such* an example? If we ought to be holy because God is holy, if we ought to forgive *our* enemies because God forgives *his* enemies, we ought also to keep the Sabbath-day because God kept it. Teaching by example is the highest kind of instruction.

THE SABBATH GIVEN IN EDEN.

Nor did the Sabbath originate with Moses, or with any sinner. It was an ordinance in Eden. When, for his sins,

man was driven out of paradise, God permitted him to carry with him two institutions, established for his good before his fall. Which of these institutions is the greatest mercy to our world, or which is the dearest to the heart of a good man, I will not undertake to say. One of them is *marriage*, the other *the Sabbath-day*. If he is the enemy of virtue who would abolish the former, he cannot be the friend of God or man who would set aside the latter. By restoring marriage, as far as possible, to its original purity in Eden, that is, by confining it to the pairs and rendering it indissoluble, the Christian religion has incalculably advanced civilization, peace, and all the domestic virtues. By restoring the Sabbath, as near as possible, to its purity in Eden, that is, by the holy observance of all of it, man makes his nearest approach to primitive innocence and to future glory. There is no example of any community, large or small, ancient or modern, continuing virtuous or happy for a considerable time, if they slighted either marriage or the Sabbath-day.

But God has also, in this command, done what he has not done in any other part of the moral law—he has pronounced a blessing on the institution. “The LORD blessed the Sabbath-day,” and thus made it

“Day of all the days the best.”

The history of the world, in the pouring out of spiritual mercies, shows what is meant by God’s blessing this day of rest.

These several and remarkable peculiarities of this precept justly entitle it to as high and sacred regard as can be claimed for any command given from Mount Sinai. If we admit that this is not of binding force, we cannot show the obligation of any of the rest, unless we can show that they are in some way written in the constitution of man, and that this is not. But it would be easy to show, by innumerable testimonies, that life is not only rendered miserable, but also much shortened by not observing the day of rest. The

world over, those men do the most work, and do it with the most comfort, who rest from labor one day in seven. Nor is there one exception to this remark. It applies as much to mental as to bodily labor.

THIS LAW OFTEN ENACTED.

The law of the Sabbath is frequently noticed in other parts of the Bible besides the moral law; it is frequently and solemnly declared to be binding, and its spiritual nature is often explained. Indeed, the law of the Sabbath is several times solemnly reënacted. It is mentioned with the highest reverence in the second chapter of Genesis, as a day "blessed and sanctified" by God. It is specially reënacted for the journey through the wilderness, in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, four chapters before that containing the moral law. It is repeated in the thirty-first chapter of the same book. It is also made by God the pattern for the solemn feasts of his ancient church. Leviticus, chapter 23. In short, it is often noticed by Moses, by David, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. One of these passages could not have pointed more plainly to a *spiritual* service on the Sabbath, if it had been given by Christ or Paul. It is in Isaiah 58: 13, 14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," that is, from trampling on it, "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: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

In the New Testament, also, frequent mention is made of a day of rest and solemn worship. It is not necessary now to examine more than one of these passages. It is in the fourth chapter of Hebrews, where the rest of the Sab-

bath in Eden is made the figure of the rest of the Jews in Canaan, then of the rest of God's people under the Gospel dispensation, and, lastly, of the everlasting rest of all good men in heaven. Surely, so clear and evangelical a writer as Paul, in an epistle, one great object of which was, to show that the ceremonial law had passed away, would not have made the Sabbath on earth a type of the bliss of heaven even to Christians, if he had thought they were at liberty to regard it otherwise than as a holy, religious day. From the Scriptures the following things are clearly made out.

In both the Old and New Testaments God claims the day as his. Exod. 20 : 10 ; Isa. 58 : 13 ; Rev. 1 : 10.

Pious men have always acknowledged this claim. Neh. 9 : 14 ; Luke 23 : 56. Was there ever a community on earth who feared God and did not reverence his Sabbaths? When that company of heathen and mutineers who settled Pitcairn's Island, repented and gave evidence of piety, although there was but one Bible and one man from a Christian country among them, yet the Sabbath was strictly observed.

There walked of late in this world a man of conceptions as sublime as they were philosophical, of views as benevolent as they were accurate. Recently, "he was not, for God took him." Before he left us, he said,

"We never, in the whole course of our recollections, met with a Christian who bore upon his character *every other evidence* of the Spirit's operation, who did not *remember the Sabbath-day and keep it holy*. We appeal to the memory of all the worthies who are lying in their graves, that, eminent as they were in every other grace and accomplishment of the new creature, the religiousness of their Sabbath-day shone with equal lustre amid the fine assemblage of virtues which adorned them. * * *

"Rest assured, that the Christian, having the law of God written in his heart, and denying the Sabbath a place in his

affections, is an anomaly that is nowhere to be found. Every Sabbath image, with every Sabbath circumstance, is dear to him. He loves the quietness of that hallowed morn. He loves the church-bell sound that summons him to the house of prayer. He loves to join the chorus of devotion, and to sit and listen to that voice of persuasion, which is lifted in the hearing of an assembled multitude. He loves the retirement of this day from the din of worldly business and the inroads of worldly men. He loves the leisure it brings along with it; and sweet to his soul is the exercise of that hallowed hour, when there is no eye to witness him but the eye of Heaven, and when, in solemn audience with the Father who seeth him in secret, he can, on the wings of celestial contemplation, leave all the cares and all the secularities of the world behind him." Dr. Chalmers.

So it has ever been. He who loves prayer and praise, loves the day devoted to the exercise of them.

It is generally agreed that Christ came to enlarge, not to curtail the privileges of his people, and especially of the poor and afflicted, many of whom are not the masters of their own time. But if he abolished the Sabbath, he cut off the pious poor from one of their dearest privileges, one no less necessary to relieve their heavy hearts than to refresh their toil-worn bodies.

The Scriptures contain many precious promises to those who reverently keep this day, and take pleasure in its appropriate duties. Isa. 56 : 1-7, and 58 : 14 ; Jer. 17 : 21-26. To such God will give, in his house and within his walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. He will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. He will make them joyful in his house of prayer, and will accept all their sacrifices; and blessings like those which came upon Jacob shall fall upon them.

The Scriptures denounce many terrible curses against those who profane this holy day. Jer. 17 : 27 ; Ezek. 20 : 21.

These curses are none the less dreadful because expressed in general terms.

God has often visited, and does still visit sore calamities on many violators of his holy day. From the days of the man who perished for his sin in the camp of Israel, Num. 15 : 36, to this day, God has made awful examples of Sabbath-breakers. The man has been blind who has not seen them. Almost all felons in prison and under the gallows are known to have provoked God by a series of open violations of the law of the Sabbath. Of six ladies who spent their Sabbaths at cards, five died either objects of pity or without a moment's warning. Not one in fifty of known criminals in the land even outwardly keeps the Sabbath. Men forsake God, and he forsakes them. They despise him, and he takes away the restraints of his providence, and they are lightly esteemed, yea, become vile in the eyes of even wicked men.

In both the Old and New Testaments God declares that the Sabbath is a benevolent institution. He says, he "has given us the Sabbath." Exod. 16 : 29. It is not a vexatious or injurious restriction upon us, but a gift, a mercy. "I gave them my Sabbaths, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them," Ezek. 20 : 12 ; that they might have proper time to acquire the most important of all knowledge, the knowledge of God and salvation. Christ himself taught the same, when he said, "The Sabbath was made *for* man." Mark 2 : 27. It was made to do him good, and not evil. Nor was it made for the Jew alone. It was made for MAN, for the whole race.

Both the Old and New Testaments record the observance of this day by godly men as an act approved by God, and appointed in Scripture. Even after the death of our Lord, the holy women, who wished to anoint his sacred body, would not do it until the Sabbath was over. Luke 23 : 56.

PROPHECY REQUIRES A CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

The Old Testament requires that under the Gospel, in times of its universal prevalence, "from one Sabbath to another, all flesh should come to worship before the Lord." Isa. 66 : 23, and Ezek. 46 : 1. This is an argument of great importance. The holy observance of the Sabbath is made by the prophets one of the tests by which the evangelical character of any people, after the coming of Christ, shall be judged. The prophets declare that the offering of prayer and praise, and solemn oaths, in the name of the true God, shall be marks of a true Gospel church. Psalm 72 : 15 ; Isa. 56 : 7 ; 65 : 16 ; 66 : 23. Suppose a church should be found, whose members in solemn oaths swore by some other than the true God, and never prayed to the Lord, nor daily praised his name, could any man fail to see that it was without the marks of a true church ? And if no Sabbath was observed in the church of God, it would prove that Messiah's reign had not yet commenced. Christianity would not be what prophecy required that it should be. The test is a fair one. Just in proportion as churches decline in the practice and power of godliness, become unsound in doctrine, licentious in life, and lax in discipline, wedded to human inventions, and heedless of the law of God in other respects, in the same proportion do they lightly esteem the Sabbath of the Lord. *No Sabbath, no Church*, is the rule laid down in Scripture. It is a correct rule. Without that holy day, all true religion would soon vanish from the earth.

A SABBATH AFTER CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

When our Lord was upon earth, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, stating that the enemies of the holy city should cast a trench about it, and that the Roman eagle, the abomination that maketh desolate, should be seen from its walls. He directed his disciples how they should, with

the utmost haste, flee from the city, and said, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath-day." Matt. 24: 20. Now, Jerusalem was not destroyed for more than thirty years after Christ's ascension, and this prophecy was delivered for the direction of Christ's disciples, when the siege, leading to its destruction, should take place. They were to pray that their flight "be not in the winter," on account of the difficulty of fleeing at that season, "nor on the Sabbath-day." Whatever may have been the reason why the Sabbath-day was undesirable for flight, whether because it was not deemed lawful to travel far on that day—a Sabbath-day's journey being less than three miles—or because their tender consciences might cause them to hesitate, and not embrace the favored hour of escape, yet the fact is clear, that Christ foretold that at the destruction of Jerusalem, long after his ascension to glory, long after tens of thousands had been converted to the faith of Jesus, his people should have a day of rest, called by himself, "the Sabbath-day." Human perverseness may annul the force of any reasoning, but candor and piety will be satisfied with fair argument. All admit that all laws and ordinances given by Moses, and not binding to the end of the world, ceased to be of force from the ascension of Christ. But the flight of the Christians from the holy city was more than thirty years after that event, and yet Christ speaks of a "Sabbath-day" that should at that date, in the mother church at Jerusalem, bind the consciences, not of Jews wedded to the law of Moses, but of Christians, converted, baptized, and formed into churches taught by apostles themselves.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS HAD A SABBATH.

If we look into the early history of the Christians, we see that they did observe a day of sacred rest; the first day of each week. On that day of the first week after the

crucifixion, Jesus rose and was worshipped: on that day of the second week after his death, he assembled his disciples, said, "Peace be unto you," and confirmed their faith. The first day of the eighth week after his death, was the day of Pentecost, a glorious Christian Sabbath. In several passages of Scripture, we find a record of the meeting of the disciples and churches of Christ on that day, to worship God, to preach the Gospel, to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, and to collect alms, so that when Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, he directs that collections for charitable purposes be made weekly upon that set day. The work he directs them to perform is a work of piety, of proper love to their poor brethren, who were suffering through the violence of persecution—a work proper to a holy day; for it always was "lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days." Matt. 12 : 12. "Pure religion and undefiled before God, even the Father, is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Paul says that he had given the same command to other churches—the churches of Galatia, 1 Cor. 16 : 1—so that the observance was general. Paul gave these directions by the Holy Ghost. Galatia was quite remote from Corinth, several countries and a sea lying between them; so that the religious observance of the first day of the week was very general, and by no means confined to any one nation or class of Christians.

When we come to the last book of Scripture, we find John, Rev. 1 : 10, saying, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." We read in the New Testament once of the "Lord's supper," and once of the "Lord's day." Does any one doubt that these expressions designate a feast and a day well known to the early Christians, and distinguished from all other days and feasts by their religious character?

Such are some of the arguments, by which it is shown that the Sabbath should be observed by us. Are they not

fair, solid, and conclusive? Are we not bound by the law of the Sabbath?

The most common method of attempting to destroy or lessen the force of these arguments, is by asserting, that if we are bound to observe any day, it is the seventh, and not the first, as the seventh was the day observed from the creation till the death of Christ. It is sufficient to reply,

1. That the term Sabbath signifies rest; and that rest by divine appointment may, without at all changing its nature, be transferred from one day to another. Some other Jewish festivals were called sabbaths, but never is one of them called "*the Sabbath*," "*the rest*."

2. There is nothing in the fourth commandment, fixing this weekly rest to the seventh day of the week. The law in the decalogue does not point out any day of the week, but only a day succeeding six days of labor. It is said, "God blessed the *Sabbath*-day, and hallowed it."

3. The resurrection of Christ was a very glorious event, to which the highest importance is properly attached, and which is well worthy of a weekly and joyful commemoration. His resurrection was life from the dead to all his people, and to all their hopes. If the completion of creation was worthy of a weekly celebration, much more is the same true of the completion of redemption. For Christians to celebrate the seventh day of the week, would be to keep a feast on the gloomiest day of the week—the day on which their Lord lay in the sepulchre of Joseph.

4. Apostolic example is as safe and correct a guide as apostolic precept, and no serious and candid reader of the New Testament can doubt that the apostles and early Christians did observe the first day of the week as the rest appointed by God. This fact, therefore, clearly determines our duty. Many duties are taught us by the example of inspired men. An appeal to such example is fair, and the example itself is binding.

5. It is believed by many sound writers, that prophecy foretold that the day of Christ's resurrection should be kept as the Sabbath under the Gospel. This prophecy is in the 118th Psalm: "The Stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." They refused him when they demanded his death. He became the headstone by his resurrection; for by that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power." Rom. 1: 4. The very next words in the Psalm are, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it."

Some have suggested that the weekly day of rest under the Gospel, which is an eminently spiritual dispensation, is not to be a rest from labor or business, but only from sin. To such it is sufficient to reply, that every day of life ought to be a day of abstinence from all sin; and when it shall be shown that we are at liberty to indulge in sin six days out of seven, and then avoid it for one day only, it will be time enough to make a more serious and extended answer.

But some persons of more seriousness ask, "Does not the apostle Paul, Rom. 14: 5, 6, declare the observance of days a matter of indifference?" He does; but the context clearly shows that he speaks not of the weekly Sabbath, nor of any institution of the decalogue, but of matters besides the moral law. The same remark is substantially applicable to what he says in Gal. 4: 10, and in Col. 2: 16.

Every law is to be known by its position and connection in a code. This is an invariable rule in interpreting every body of laws, and ought to be applied to the laws of God and the teaching of the apostles. When the whole connection of one of their arguments shows that they are simply endeavoring to wean their converts from Jewish ceremonies, it is most unfair to extend their general remarks to institutions as old as the creation, and observed before the fall of man, and by all the pious after the fall, up to the giving of the ceremonial law, and then not reenacted

as a part of the ceremonial law, but put in the middle of the moral law. "The handwriting of ordinances which was *against* us," is indeed "blotted out;" but that can never prove that the Sabbath, which is *for* us, is blotted out also.

If no time be set apart by a competent authority for public worship, there will be no public worship. When Paul rebuked some of the early Christians, for "forsaking the assembling of themselves together," Heb. 10 : 25, it would have been ample justification for them to have replied, "No such thing is required, and no time is set for it." But we hear of no such plea. It never was made. There was as much agreement among the early Christians in observing the Lord's day as in observing the Lord's supper. It would be mere will-worship to observe the Lord's day, if it had not been appointed to be so observed by God himself. Is it credible that God should have left the whole church so ignorant of his will, that all believers for eighteen hundred years should have been mistaken as to their duty in so important a matter as this? The apostle James says, "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." That he here means the moral law is evident, for he cites two of the precepts of it in the next verse : "Do not commit adultery," "Do not kill." James 2 : 10, 11. Now, if you do not kill, or swear profanely, yet if you violate the fourth commandment, you are "become a transgressor of the law." Let those who indulge in Antinomian laxity concerning the law of the Sabbath, solemnly consider the course of reasoning adopted by James, and be warned in time.

Having shown that the law of the Sabbath is still binding, let us see what it FORBIDS.

1. It forbids all labor not required by necessity or mercy. The divine example, recorded in Gen. 2 : 2, 3, teaches as much. "And God rested on the seventh day

from all his work which he had made." So also, in the very words of the fourth commandment, we are required to do "*all our work*" in six days, and are forbidden to do "*any work*" on the Sabbath. In Exodus 23 : 12, God says, "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." And in Ex. 31 : 15, "Six days may work be done ; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy unto the Lord." So in Lev. 23 : 3, "Six days shall work be done ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation : ye shall do no work therein ; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." And in Jer. 17 : 21, "Bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem ; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day." These several commands are in plain words, are clearly expressed, are given by divine authority, in the most solemn language, and are subject to no exceptions but those of necessity and mercy, as God has himself laid down the law in Matt. 12 : 1-13 ; Mark 3 : 1-6 ; Luke 6 : 6-11 ; Luke 13 : 10-17 ; Luke 14 : 1-6 ; and John 5 : 10-17. Although carnal men will abuse the doctrine of necessity and mercy to defend their violations of the Sabbath-day, yet "the law is good if a man use it lawfully."

Works of necessity are of two kinds—permanent, and occasional. Permanent works of necessity chiefly consist in preparing for the house of God, going to it, and returning from it. Occasional works of necessity arise from unusual events ; as the burning of a house, the inundation of a flood, or the destruction of a tempest. In either case the necessity should be real, and not feigned ; and should be such as previous care could not have avoided.

Works of mercy are also permanent, or occasional. Permanent works of mercy, are such as the use of necessary and sufficient food and drink for ourselves, and the giving

of them to our families, and to guests, and to brute animals. Occasional works of mercy, are such as the providence of God unexpectedly brings before us; as dressing a wound, nursing the sick, and visiting the poor and afflicted, for the purpose of administering relief and comfort.

2. Nor should the Lord's day be made a day of indulgence in sumptuous feasting. This sin seems to be pointed at in Ex. 16: 23; in Ex. 35: 2, 3; and in Num. 15: 32-36. It is true, God has never commanded that the Sabbath be a fast-day; nor would it be proper so to observe it. But let us not run to the other extreme. This is important, because sumptuous feasting produces drowsiness in religious exercises; because, as far as possible, servants should be relieved from labor, and have an opportunity of going to the house of God; and because, in such feasts we are too apt to seek the presence of others, who could better keep the Sabbath at home.

3. God, who has promised that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease," has expressly said, in Ex. 34: 21, "Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing-time and in harvest thou shalt rest." Very diverse from this law is the practice of many. But if man and beast ever need refreshment from rest, is it not during the excessive heat and labors of harvest? It is also a solemn question, and may be pertinently pressed, Who hath hardened himself against God, in violating this law, and prospered? But even if apparent success has attended any man in profaning the Sabbath in harvest-time, let him remember, that "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

4. It was a resolution of pious men, in the days of Nehemiah, that "if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath-day to sell, they would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day." Neh. 10: 31.

The thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second verse, records the efforts of that resolute and pious man to enforce this solemn purpose. He did not regard it as a merely civil regulation, but says to the nobles of Judah, "What evil thing is this that ye do? Ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." From these passages it is very evident, that the law of God forbids the opening of markets and shops, and the driving of bargains, on the Lord's day.

5. The Scriptures, with equal explicitness, forbid travel upon the Sabbath-day. "Thy stranger that is within thy gates" is put down by name in the fourth commandment, and is as much required to keep the Sabbath holy as any other person. So in Ex. 23 : 12, "the stranger" is required to "rest," and the reason is given, that he "may be refreshed." Many and ingenious, but wicked are the pleas urged by men for disregarding the fourth commandment when on a journey; but they are "refuges of lies," which will be swept away the moment man appears in the presence of God. This is a great sin in our nation. Its influence is vastly mischievous. The traveller is seen by many, and sins openly. He requires the services of those who conduct the public conveyances; or, if travelling privately, he at least demands the services of keepers of public or private houses. The whole moral law, including the fourth commandment, was given from Sinai to a whole nation on a journey.

6. The fourth commandment, like all the precepts of the decalogue, is spiritual, "and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It forbids us not only to do and to speak what we please on that day, but it binds our thoughts and hearts, and requires us to "delight" in its holy services. By the prophet Isaiah, chapter 58 : 13, 14, God says, "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 on 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."

7. The first words of the fourth commandment forbid us to forget this day before it comes, and after it is gone. "REMEMBER the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Many instances are given in the Scriptures of pious men preparing for this day, by a proper arrangement of all their affairs. Even the pious women who wished to anoint the body of the Saviour, prepared their spices before the Sabbath began. Who was ever a loser by imitating these pious examples? "In keeping God's commandments there is great reward." This reward as certainly follows obedience to the fourth commandment as to the fifth, or any other. See Isaiah 58: 14; and 56: 2-7. One of the most remarkable men, that his own or any other age has ever produced, was Sir Matthew Hale, chief-justice of England. His testimony shall close this address. He says,

"I will acquaint you with a truth, that above forty years' experience, and strict observation of myself, hath assuredly taught me. I have been, near fifty years, a man as much conversant in business, and that of moment and importance, as most men; and I assure you I was never under any inclination to fanaticism, enthusiasm, or superstition.

"In all this time I have most industriously observed in myself, and in my concerns, these three things:

"1. Whenever I have undertaken any secular business on the Lord's day, which was not absolutely necessary, that business never prospered and succeeded well with me.

"2. Nay, if I had set myself that day but to *forecast* or *design* any temporal business, to be done or performed afterwards, though such forecasts were just and honest in themselves, and had as fair a prospect as could be expected,

yet I have always been disappointed in the effecting of it, or in the success of it. So that it almost grew proverbial with me, when any importuned me to any secular business on that day, to answer them, that if they expected to succeed amiss, then they might desire my undertaking it upon that day. And this was so certain an observation with me, that I feared to think of any secular business on that day; because the resolution then taken would be disappointed, or unsuccessful.

“3. That always the more closely I applied myself to the duties of the Lord’s day, the more happy and successful were my business and employments of the week following. So that I could, from the loose or strict observance of that day, take a just prospect and true calculation of my temporal success in the ensuing week. Though my hands and mind have been so full of secular business, both before and since I was a judge, yet *I never wanted time in my six days to ripen and fit myself for the business and employments I had to do; though I borrowed not one minute from the Lord’s day to prepare for it, by study or otherwise.* But on the other hand, if I had at any time borrowed from this day any time for my secular employments, I found that it did further me less than if I had left it alone; and therefore, when some years’ experience, upon a most attentive and vigilant observation, had given me this instruction, I grew peremptorily resolved, never in this kind to make a breach on the Lord’s day, which I have strictly observed for above thirty years.

“This relation is most certainly and experimentally true, and hath been declared by me to hundreds of persons, as I now declare it unto you.”