



The
Seventh Part of Time

A Sermon
On the
Sabbath Question

Delivered At
Orange, Mich., June 18, 1869

By
W.H. Littlejohn

Testimony press publications

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“THE SEVENTH PART OF TIME.”

TEXT—“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.” Ex. 20: 10.

PERHAPS there is no view more generally entertained by those who are arrayed against the Sabbath of the Lord, than that which is commonly called the “seventh-part-of-time theory.” Its friends, while denouncing Antinomianism, and insisting upon the universal and perpetual obligation of the law of God, so construe the fourth commandment as to make it simply require the observance of one day in seven, leaving the individual to determine which this shall be.

It is a matter of no little surprise that they, while they are loud in their condemnation of all who, as they claim, seek to abridge their liberty by compelling them to observe the last day of the week to the exclusion of all others, do, nevertheless, without exception, unite in keeping the first. The query naturally arises, Why is this so? why no greater diversity in practice? And when inquired of respecting this matter, the invariable

reply is that, for the sake of the common good, they have concluded to forego their personal right of choice, and conform to an excellent custom, resting upon the necessity of a uniform day of rest, and designating Sunday as the same.

It never seems to have occurred to their minds that the moment they assume this position, they virtually abandon their own exposition of the Sabbath law. Nevertheless, this is undeniably true; for, by their own confession, there is in society a necessity for a uniform day of rest. Now, therefore, if they are right in this, as they unquestionably are, one of two things is certain: either God did comprehend the necessities of the race and provide for them by instituting a definite Sabbath day, to be kept by all, or else his law is imperfect, in that it does not meet the requirements of those for whom it was made.

Leaving these, therefore, to determine for themselves which horn of the dilemma they will take, *i. e.*, whether they will still insist upon holding on to an explanation of the commandment which involves the dishonor of God; or conclude that he who knows the end from the beginning has, in his law, exactly met the necessities of his creatures, and that the whole difficulty has arisen on their

part, through a misconception of the meaning of the statute which he has given, we turn to examine it for ourselves. While doing so, as this is a matter of no small moment, since it is one upon which eternal interests hang, we invite the prayerful attention of all who are earnestly seeking for truth, while we offer what seems to us to be a few conclusive arguments that the opinion in question is utterly unsound.

First, we submit that it is not in accordance with the obvious meaning of the commandment. In proof of this we might advert to the fact that the history of the Jews from Sinai to the cross not only fails to furnish a single act in the performance of which they proceeded upon the hypothesis that the day of the Sabbath of the decalogue was variable at pleasure; but, on the contrary, it is full of the most convincing proof that they ever regarded it as fixed and immovable.

As an evidence of this, from many others of like nature which might be adduced, take, if you please, those sieges of Jerusalem in which they persisted in their customary regard for their holy day so far as to refuse to employ its sacred hours in preventing their enemies from advancing their works against the place, thereby enabling them to

destroy both it and them; a calamity which might have been altogether averted had it occurred to them that the Sabbath law was so accommodative that while one portion of them were fulfilling its requirements by resting on one day, another might be fighting in the field at the same time, providing only that they should meet its requirements by resting on some other one of the seven days of the week.

We conclude, therefore, that inasmuch as the history of the Jews, covering a range of fifteen hundred years, and characterized by all the vicissitudes of war and peace, fails to furnish a single instance in which one of their number ventured, either by word or deed, to question the fact that the last day of the week, and it alone, was the one which Jehovah claimed as his own, we shall be safe in deciding that this was the judgment of the whole people, without exception; a fact by no means insignificant when we consider that to them were committed the sacred oracles, after having been written out upon tables of stone in their own tongue, with which they must have been more familiar than we can be. And, strange as it may appear, the verdict which they have given in the premises has received the unqualified approval of

the Christian world from the commencement of this dispensation down to within two hundred and seventy-five years of our time.

For it was not until the year 1595,* and more than three thousand years this side the giving of the law, that, when pressed to the wall by Papists, on the charge that Protestants were observing Sunday in obedience to the decree of the Catholic church, and in contravention of the commandment of the Lord, Nicholas Bound made the first successful effort to bring into favorable notice the doctrine that all which its phraseology demands is the keeping of any one of the seven days of the week. This being true, we find, after all, that those who have prided themselves so much upon the idea that their version meets with the approval of the majority, are, nevertheless, when we take into account the opinions of those who have lived in the past, vastly in the minority.

Turning, then, from the opinions of men, and the bearing which they have upon this subject, after having seen that there has ever been a wonderful concurrence among them in the belief that the commandment is so worded as to leave no rea-

* Coleman's *Ancient Christianity Exemplified*, chap. xxvi, sec. 2.

sonable doubt in the mind of the unprejudiced, that it pointed unavoidably to one day, and only one, as the Sabbath, the observance of which it was given to enforce, let us seek elsewhere for additional proof that this modern view finds no warrant in the word of God, and never could have gained credence had it not been for the necessity that something of the kind should be invented to defend a practice which could not be justified in any other manner.

We naturally recur to the commandment itself, in the hope that it will afford all the light which is necessary to enable us to reach a correct conclusion. It reads as follows :

“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.”

A glance reveals the fact that the whole discus-

sion must turn upon the meaning of the expression, "the seventh day," for that is plainly called "the Sabbath," and in it we are forbidden to do any work. In the opinion of our opponents, this is applied indiscriminately to any twenty-four hours in the cycle of the week, which we may see fit to call the Sabbath and devote to the worship of God.

But the question with which we have to deal, is not what they *now* understand this language to mean, but what was the impression which it then conveyed to the minds of those to whom it was given; for, as language is variable in its meaning, it is universally conceded that laws must be interpreted in accordance with the signification of their phraseology when they were enacted. How did the men who stood at the base of Sinai view the question? Was the idea imparted to them by the words in controversy the same as that held by our friends? or was it as determinate to them as it would be to us should the Lord declare in so many words that Saturday is the Sabbath?

Fortunately, this question can be settled beyond peradventure. The sixteenth chapter of the book of Exodus seems to have been thrown in almost for the express purpose of furnishing a commentary upon this subject. The events which it records

transpired but thirty-three days before the trembling multitude stood at the base of the quaking mount, a period of time altogether too short to admit of change in the use of language, or a revolution in the customs of the nation. Whatever appellation, therefore, was given to the days of the week at the commencement of this period, would apply equally well at its close. But in the brief record under consideration, mention is made three times of the sixth day of the week, and four times of the seventh. Here, then, is an excellent opportunity for testing the merits of the rival theories.

If, in the cases alluded to, we shall find that the terms, "sixth day" and "seventh day," there signified respectively one-sixth and one-seventh part of time, the latter was undeniably employed in that sense in the decalogue a little more than a month later. But if, on the contrary, it shall appear that they were made use of in this case because they were the titles commonly given to the last two days of the week, then they retained this signification when the Lord employed the last of them in marking the rest. The verses in which they occur, read as follows: "And it shall come to pass that on the sixth day they shall pre-

pare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Verse 5. "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses." Verse 22. "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, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Verse 29. For the use of the term, "seventh day," see verse 29, as copied above, also the following: "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." Verse 21. "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none." Verse 27. "So the people rested on the seventh day." Verse 30.

Now consistency demands that if the words, "the seventh day," used in the above, are to be construed as meaning one day in seven, then the kindred expression, "the sixth day," must mean one day in six. But this would make nonsense of the whole thing; because, according to the context, it was to be the *preparation* before the Sab-

bath, and on it, twice as much manna was to be gathered and prepared, as on other occasions, for the reason that on the seventh day, there was to be none. Who does not see, however, that, admitting the construction in question, the whole plan would have proved a failure, inasmuch as the preparation occurred as often as once in every six, while the Sabbath transpired only once in seven days; so that at the end of the second week, they would have been separated by one whole day; at that of the third, by two; of the fourth, by three; and so on, until the cycle of the week was completed, when they would occur at one and the same time, thus representing God as so far blundering, through a misconception of a plain mathematical principle, that six out of seven of the miracles which he worked for the preservation of food for the Sabbath were rendered ineffectual by the fact that they occurred either too soon or too late to meet the requirements of the case. It is evident, therefore, that the day spoken of in the above as the sixth, was so called, not because it represented one-sixth part of time, but for the reason that it was the distinctive appellation by which it was known from the other days of the week. That this is so, is abundantly attested by the fact which

is brought to view in verse 22, wherein it appears that the people, so far from having any doubt as to when the proper time had arrived for the gathering of the double portion of manna, entered upon this work, without exception, at one and the same time, since all of the rulers came and reported the same to Moses.

From this standpoint, therefore, we are enabled to construct the whole Jewish week, giving to each day its proper name; for if the day under consideration was the sixth, it must have been preceded by five others, each following in consecutive order, and receiving its proper numerical title from its relation to the first. It was not only true that this was preceded by five others, but, according to the statement found in verse 23, it was followed by the Sabbath; for Moses, from the standpoint of the sixth day, says, "To-morrow is the Sabbath." And, in verse 26, he makes the statement that it also has the additional signification of "the seventh day;" and is further characterized by the fact that in it there was to be no manna: a thing which was not true of any of the others. These facts, which were familiar to the minds of all, not only serve to locate it unmistakably in the wilderness of Sin, but as they

were equally true a little farther on, when the voice of the Lord was heard in the mount, and when his finger traced upon the marble the words, "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," must have marked it with moral certainty as the one to which reference was made.

Secondly, it is not in harmony with the reason of the law.

We apprehend that one of the chief difficulties in the way of arriving at the truth in the matter, arises from a misconception of what the Lord really requires at our hands. Many seem to read the statute as though the keeping of a Sabbath is all that it requires. Acting upon this impression, it not unfrequently occurs that Sunday-keepers, when reminded that Saturday is *the* Sabbath, reply somewhat as follows: "We know that Saturday is *your* Sabbath, but Sunday is *ours*." The error here consists in the use, in such a connection, of the words, *your* and *our*. For, mark, Jehovah does not say, "Remember a Sabbath to keep it holy," neither does he direct you to abstain from labor upon *your* Sabbath. But the

injunction is, to do no work on "the seventh day," which "is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Hence, all that is necessary to determine, so that we may know whether we are obeying him or not, is to decide the simple question whether the Sabbath we are celebrating is that of the Lord. If the mere fact of resting upon a day makes it such, then all which is necessary in order to impart this distinction to every day of the week (and, as a consequence, to each one in the whole year), is, that seven individuals, through accident, caprice, or interest, should devote to this purpose seven days following each other in consecutive order, a condition of things of a nature to render the absurdity of such an opinion palpable to all.

How, then, shall we ascertain when we have found the Sabbath of the Lord? We answer, Its identification is easy. It is not necessary to leave the sacred tablets themselves, in order to locate it with absolute certainty.

Underlying every wise law is found a good and sufficient reason. The one which is assigned by its Author for the institution of the Sabbath, is found in the following words: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: where-

fore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Here we are informed that the seventh day became the Sabbath of the Lord on account of three distinct acts. 1, He rested; 2, he blessed it; 3, hallowed it. Now, therefore, as the *seventh day* and the Sabbath, are herein declared to be one and the same, before any other day can be said to be entitled to this distinction, its friends must be able to show that these three things have, at some time or in some sense, been true of it. Let us, therefore, examine the claims of the first six from this standpoint, taking them in the order in which they occur.

We will first investigate those of Sunday. Did God ever rest upon it? There is not a scintilla of evidence in his holy word to that effect. Did he ever bless it? If so, he has failed to mention the fact. Has he ever hallowed it? The most patient student of sacred history has failed to find a single trace of this fact.

Thus we find that it comes short in every particular necessary to constitute it the Sabbath of the Lord. The same line of argument which has proved the claims of Sunday to be unsound, invalidates equally those of the other five days, as neither of the three conditions required is met by them.

They were all of them working days, and, consequently, it could never, with propriety, be said of them that God blessed and hallowed them after he had rested upon them.

How different the case when we come to the seventh, and last. Standing in the field without a rival, its competitors having been dismissed on the ground that sacred history has shown that the facts peculiar to the Sabbath are not true of them, we are furnished with a strong presumptive argument at the outset, that *it is* entitled to the distinction which the others have failed to obtain. Nor shall we be disappointed upon further investigation. The same man who penned the fifteenth chapter of the book of Exodus, in which the seventh day is distinguished in so marked a manner from all others, and the same one to whom was committed the awful responsibility of receiving from the hand of Jehovah, and conveying to the people, the tablets of the law, has spoken emphatically upon this point. In the brief but lucid account of creation, which he has left us in the book of Genesis, we are furnished with a narration of what transpired during the first week of time.

Making mention of the events which character-

ized each day in order, and referring to each by its proper numeral, he speaks of the last, as follows: Gen. 2: 2, 3: "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."

In these short verses is found the historic counterpart of the statement made in the commandment, that in the beginning God rested upon, blessed, and hallowed (or, that which is the same, sanctified), one of the days of the week. The scripture in question once more announces that it was the seventh, and the context shows that it was the last, thereby establishing, beyond dispute, that the seventh, or last, day of the week is the "Sabbath of the Lord."

Thirdly, it makes the law contradictory in its provisions.

Nothing is more manifest than that a rule emanating from the Infinite must be characterized by harmony in all of its parts. In fact, should a document claiming this honor appear to be deficient in this respect, it would be all which would be necessary to disprove its heavenly origin.

God never stultifies himself by introducing into the same law conflicting provisions. He never enjoins in one clause a duty in which is implied the right of choice as to the time and manner of its fulfillment, and in the next prevents you, either from enjoying this franchise yourself, or requires, at your hands, that which would render it impossible for others to do so. In other words, applying the principle to the case in hand, God either meant to confer upon all the right of deciding for themselves which day they would keep, or else he intended to withhold it from them altogether. If the latter be true, it was done for good and sufficient cause; if the former, then he was moved to this course by considerations equally weighty. There is no half-way ground in this matter. The right of choice in this thing is either a positive good or positive evil. If the latter, then he has, unquestionably, guarded against it in every reasonable manner; if the former, then he has, doubtless, shielded it with the most scrupulous care, in order that the greatest good might be accomplished; by leaving to the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant, the right as against every other man, of saying, not only that they would keep the Sabbath, but

that which was equally God-given, of determining when they would do so.

But this is just what our friends argue that he intended to do in the Decalogue. If they are right, we shall, undoubtedly, find it constructed upon this principle throughout. Let us test the matter. Perhaps the best method of doing this, would be that of allowing some one of their number to attempt, practically, to carry out his conception of this doctrine.

(1) Let him be a man of family, say a farmer, a portion of whose children are grown up; and who is surrounded by much hired help; also, a man who is not only conscientious in his notions, as doubtless many of that faith are, but a somewhat ardent advocate of them; and one who would spurn the idea of depriving others of that which he believed to be their rightful prerogative.

Having kept Sunday for the whole of his life thus far, he concludes that a sentiment which can never be enjoyed is hardly worth the holding, and decides to deviate from the practice of years, so far as to substitute Wednesday for it in the future. His wife consenting, they gather the household about them, and make known their intentions. While he invites all, as far as they can consist-

ently do so, to unite with himself and wife in this thing, he nevertheless gives them to understand that he shall by no means attempt to coerce compliance, since that would be an infringement of their undoubted freedom to consult their own wishes in such matters. However, it would be exceedingly gratifying if all would make the change with them. The young people, seeing that such a step would be very inconvenient, and many times in the way of their enjoying society as they otherwise would, decide not to take it. The hired help, also, for one cause or another, determine not to depart from the custom of their fathers.

Wednesday arrives at last, and with it the appointed rest. Our venerable friend, true to his convictions of duty, having previously assigned to all who thus desired, the field of their labor during his Sabbath, in order that his mind might not be turned away from its devotions by the intrusion of matters of a secular nature, withdrawing, in company with his wife, to a retired portion of the house, and congratulating himself upon the liberality of sentiments which, instead of holding all to the same inflexible rule, furnishes so much scope for the gratification of personal tastes and the consulting of individual interests, enters

upon his rest. In this mood, the Bible is taken from the shelf, and opened to the 20th chapter of Exodus. The gray-haired man reads: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Yes, Lord, he replies, we are endeavoring thus to do. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." This, he responds, we have already done. "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." Once more he ejaculates, This has reference to one day in seven, and means that it should be celebrated as we are celebrating this. He begins back a little: "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." He pauses. A new idea strikes his mind. He again reads the passage. He is not mistaken. In the light of those words, he is a Sabbath-breaker. For, waiving all question in regard to time, he is guilty in respect to the manner of keeping the Sabbath; as by every rule of fair construction, these words clearly imply that his sons, his daughters, his manservant, his maid-servant, his cattle, and even the stranger that is within his gates, are to abstain from labor on the same hours on which he does; and yet, by his

own direction, his daughters and his maidservants are hard at work in the kitchen ; his sons are employed in like manner in one field, while in another, his oxen, under the goad of a hired man, are pressing their weary shoulders against the yoke in order that in due time their master may reap in a rich harvest of golden grain—the reward of their Sabbath toil.

Do you say that we are begging the question in saying that the words in controversy, when rightly understood, teach what we claim ? We reply, The verdict of all ages and races is in our favor in this matter. From Sinai to the present time, it has been the practice of both Jews and Gentiles to hold church members responsible, under the principle enunciated in this language, for the conduct of those under their roof on the Sabbath day. So general, and so deep-seated, is the conviction that this practice is every way commendable, we venture the prediction that, should a conscientious Sabbatarian in search of labor among equally-sincere Sunday-keepers who needed his services ever so much, propose the idea of working for them on the latter, and resting on the former day, his proposition would be spurned with contempt by

nine out of ten, on the ground that they could not grant it without sin.

(2) The understanding of the clause which you suggest, involves absurdities too great to be entertained for a moment. Take, for example, the two first classes mentioned, *i. e.*, sons and daughters. In the majority of cases, they would include children of immature years. Does it seem probable that God would subject a father to the humiliating necessity of consulting the whims and caprices of boys and girls, as to when they should observe the Sabbath on his premises and under his roof? Yet he has done so, unless the language in question confers upon him the power of compelling them to rest at a time either fixed by the Almighty, or to be fixed by himself.

(3) The third class produces an illustration of the folly of such a sentiment, as clearly marked as does that of the second. For it cannot with any show of reason be urged that the servant should be made superior to the master by conferring upon him the privilege of deciding in reference to the day upon which he will rest, and, at the same time, the latter be held responsible for the manner in which he passes it.

And besides, is it not manifest that the workings

of such a system would be disastrous in the extreme, and that the efforts of every family conducted upon this principle would inevitably be marked by confusion and failure? Surely, nothing is more indispensable to success than the presence of the leading mind at the time when the subordinate ones are to carry out the plans of operation which he has formed. But this, in the case under consideration, would be rendered impossible for at least one day in every week. Not only so, but the sentiment in question, in the hands of skillful shirks, especially where the service, as among the Jews, was many times for life, would prove the never-failing source of vexation and trial; for a change of Sabbath would ever afford a plausible pretext for absence, whenever extraordinary or unpleasant labor was to be performed.

(4) Again, the fact that cattle are mentioned in this connection, in common with sons, daughters, men-servants, maid-servants, and strangers, throws light upon the intention of the Lawgiver; for, as it is said of them, in common with the others, that they shall do no work in it (*i. e.*, the seventh day), it becomes too plain to admit of argument, that the words, "in it," as here read and applied to them in common with the other classes, does not

refer to the day of *their* choice, since cattle cannot exercise volition—but must be understood as alluding to the one in which the master himself refrains from labor.

Thus we think we have established that which we at first assumed to be true; namely, that the head of a family does not wholly comply with the law by simply resting on the Sabbath day. He must do more than this. He must compel those about him to follow his example.

The bearing of this fact upon the general issue is too plain to require comment. For you will remember that the “seventh-part-of-time theory” is but the enunciation of the principle that God has clothed every man with authority to decide for himself when he will hallow the Sabbath; and yet we discover that, by a decree of the same God, three-fourths of the race, or at least all embraced in the various orders of children abiding at home, men-servants, maid-servants, and strangers, are most effectually debarred from the benefits of this provision. One of two things, therefore, is true: either the Lord has, in the details of his law, defeated its general purpose and plan, or else this theory does not accord with his original intention.

The reader will not be slow to decide which of these hypotheses he will adopt.

The providence of God is against it. Having found that the internal evidence of the law is overwhelmingly against our opponents, we might rest here, in the confident conviction that our case is fairly made out. But, remembering that men who are called upon to change opinions of long standing, desire, if they do not require, all the light which can be given, we pause, before submitting it to them to pass upon, that we may present testimony drawn from the providence of God, showing that his dealings with his people during the forty years in which he walked and talked with them in the wilderness, were such as to render it utterly impossible for them to keep any day but the last of the week.

If we shall succeed in doing this, as there is in Him "no variableness nor shadow of turning," as he never does anything the effect of which he does not previously comprehend, and as the rule of action is precisely the same now as then, we shall be condemned for attempting now, that which the Hebrew then found it impossible to accomplish. Or, to state the proposition in another form, as there can never be any shade of conflict between

God's revealed will and his secret purpose, as his words and his acts always tend to the same end, if the former were designed to vindicate the idea of a variable Sabbath, the latter would have been equally decided in its favor. We will, for the sake of brevity, *suppose* that some one of the mighty host of Israelites had been seized with this modern notion. He has conformed to the usage of the multitude a long time; but *finally* he grows restless, and makes it manifest by intimating that Moses takes too much upon himself, in that he teaches the people that all are to keep the Sabbath simultaneously, since this, to his mind, was by no means a part of the original plan. Weary, at last, with simple remonstrance, he takes a step further, determined either to become a martyr to his own faith, or revolutionize that of the camp.

Sunday affords a convenient opportunity for carrying his plan into operation. As, with the Hebrews, that day began with the setting of the sun on what is now Saturday evening, he assembles his family in his tent at that period, they having been previously notified of, and having acquiesced in, his intention. As the shades of evening draw on, they retire to rest, wooed by the almost holy stillness of the night into the impres-

sion that they are keeping an acceptable Sabbath unto the Lord. Morning dawns at last, and as the rising sun throws for the first time his golden pencils of light across the landscape, they awaken to the consciousness that it is holy time. The first inclination is to break a fast which has been of so long duration that nature is somewhat importunate in her demand for food. This is especially true of the children, and they clamor for bread. But their appeals are unheeded; there is not a morsel of food in the tent.

It is true that the fields without are white with that most delicious substance, whose taste was said to be "like unto wafers mingled with honey," but they remember that the Lord had said that the people must not go out to gather it upon the Sabbath day. Ex. 16: 29. The dilemma is an unpleasant one. The father appreciates the awkwardness of the situation, and, stung to the quick at the prospect that his first attempt at innovation must prove abortive, since it would be folly to persist in it under the circumstances, and anxious to shift the responsibility of failure to the shoulders of another, reprovingly inquires of his wife why she did not foresee this, upon the previous day, and guard against it by furnishing a

double portion of manna, according to the usual custom. She gently reminds him that it would have been impossible; for, that being the seventh day, no manna had fallen, else the word of the Lord would have been broken. Ex. 16:26. Mortified, but not corrected, and failing to comprehend to its full extent the moral which this lesson ought to have taught, he attributes his first failure to the unfortunate selection of a day that had been preceded by one upon which there was no fall of manna, and decides to make one more effort. Monday furnishes the first opportunity for this purpose, and is therefore fixed upon; and Sunday, the very one which had witnessed his disappointment, becomes the preparation day for the second experimental Sabbath.

There is now no lack either of the material to prepare, or of a disposition to put it in a state of readiness for the morrow. When the seething and baking of a sufficient quantity is completed, it is viewed with evident satisfaction, since it is supposed to furnish a complete guarantee against a failure similar to the one which had occurred in the past. The sun goes down, and holy time is once more fairly entered upon, the night is passed in unbroken silence, and the first dawn is hailed

as the arrival of the auspicious moment which is to witness the triumphant vindication of a theory, the enemies of which, through the merest accident, have been enabled to ridicule for a period.

Again the family circle is complete. As they gather around to partake of the morning meal, the urn in which is deposited that which is at one and the same time the precious food of angels and that of God's wandering people, is brought forth, and its cover removed in order that each one may receive his portion of its most delicious contents. How perfect the revulsion of feeling, and how great the chagrin, when they find in the place of that for which their souls longed, a living mass of loathsome worms. The words of Moses, that they should not keep any of that which was gathered on any day but the sixth until the morning, are brought to mind; and they perceive at last that they have but repeated the experiment of those who have formerly disregarded this injunction, and found that it "bred worms and stank." Ex. 16:20. But folly had not yet run her perfect round. Reason seems to have been dethroned until Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, are tried with like success.

Upon the first day of the week, that which

many are now solemnizing in supposed obedience to the commandment, there was no food at all, while upon the remaining five, it was in such a condition as to forbid the entertaining, for a moment, the thought of its being appropriated as food by mortal man.

Thus terminates the first attempt to confound the sacred with the profane. Its victim, thoroughly humbled and profoundly penitent, returns to the old way, a wiser and a better man, resolving for the future to atone, as far as possible, for the past, by a faithful observance of the Lord's Sabbath. Making Friday the preparation day, he once more enters upon its solemn hours. How different the experience now! No hunger here, nor sight of nauseating food! The creature is in harmony with the Creator. The latter, to make up for the lack of manna on the seventh day, gives a double portion on the sixth; and to obviate the difficulty which would arise from the fact that the manna which ordinarily fell would become corrupt within twenty-four hours, by an exercise of divine power, he makes this of a nature to last forty-eight.

Thus did the Lord distinctly teach his ancient people that his Sabbath was a particular, definite, day of the week. If you would feel the force with which this conviction must have rested down upon their minds, you have but to remember that there were, in each week, three distinct acts of God, or,

if you please, miracles, all tending to confirm them in it; viz., the falling of the manna on the six days, the giving of a double portion on the last of them, the preservation of this over the seventh, and the absence of any, whatever, on this. Also that, as there are in the year fifty-two weeks, they must have witnessed, in each year, one hundred and fifty-six of these occurrences (there being three each week), and in the forty years of their wanderings in the wilderness, the enormous aggregate of six thousand, two hundred and forty.

(5) It would prove destructive of the highest interests of society.

When we speak of society, and the confusion which would be created in it by a general and practical indorsement of the tenet before us, it is not with reference to that temporary disturbance which would arise from a change of views, but it is that permanent disorder which would result from the inauguration of a line of public policy which can never be reconciled with a state of things every way normal and necessary.

With this understanding of the declaration which stands at the head of this division of the subject, we see the weight which, if true, it ought to have in this discussion. For as God, the creator, and God, the lawgiver, are one, certain it is that he has not approved in the first capacity that which he has condemned in the last; *i. e.*, if God, in his omniscience, has so related us to each other

socially that a Sabbath which is not fixed would be a curse, then he has never given such an one. That this would be the case, however, might be illustrated from every walk in life. Take, for example, the commercial world. In it men are intimately connected with, and largely dependent upon, each other for success. So true is this, that even the most common transactions are seldom perfected without the joint action of several individuals, and, in many cases, that of a much larger number. Now let a certain portion, say one-seventh, of your business men, retire each day from the active scenes of life. A glance reveals the fact that those who are not of this number would find themselves vexed and annoyed at every step, if not prevented from making any progress whatever, by the absence of those whose presence was to them indispensable in order to the accomplishment of their designs. This would be especially true with those more complicated organizations, which have been created for the purpose of facilitating an exchange of commodities between cities and nations; such as railroad corporations, which are wholly dependent for success upon the united and timely effort of many individuals, scattered along a line stretching for hundreds, and sometimes for thousands, of miles. In fact, it may well be questioned whether they would not, from the very necessity of the case, perish immediately upon, and as a consequence of, the introduction of the change proposed.

Again, it would prove fatal to our educational system, since it is wholly dependent for success upon classification, and this can never be maintained except through the regular attendance of pupils, a thing which would be altogether out of the question should they or their parents act upon the plan suggested.

But, as we have neither time nor disposition to examine in detail the many institutions which we so much cherish, and which distinguish civilized from barbarous life, in order to trace the effect which will be produced upon each, we propose to show at once that it would prove ruinous to them all, since it would utterly subvert that upon which they must depend for existence; viz., law and order.

While there is much in human governments to be regretted, there is, also, much which is commendable; and it is difficult to see how they could be dispensed with so long as men are either criminal in intention, or liable to err in judgment. Hence we are instructed in the word of God that we should be subject to the powers that be, as they are ordained by him; that we shall render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's; that rulers are a terror only to evil doers. So important was the idea of a well-regulated state in the eyes of the Lord, that he organized one for his chosen people, the laws of which have furnished a model for the ages which have followed. We unhesitatingly af-

firm, however, that neither that, nor any other, government, can be administered upon the principle of a Sabbath movable at will; for the very idea of government is that of a condition of society regulated by law; but law enforced, implies a judiciary, in some form or other, clothed with power to try cases and inflict penalties. That this, however, would be, practically, out of the question with the condition of things alluded to, will be apparent from a moment's thought. We will suppose that the legislature, acting in good faith, and in supposed harmony with the will of Heaven, has enacted that every citizen shall be guaranteed the right of deciding for himself when he will solemnize the Sabbath; and the people, equally ingenuous in lauding the wisdom of this plan, proceed to act upon it. The result is that, from one motive or another, every one of the seven days of the week has been appropriated by a portion of the community to rest. Who does not see that with this state of things it would be the idlest nonsense to talk of administering justice through the courts; for the Judge, having passed the period of his rest, might, perhaps, be ready to proceed to business at the very moment that the officers of the court are about to lay it aside, in order that they may enter upon theirs.

This difficulty surmounted, after much delay the calender is taken up in order on this, and every subsequent day of the week; but it is found, upon

examination, that they can not come to trial in a single case in the long list, since there is not one of them in which adjudication is not impossible because of the absence of either one or the other party, or the counsel or one or more of the witnesses, or some one of the twelve jurors, whose presence is indispensable, and yet who cannot be compelled to appear, because this would be an invasion of his legally-recognized right to consecrate to the worship of God whatever hours might seem to him good.

The result of such a state of things is apparent. Criminals, perceiving that the hilt of the sword of justice is in their own hands, become defiant, crime becomes rampant—the flood gates of iniquity are thrown wide open—the land is deluged with vice, and no man can close them until the State is ruined, except by a repudiation of the fatal dogma, the legalization of which has caused all the trouble.

We have now been brought, by five distinct processes of reasoning, to the same result, viz., that the seventh or last day of the week, and no other, has been, and is now, the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

Have you hitherto, by an unfortunate combination of circumstances, been found desecrating it through ignorance of its true character? Then an humble confession of your guilt will secure you the fullest pardon. But in this case, as in all others, the genuineness of the repentance is determined

by the fruits which it brings forth. Should you for the future continue in the way of the transgressor, even the sins of the past cannot be blotted out. Is this the first time your attention has been called to the subject? Then your position is, indeed, a critical one. Thousands of staunch vessels have gone to pieces on the identical rock of decision that your bark is now approaching. Perhaps you have never in all your life been placed in a situation where your love for God and his word has been so thoroughly tested as it will be here. On one side of this question stands almost every consideration of a worldly nature. There, perhaps, are your friends. There is the multitude of wise men whose opinions you have been taught to revere. There are the churches with which you have acted so long and so pleasantly. There, it may be, are your property interests. There is your reputation and your standing in society, while on the other side are the tablets of the law, bearing the inscription, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Do you falter? Then listen to the voice of Him who, while he seeks to deter us from evil by fierce denunciations of wrath, also strives to win us to holiness by promises of future good, as precious as they are incomprehensible. "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 do-

ing 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." Isa. 58:13, 14.

Can language convey an idea of felicity more perfect than that which is portrayed in the above? If so, it will be found in the following benediction pronounced by our Saviour upon those who are seeking to obtain it: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14. Not the city of an earthly king; not the Jerusalem of the land of Judea; but that of the "King of kings," "the Jerusalem which is above, whose builder and maker is God;" the same which John saw coming down from God out of Heaven, shining with a light clear and beautiful as that of a living stone, with twelve gates of pearl, every several gate of one pearl, and each one guarded, not with a grim and frowning soldier, but by a mighty and shining angel of God; with walls of jasper, and twelve foundations, each of precious stone; with a street of gold, like unto transparent glass, through the center of which flowed "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," and on either side of it was the tree of life, "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded

her fruit every month ;" and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations ; while at the head of the great avenue stood the throne of God and the Lamb, from which proceeded an effulgence so bright that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof.

Such will be the future and eternal home, not of those who *hear*, but of those who *do*, God's commandments. There will be fulfilled to the courageous, God-fearing men of this generation—standing as they do in the last, or Laodicean, state of the church—those most mysterious words of the Lord: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3 : 21.

Would you be of this immortal number ? Then remember that the promise is not to him that *is overcome*, but to him that *overcometh* ; and that, if you fulfill the conditions named, the combined powers of earth and hell cannot separate you from your reward.

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Freely ye have received, freely give.

Mat 10:8



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