

THE SABBATH A PHYSICAL NECESSITY

BY HON. HOWARD M. REMLEY¹

The success of an invention brings honor to the inventor. Edison holds a high place in the esteem and admiration of men, because he has so combined the various laws of matter as to increase the power of mankind over nature, and add to the comfort and enjoyment of our race. Keely has spent years of toil and thousands of dollars in an effort to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Again and again he has announced that he had made the fortunate discovery, but as often has he been compelled to disclose his own failure. And now he is held in derision as one whose unbalanced mind is chasing a phantasy.

This is pre-eminently true in military and political life. The general whose campaigns terminate successfully is lauded and worshipped as a hero, but he who fails is court-martialed and disgraced. The politician who is carried into office upon some tidal wave of passion or prejudice is considered a wise and sagacious statesman, while he who is defeated sinks out of sight. The Creator has made the solar system and controls it by fixed laws. He has made man, combining matter with intelligence and emotions, and subject to physical laws as well as mental action and moral obligation. He, doubtless, intends that the human race should increase in numbers, gain dominion over nature and enjoy the full fruition of health and happiness. Whatever we may do to improve the condition and increase the enjoyment of ourselves and those around us is aiding thus far in carrying out God's plan, and we become to that extent coworkers with him. The highest honor that men can give to the Great Ruler is to work with him in bringing to a speedy realization his benign intentions towards the human race. There is no possible doubt about the success of his plans, but if we would show him highest honor we must be found working with him.

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For our good; and only because it is for our good, God has given certain rules to govern us known as the moral code. These rules are intended to prevent us from throwing ourselves under the domain of the inflexible laws of nature and being crushed by them. Because murder, drunkenness, sensuality and other vices tend surely to disease, death and extermination, God has commanded us to refrain from these. If we commit these acts our course and influence delay the fulfillment of God's plan, and we thus bring dishonor upon him. Theologians say such acts are sins, because they are forbidden. We would rather say they are forbidden because they corrupt and degrade mankind, hence retard God's plans, hence dishonor him. The commands "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" were mercifully given to aid us in knowing and avoiding the maelstrom of passion and appetite and escaping the inexorable consequences of violated physical law.

To those who recognize the right of the Creator to declare his laws, and his munificence in so doing, and the duty of the creature to obey—to such no argument is necessary to establish the obligation to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. But to the many who have no definite conception of the Deity and their relation to him—who look upon God as antagonistic to them, a material, physical argument has great weight. It is to such and from this standpoint we discuss the subject before us.

Men who have no respect for the Divine character and regard for his word frankly admit the necessity of a law against murder, theft, robbery, false swearing, because the immediate and direct result of these crimes is to make insecure person and property. Hence they join with the most devout in commending and enforcing the laws of our land against such crime. But because the effect of the violation of the fourth commandment does not so closely follow disobedience, they overlook it. They flatter themselves that in disregarding this commandment they only shock the sense of propriety in weak women and sentimental men, and gain the more time for their worldly plans and enjoyments. If we convince them that the Sabbath was made for man, that a faithful and honest observance of that day is as essential to their success as security of property is, then they would

be as ready as Christians to enforce the proper observance of the Sabbath. If we can show them that refraining from all labor on the Sabbath will increase their wealth, not diminish it; that by resting one day in seven the number of working days in their lives will be greater instead of less; that by denying themselves amusement and excitement on that day their lives will be filled with a larger measure and more continuous enjoyment—then will these worldly men march hand in hand with those who acknowledge a higher allegiance in fighting valiantly for the Sabbath.

And when statesmen are convinced that the quiet and rest of the Sabbath is the governor or regulator which prevents the wear and friction of busy, bustling life, from tearing the political machinery to pieces, which causes the national pulse to beat healthily and steadily, then will they insist that the Sabbath shall be a day on which shall cease all commercial and national activity.

As education, once unappreciated by the individual and neglected by the state, is now prized as the source of power, and fostered by the nation as the very foundation of free government, so will the time come when the people and the nation will esteem the Sabbath as its choicest treasure.

God never did hurry—never will hurry—never can hurry. Hurrying is the result of faulty plans, of bad management. By hurrying we try to make up for delay, for accident, for neglect, for misjudgment, for ignorance. But God knows all, governs all and does not need to counteract and guard against imperfections in himself or his plans. Hurry produces strain upon the muscles and the mind, causes waste of nerve power, and confusion of thought in competition in business, and the management of vast enterprises in these days of steam and electricity increases the apparent demand for speed and mental strain. Regular, calm, systematic work does not injure, but continuous worry and hurry destroy. We need not the Bible to prove this. Science teaches it, history tells it and experience and observation confirm it.

What softened the brain and caused the premature death of Crocker, the great builder of the Pacific railroad? Did he gain wealth, or add to working days or increase his earthly enjoyment by working seven days in seven? What sent Robert Gar-

rett, the president of the Baltimore & Ohio railroad system, to the madhouse in the prime of life and surrounded by his millions? Why did Horace Greeley, with all his mental power and tenacious hold upon the public mind, his profound desire to educate and elevate the people—why did the sun of his life set beclouded in reproach and imbecility? He hurried, he worried, he worked himself to death. He did not rest every seventh day. Our statesmen, our great business managers, are departing by each steamer to Europe, driven from home and friends and country, to prolonged and enforced idleness in the vain pursuit of rest and health. All because they had not time to rest on the Sabbath. Blaine, the representative American as he is called, has just returned from such exile. William H. Barnum, the manager of the Democratic campaign during the recent presidential contest, is lying hopelessly ill at his home. Flood, the California millionaire, is on his death bed at Heidelberg, Germany. Ministers in their zeal to proclaim the gospel, permit themselves to come within the demands of the inexorable law of rest, and nerves are shattered, tempers ruined and years of usefulness are lost. The hospital, the madhouse, the penitentiary, the grave, cry aloud, if weary, working, worldly men would but heed, "Remember the Sabbath day." And Christians by faith hear a sad, solemn wail rising from the abode of the lost, "Oh, that I had remembered the Sabbath day."

The command bears evidence within itself that the rest enjoined is a physical necessity. It includes within its terms that neither *thou nor thy cattle* must do any work on that day. As no moral responsibility is laid upon the cattle it follows that the physical law requires this rest for them. All inanimate nature, in emphatic tones, demands rest—their Sabbath. The fields must have rest. The strung bow loses its elasticity. The stirring, pushing railroad men, who deny themselves any rest, all insist that their engines and cars shall run only a certain number of miles without rest. They say, and say truly, that continuous revolution of the axle disintegrates the iron, causing accident, delay and loss of property.

Nations recognize the importance of the Sabbath. Constantine, in the fourth century, enacted a law requiring the observ-

ance of the Sabbath. Our people who are so sensitive that each one should be free to worship God, or not worship him, according to the dictates of his own conscience, have placed in our laws this requirement. And laws are the conclusions of a people drawn from the experience and wisdom of the preceding ages. France in her impulsive haste to be rid of tyrants and tyranny, lifted her puny hands to resist the law of nature and of nature's God by abolishing the Sabbath. And from that day she has been vascillating and unreliable. She has had trouble without and factions within.

If we would read carefully and keep the whole commandment, most of us would have no excuse for working on the Sabbath. It reads "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," not six days of idleness with work undone, but six days of work with work all done. The idleness of the first six is as much forbidden as the labor of the seventh. Then the seventh is for well earned rest, welcome rest, rest for the hammer and the anvil, rest for the engine and the cars, rest for the horse and the ox, rest for the body and the mind, rest and a calm review of our life and its fruits.

The laws which control the physical world and the eternal principles of right which rule the moral forces intertwine so closely and work in such perfect harmony that we cannot separate them. God in nature and God in revelation do not, cannot be in conflict. Dr. Chandlish, of Edinburgh, in his work on "Conscience and the Bible," says:

"All things proceed according to law, and law implies intelligence and design. It seems but another step in the same direction to reduce the moral world also with the same rigid uniformity of rule and order with the physical. There, too, the empire of law reigns. There are laws according to which our intellectual, our active, our social and our moral faculties are respectively regulated in their exercise. There are laws of association governing the intellect, laws of motive and habit guiding the active powers; laws of taste and feeling controlling the social propensities; and laws of truth, righteousness and love determining the moral judgment. Thus man as to his whole nature is the subject of law. He thinks and acts, he likes or dislikes, he approves or condemns

according to law, according to laws proper to the different departments of his complex constitution. . The violation of any of these is his misfortune or fault, and his misery."

If you do not recognize the right and authority of the Great Ruler, give heed to the teachings of science, the laws of nature and the lessons of experience and from these know that you must remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And those of us who know in some faint degree the glorious character, the matchless love and infinite mercy of our Heavenly Father, whose every command is given in love, who afflicts us only for our good, shall not we so walk in the future that our example may not be a stumbling block in the way of others?

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