

**CHRISTIANS**

**and**

**THE FOURTH  
COMMANDMENT**

**by Rev. A. F. Buscarlet, D.D.**

## *The Author*

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Dr. Buscarlet's statement on the Fourth Commandment is a result of his mature experience of life in addition to his deep understanding of the Word of God. In it he deals with a number of important aspects of the subject, especially that of the Christian's relation thereto in this Dispensation of Grace.

# Christians and the Fourth Commandment

The Fourth Commandment points out to us the special portion of time allotted by our Heavenly Father to our several duties as men in the midst of our fellowmen. In it He specially draws attention to a special portion of time which He specially claims as His and which we are to set apart as His intelligent creatures for His worship and showing forth His glory, for our increase in the knowledge of our God and of His will as well as for our preparation for the full enjoyment of His presence and our Eternal rest. It also sets before us one very special way in which we can show the sincerity of our love to and delight in God and of our love to our neighbour. It then speaks of our need of a certain education if ever we are to have spirits in harmony with those feelings of adoring and obedient praise and love which fire the hearts of those holy beings who enjoy the bliss of Heaven.

## Duty to God and Man

In the First Commandment God presents Himself to us as the one living and true God. The Second lays down rules for the worship of this God, Who is a Spirit, in Spirit and in Truth and therefore forbids the use of any images as a means for the adoration of this God. Many protest against the Church of Rome for suppressing this Commandment and yet virtually treat the Fourth in much the same way. The Third Commandment teaches us to use with deepest reverence all whereby God makes Himself known to us — His works, His Word, His Day. When prayerfully studied and lovingly obeyed the Fourth is most admirably adapted to lead us in the way of the three previous Commandments whilst it lays the foundation of respect for our parents and of that love to our neighbour which alone can fulfil the positive requirements of

the six following. It stands between the honour due to God and that due to our parents and our neighbour. It is a golden clasp binding together in love our duty to God and our duty to man.

We accordingly find that keeping holy The Day of Rest, the Sabbath, is placed in immediate connection with "joining oneself to the Lord, with serving Him, loving His Name and laying hold of His covenant", Isaiah 56:6.

## Remember

The very first word of this Commandment arrests our attention! We are bidden "Remember" so as to obey a commandment which must therefore have been given already by God. The same word is used in Psalm 98:3, "He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel", and in Psalm 74:2, "Remember Thy congregation which Thou hast purchased of old". Emphasis is laid very specially on this word "Remember". It takes the form of an imperative command, of a positive order! It is not merely negative as the following Commandments—"Do not forget!", "Thou shalt not forget!"—but "You are to Remember!" You are to keep up the remembrance of this Day with a definite purpose —so as to *keep it Holy!* It evidently then points back to some previous Commandment. Moses refers in the same manner to a past event wishing to reimpress it vividly on the minds of the Israelites when he says "Remember this day in which ye came out of Egypt out of the house of bondage", Exodus 13:3.

And now run your eye down the history of man which preceded the giving of the Ten Commandments for you may expect to find the reason whereon it rests **and, as soon as and as long as this reason exists, so long we may feel certain that man will not be deprived by a gracious God of the privileges which it brings him.**

First then we are arrested by the sixteenth chapter of Exodus. There we read that the multitudes that had followed Moses out of Egypt cried out for food, and the Lord, ever mindful of all His people's wants, provided manna for them and ordered that a certain quantity should be gathered every day so as to prove "whether this people would walk in His

law or not". On the sixth day therefore a double portion was to be collected. Such is the Lord's command. But in the twenty-eighth verse we find that the people have vexed the Lord and broken His law—How? The twenty-ninth verse tells us that it was by disregard for His test of their obedience—the Sabbath. This then was the test of obedience which God then chose to employ— even the observance of the Sabbath. Evidently Moses understood the order given him, though no direct mention of the Sabbath had been made. He knew why twice as much manna was to be laid up in store on the sixth day for, when the rulers expressed their astonishment at this being done, Moses said to them, Exodus 16:23, "This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the Rest of the holy Sabbath". Mark well that this is not the first institution of "the Day" for we should surely have had "Tomorrow shall be . . ." Evidently Moses refers to some one Special Day **already made known by God to man** when he declares "Tomorrow is the Solemn Rest of the Lord" (The Lord's Day even then!). The very word 'Sabbath' must have been set apart for a special use ere this, or the expression used could not have been understood and, without the idea of God's rest and His sanction of a rest, such a word would never have been peculiarly used to designate "The solemn Rest of The Lord". Evidently the people had or should have had some remembrance of the Sabbath. It was vague however and, so important was it to reawaken belief in its Divine origin and to impress this on their minds as a duty and a privilege, that Moses says (Exodus 16:29). "See that the Lord has given you"—he does not say "a day of rest" or "the seventh day to rest" but—"The Sabbath". That which, "made" once and for ever "for man", was for a time specially given to the Jews.\*

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\* In the "Tel-el-Amarna Tablets" we have clear proof that a rest, a seventh day and a Sacred day, was known to the Babylonians and Assyrians. In their Saints' Calendar the word rendered "Sabbath" by Sayce is the equivalent to the Assyrian "Yum Salumi" (two Accadian words) a day of completion (of labours); the word "Sabbath" itself was not unknown to the Assyrians—"Sabattu" is explained as "a day of rest for the heart". Every seventh day of the week was a festival dedicated to a different Saint and "the Prince" or shepherd of many nations abstained on these seventh days from certain foods and garments, offered no sacrifices, did not legislate, did not drive a chariot or appoint a garrison, etc.

We must then look still further back for the Institution of the Sabbath—all the more so that the passage now before us has been wrongly considered by some as the first promulgation of the Fourth Commandment, no mention whatever being made of the great reason assigned for it in the Commandment, “for in six days God created”. We pass back then till we hear these few but significant and majestic words: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them and on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made . . . and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made”, Genesis 2, 1-3. It was then to this Sabbath of the Lord, this holy and sanctified “Lord’s Day of Rest”, that God pointed back on the occasion of the manna, as well as on Sinai, when He there spake by the mouth of His servant Moses saying: “Be mindful of, Remember, the Sabbath”. We have then in Genesis a full record of this Institution of the Sabbath, resting on grounds in no way Jewish but universal. A Seventh portion of time is set apart in a peculiar way; “And God blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it”. Secondly, the reason is given for the peculiar name attached to this special day; “In it He had rested from all His work” and thence forward this seventh portion of time is designated specially by the title “The Sabbath” and not by the name “the seventh day”.

### **Soul’s Rest**

We must carefully note that in this primeval Institution we find that it was not established in connection with any peculiar people. It is given to the unfallen man, the representative of all mankind, who, at the fiat of our Omnipotent Lord by Whom the worlds were made, sprang forth into being, well fitted to value such a Day, most ready thus to do homage to His Creator and Lord, capable of enjoying and partaking in God’s rest even on earth, even in Paradise. Need I add that, if God is said to have rested and that on a given day, this was said in reference to man? We are then to look on this Day in the light of that glorious end for which, as long as time lasts, all time was divided for man by an infinitely wise and merciful God. A special division is laid down, which as to the body has its foundation in its physical constitution,

which marked off a seventh day (at the beginning or end of the week matters not) which man was to set apart as "The Lord's Day", "My Sabbaths", to set it apart for the God who "kept his soul" and had Himself sanctified, set apart, a seventh portion of time by resting after the six days of Creation. Let us view this question with reference to our spiritual welfare. It is not necessary that our little days of labour should fix the time employed by creative power for the bringing forth of the Universe. Our days are portioned out according to our strength. For us night soon comes in which "no man can work". Meanwhile our weary members require that rest be given them and thus are six of our portions of time divided off. Science however has proved that six nights' rest is insufficient to restore and therefore a seventh day and night (twenty-four hours) are left for us to consider as "The Lord's Day", "The solemn rest of the Lord". But our souls' rest is not in the night—souls rest not then but rest in the Light—The Light of life now risen to set no more. Our soul rests in the ever increasing brightness and fulness of fruition of "The Lord's Day"!

Now let us study the Title given to this special seventh portion of time in the Fourth Commandment. It is "The Sabbath"—the cessation of work—for that is the meaning of the term. It is the Rest of Rests—the best! First note that we are bidden "Remember the Sabbath", not the seventh, day and that it is said also that God blessed "the Sabbath" and not the seventh day! (Exodus 20:11). Thus full scope is left in the Fourth Commandment for any future change from the literal seventh to the first, any future change which the Lord of the Sabbath alone had a right to make, such a change as that which took place after the Resurrection, in the Lord's Day. After all a seventh portion is set apart. It matters not whether the Rest day comes first or last, seventh or first day of the week. All tends to prove that "The Sabbath" or "Lord's Day" is not any or every day of the week, but a Day, a limited portion of time, the specific nature and duration of which is fixed and shown by its contrast with or similarity in some aspects to the other days which are to be given to work. Marvellously is God's wisdom displayed in hedging in our way by this most gracious Commandment which is continued in mercy to fallen man who deserved only to toil. A Com-

mandment binding us in love! Our path of life lies through a money-loving, bustling and rushing, pleasure-seeking, selfish, selfwilled and lawless world, where thoughts distract and anxieties may spring up on every side. Hateful pursuits at the expense of our neighbour, the pride of life or seeking the honour that comes from men and the fear of man soon lead us to forget our neighbour's rights and to injure him body and soul most seriously, however wilfully or thoughtlessly. We must not take the ideas of men, good though they be, or of those who fancy they have risen to such heights of spiritual life as no longer to need God's ordinance, and who are above all law, however holy, just and salutary it may be, as spoilt children saying: "I will do this or that freely but I will not be ordered!" Neither are we to listen to fallen man's conscience as though it needed no revelation, precisely on this question so as to enlighten it as to the true relation in which we should stand to God and our neighbour. No! No! Man, fallen man, toiling, labouring, weary man needs time with the Best of teachers, even God Himself, the Best of friends with Whom to company and take sweet counsel, even the Lord of the Sabbath, whilst He furnishes the best of entertainments and truest re-creation and revival in those ordinances which He has established for our growth in grace and in His knowledge, as well as the sweetest work and pleasure in works of mercy. As we turn aside into this quiet resting place, on the King's Highway of Holiness we catch a glimpse of that Sabbath-keeping which "yet remains for the people of God". We tread a still and quiet pathway in which we seek and find Jesus, our Risen Lord, and lo! it is the Lord of the Sabbath Who says to us, "Peace be with you!" He is in our midst! Let then no earthly teachers, however worldly or spiritual, let no cry of "Puritanism" or "legality", rob us of His blessing when, in the humble use of this His special means of grace, of revival and higher life of faith, He in His wisdom would make it a very path of pleasantness and peace.

### **Highest Benefit**

The word Sabbath is derived from a verb which means to "*sit still*". It recalls the rest of the Rest Day. "When the hour was come Jesus *sat down*, the twelve apostles with Him", Luke 22:14. It contains the idea of restful cessation

from toil, that of placid, quiet enjoyment and contemplation. Now God would teach us that this rest and enjoyment specially consists in Sanctification and Holiness, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". It must be kept holy if it is really to be the Day of Rest God intended it to be. "The Lord's Day." Let me ask you. Has this to do with Jews only? To think only of cessation from work, literally "Sabbath", that is indeed a Jewish way of looking at it, but surely to seek after holiness is the sign of our dispensation of the Spirit. "*Be still and know that I am God.*" In Genesis 2:3 we read that God declared it to be holy and set it apart or sanctified it. It cannot mean that God set it apart and declared it holy for His own benefit and use ("The Sabbath was made for man"). Evidently, if it is said that He attached a blessing to it, and set it apart, it must have been for one who needed it, for man. Yes, God attached special blessings to the true observance of this Day and it is in the keeping of God's object in this gift that man finds these blessings—not in saying "The Sabbath was made for man and away I go".

The principal thing enjoined and comprehended in keeping the Sabbath is not so much bodily rest, which the brutes also need (and Divine love forbids brutal man's robbing his very beasts of their God-given rest), as the keeping it holy for man's highest benefit as a moral, a spiritual being. It is above all to be a source of rest and peace for man, as such, in that part of his being most like God. Hence, with reference to the keeping of the Sabbath and to its blessing, we are not so much to ask, "Does such and such give any rest to a man?" as "Does such conduct prevent or help him and others to set this day apart for God's Service, as an imitator of God in keeping it holy?" That is the kind of rest he needs most. Never more so than in our day, far more so than in the Desert. To consecrate, to keep holy the Sabbath Day is to set it apart from common to sacred uses, uses in keeping with the grounds of its first and second consecration and with the end it was intended to further by Him Who instituted it. These uses are to be deduced from the further unfolding of the Commandment. We can inferentially deduce these from the reasons given for its being made holy and blessed. First, we have God's example. "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made and rested on the

seventh day from all the work which he had made and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it " This stamps the Sabbath with the Seal of Divine authority for all men and sacriligious is the hand that dares to tear off this, the King's seal! It is of universal obligation. As he, who swears, sins by making common that which is holy, set apart by His example (swearing by Himself), so also the Sabbath breaker sins most grievously for he also turns to common, every-day use (if not to positively unlawful use on any day) that which is Sacred, because God has set it apart by His example for special use as well as by clear Command.

This Day, remember, was set apart long before the Jewish people had been set apart as a peculiar people, when in fact all future generations stood represented in Adam yet unfallen. He was quite able to realise the highest blessings connected with the loving observance of such a Day. We find another of the ends for which the Sabbath was given in the thirty-first chapter of Exodus, verse 13. " Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Again, in Ezekiel 20, verse 20, we read, " That ye may know that I am the Lord your God". Surely these two grounds for the appointment of the Sabbath: that *God sets us apart for Himself* and that *He is our God*, are not peculiar to the Jews? Who will dare to say that we have no need now to be reminded that it is God alone who sanctifies us, that He alone is God and that He alone can make anything really holy? Are not men in as great danger today (if not greater) of forgetting Whose they are and Whom they serve, as the Jews ever were? Can we say that on these grounds we Christians do not need the Sabbath, the Lord's Day (My Sabbaths)? Why, look at all the Revival meetings held every year to promote spiritual life! Would they be needed if God's revival day was duly kept and enjoyed? It is His weekly Revival Meeting! No! No! The Sabbath is a Divinely instituted weekly not yearly Resurrection feast, the divinely instituted remembrancer of our dependance upon God for our spiritual life and of His power to raise us up again! To create in Providence and in Grace! To redeem, sustain and sanctify, as well as of His creative power. It moreover points to that Omniscience Which knows all that

is in lawless, weak, selfish man and therefore fixes the exact proportion of time necessary even for the body's rest and at the same time shows how infinitely more important it is that the life of the soul should be regularly sustained, fed and strengthened by peaceful communion with God. It reminds us as it regularly comes and goes in the rushing tide of life that here below we have no abiding rest and thus bids us look longingly forward and upward to that land where we shall at length find uninterrupted rest and peace with Him in the Sabbath of Eternity.

Such hopes should surely lead us to set carefully apart the Sabbaths God gives us on earth that we may seek, find and enjoy rest in His presence! God would fain teach us that a certain portion of time is to be consecrated to Him, not because *He* needs it, but because *we do*! He would have us rest every week in His presence; stop in our earthly career; set our minds on things above, unseen, eternal; consider His dealings with us in Providence and in Grace. He wishes to strengthen our souls, to revive them again by revealing Himself to us as our Creator and Redeemer in Christ Jesus, the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man". He would have us stop on our desert journey and refresh our weary souls by feeding on the Bread of Life and by drinking deeper draughts of the Living Waters that flow from the Rock, once and only once smitten for us. He wishes us to sanctify the Sabbath that we may be ourselves sanctified, set apart more and more completely for His Service.

### **Hold Fast!**

Would any one deprive me of the blessings of the Lord's Holy Day, then I would say, Read Isaiah 56:2, "Blessed is the man that doeth this and the son of man . . . that keepeth (holdeth fast) the Sabbath from polluting it". I care not for your boasted "Christian liberty". The obedience of faith in and love to God and to His all-wise ordinances bids me hold it fast in the name of my Lord Who is "The Son of Man" and "the Lord of the Sabbath". I remember it so as to consecrate it to Him—not to give myself to idle and murmuring rest but to active Spiritual employment in God's public worship and service, listening to His word, praying to Him, praising Him, calling sinners to the good Physician, leading

the weary and heavy-laden to Him Who has promised to give rest to their soul. All this should be a delight to our soul and not a burden, "the Holy of the Lord, honourable". In it we are to honour Him by "not doing our own ways, not seeking our own pleasure, not speaking our own words". If we act thus, then God's word for it—against all anarchial, unbelieving theories or falsely so-called higher spiritual views—is that we shall delight ourselves in the Lord. Unmake it at your peril for it is Divinely suited to man's highest and deepest wants! If you ask me, what of people who do not profess to be Christians? I answer, do you expect God to make laws simply to please unbelieving, ungodly men, selfish men, to please or suit the natural heart which is not subject to the law of God? Does it become a Commandment only when I accept it as such? Does it rest on my will or God's, Who needs to mould mine! "Our whole nature needs to be chained to the new Christ-conscience. Our conscience has participated in the general ruin of our nature and seldom speaks as the sincere servant of truth", as Bowen says in his striking commentary on Christ's stern rebuke followed by His most gracious promise even to Laodicea! Revelation 3, 19 and 20.

## Work and Rest

We now come to a second instruction which shows how exceeding broad and wise God's Fourth Commandment is. "Six days shalt thou labour." Let me here say that of all the Ten Commandments this is the most fully developed one. The fact is that the one great object arrived at in it is impressed now in different ways. First we have had "a memento", now we receive a clear order, "Six days shalt thou labour". Whilst this is in some respects a separate commandment, it is purposely added so as to build up and strengthen "the memento", so as to facilitate our obedience to it. Specially notice that so far we have had no mention of the seventh day. We are "to remember the Sabbath Day", not the seventh day, to keep it holy. God's Command here takes a certain form, which limits and defines this Sabbath as a seventh portion of time. An exhaustive process establishes this! "Six days" are cut off from the week and are marked off for labour! and this is done to show us that the main

thought of the Lawgiver is to fix the manner in which this seventh portion of time (first or last in the week comes to the same) is to be employed. This is the grand aim of the Fourth Commandment, whilst in Genesis the design seems to fix the portion of time which is to constitute a Sabbath. Man's period of labour is positively willed and fixed and in such a way that "labour" is ennobled and sanctified, for God's example is held up in this also as an incentive to our obedience. Labour as well as rest was worthy of sinless man in Paradise. Labour is not degrading and indolence is not only a breaking of God's law, transgression, but it is a setting at nought His example. Not to work six days is also to break the Fourth Commandment. God, in ordering us thus to work or to rest, asserts His sovereign right to dispose as He wills of all our days. It is oftenest those, who do not work six days, who also break the Fourth Commandment and make others work for their pleasure or profit on the seven days! "Let us rather," as Clemens Romanus says (after speaking of justification by faith, not by works), "ask, what shall we do then? Shall we become slothful in well doing and cease from the practice of love? God forbid! rather let us hasten with all energy and readiness of mind to perform every good work, for the Creator and Lord of all Himself rejoices in His works." Do not pretend to know better and say every day is to be a Sabbath. He leaves you no choice in the matter and does not require you to prove that you are free at the expense of your neighbour but to do right, calling the Sabbath "a delight" and rejoicing in the work He calls you to do; then you will be free in the highest and fullest sense!

This order, "Six days shalt thou work", points out to us how we may keep God's Day clear of all that is foreign to it. The command hedges us in so as to leave no impediment in the shape of labour on the Sabbath Day. "In six days thou shalt do all that thou hast to do." As God ended His creative work in a certain period of time, so man is, in a sense, to finish all he has to do, i.e., all his ordinary, every-day work. This work is to be so ordered as to enable him to complete it and not to carry it over to the Day of rest. Nothing is to be left over to the Lord's Day which could be done on the week-day. The six days' work is to guard the setting apart of the Lord's Day as Holy unto the Lord.

The word here used for "work" means the work a man does for himself, his sustenance; in a word, his business. In Leviticus 23:7, it is rendered "servile work". No such unnecessary business is to rob any of the sanctity of the Sabbath. In thought or in deed it is to be as completely set aside as though nought remained to be done. God gives us six days to fill up as best we can and as providential circumstances may direct, but by Divine Command these six days, instead of being allowed to encroach on the Sabbath, should be carefully employed so as to prove a safeguard for it. Surely He in Whom we have our being has a right, though all our days are His, to ask that one day out of seven shall be specially devoted to His Service. He does claim it as peculiarly His own when He says that this portion of time is: "The Sabbath of the Lord thy God". It is not the Jews' Sabbath, it is "My Sabbaths", "The Lord's Day". Jesus is its Lord, not as a Jew of the seed of Abraham, but as "The Son of Man"; He claims your obedience if you call Him "My Lord and my God!" In Leviticus 26:2, thus saith the Lord, "Ye shall keep *My Sabbaths*" and in Isaiah 56:4 "Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep *My Sabbaths* . . ." These days are His, not yours, and they do not become yours to do as you please simply because you are not Jews but Christians. No gospel liberty can give you a right to rob God or your neighbour of that which is peculiarly His. If the Sabbath is to be kept at all it is emphatically to be kept as a day belonging to the Lord our God!

Yes, the Sabbath was made for man; God's Day was given to him, first as created in the image of God, then that he might be recalled from his wanderings by Him who would fain lead him gently in the way everlasting and to streams of living water. God knows best what is in man. How easily we allow our legitimate occupations and the pleasures of a passing hour to engross our thoughts! How we soon forget the rights of others in doing our work or seeking our pleasure! He would give us rest, "His rest", but only so as to make it subservient to the rest of our souls, their holiness. When we carefully look into the New Testament we find that the Sabbath has not changed either as to its owner or to its aim. It is the Sabbath still, a type of the Sabbath keeping which remains for the People of God. The first day of the

week is the Lord's Day still—use it rightly and you receive a double blessing. "We enter into His rest" and in honouring it we honour Him Who has said, "Them that honour Me I will honour".

## Authority and Responsibility

All possibility of misapprehension is now removed. No work was to be done on the first or seventh day as none was to be left to be done and God presses home this duty more definitely and minutely for He knew to what hollow excuses man would have recourse. He repeats, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work", and adds, "Thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Here we have enumeration of those concerned, and an establishing of the head of the family's responsibility and of his authority over his children and all employed by him. The Commandment holds good for all in general and each in particular. *Respect for Divine Authority* in this matter by the father or employer lays foundations for *respect for all authority* in the family and hence everywhere—Church and state—civil and religious life. Children are very specially to be trained up by precept and example in the way they should go, in the way our Heavenly Father has appointed. They are never to see their parents treading this Fourth Commandment underfoot; they are not to be allowed to ignore God's orders and do as they think best! The authority of parents is to be based on their submission to the highest authority of all. The responsibility of the head of the family does not end where love alone for his loved ones' spiritual and temporal welfare should or might lead him; as a Master, as an employer of labour, he is responsible also for his servants. He has no right to deprive them of that which their Heavenly Father and Master, both his and theirs, has given them and requires of them all, as *His servants*! In as far as he is concerned and has rights over them he is to see to it that they all obey their one Lord. No unnecessary work, servile work, is to be done by any on that Day. They have souls to be sanctified just as much as he has. They are as capable of increasing delight in the Lord their God, as he is. They need rest and calm as much as, if not often more than, he does and God is no respecter of

persons. The order, privilege and promised blessing is given to all, bond or free, male or female; nay more, the very beasts that perish are not forgotten of God, they are to enjoy rest according to their nature on the Lord's Day! The principal motive for this last order is no doubt that God in His goodness would prevent work being done by man, for the beasts cannot toil without involving labour for man. The argument runs thus: even the very beasts are to rest their bodies, how much more then you, who, with more perfect bodies needing rest, have also souls to nourish and to revive by "Rest in the Lord", which is sought for in His courts, in His presence, in works of mercy worthy of such a day as the Lord's Day! Children then and all you employ—those who have come to you for work, "the stranger within thy gate"—even the heathen—none are to be robbed of His Day and of their rights in this matter. Even cruelty to animals finds here a rebuke and the law for the servant and stranger antedates the taking away of the temporary wall of partition between men!

See to it that you rob not God! If you do, it will be to the hurt not only of your own soul but you may help to destroy your children's and your neighbours' also! If you have experienced the blessings connected with a right observance of the Lord's Day, then exert all your influence to lead others to do so. Our spiritual wants are the same as those of Israel of old, our need of rest and quiet is quite as great, nay greater, and, as long as this need remains, so long does the Commandment, given in view of this, hold good!

### **Under Grace**

Moreover, such privileges would never have been withdrawn without a special intimation that this was God's will; that merciful Will changes not when the same necessities have to be met. Generally speaking the fact that the Ten Commandments are not abrogated under the New Testament order is proved in Ephesians 6:2 (an epistle written not to Jewish but Gentile believers) where Paul quotes the Fifth Commandment as binding on their children to whom also the promises belong; *as a rule of life, the Fourth Commandment, as well as all the others, remains.* What should we think of a so-called superiorly enlightened Christian child who, when told

"Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first Commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth", answered: "Oh you are still in bondage; we are no longer under the law but under grace!" Did Christ say He had come to abolish the law?

Lastly, consider the reason given for this Commandment: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and rested the seventh day wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day" (not the seventh day, mark) "and hallowed it". Such is the reason given for our six days' work in view of our one day's rest given by God. He speaks to us as our Creator, as He Who rules in earth and Heaven and metes out the time He gives us as He will! We have not here to discuss the scientific questions connected with the subject before us. There is no proof here that all was created in days of twenty-four hours or that God's rest lasted twenty-four hours. The solution affects the main issue but little. The time given us daily for our labour gives us the duration also of our rest in the Lord. Our wearied nature calls for rest after 12 hours' toil and—notwithstanding the refreshment night and sleep bring us—scientific research proves that at the end of six days we require a Sabbath day's rest even for our bodies, thus also testifying the wisdom and goodness of Him Who created us for Himself and knows our frame. The words, "God rested the seventh day" are chosen so as to give our finite minds some idea of that wondrous day and scene, replete with infinite creative power, which cost indeed no labour, nor caused any weariness to the Creator, but which had "a beginning" in time and a cessation during which the Creator rested in the contemplation of the good and glorious work of His hands. The word used signifies or implies cessation from the perfecting of some work as well as entering into rest. When we think of the great Creator's love shown in the inexhaustible source of pleasure and admiration opened up to us in all His works; when we remember how all was marred by sin and then think that on such a day as The Sabbath (of which all other Sabbaths were but a shadow) the foundations of a new Creation were laid and, at the same time, the bright and glorious earnest of a yet brighter and more glorious Sabbath-keeping was given; how can we resist

the feeling of gratitude which prompts us to obey this Commandment and to consecrate this day so replete with earth's absolutely most glorious events, Creation and Resurrection, with Heaven's own foretaste also; to consecrate this day, I say, to the service of Him Who so loved us, and to the rehearsal in public or private of all the great things He has wrought for us.

The same reason is given in the Fourth Commandment for the sanctifying as for the first institution of the day of rest—" wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day " (not the seventh day, leaving full scope for a change from the seventh to the first day of the week) " and hallowed it ". Peculiar blessings are contained in this His hallowing of the Day. Divinely appointed ordinances are given us as springs of living water—or as stepping-stones—in life's troubled and swift current. No doubt every day is blessed for the man who walks with God but on this day at His invitation the Lord's people lift up their united hearts and voices, with one consent in prayer and praise, and the messengers of Peace, His Peace, proclaim rest to the weary sons of men, slaves of sin and of the world.

If only God's people listened to God's voice in this matter, laid aside their work on the sixth day and spent the Sabbath in sabbath thoughts and works and rest, not doing their own way, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words, choosing the things that please Him in this matter, then they would soon experience what is meant by the words: " The Lord blessed the Sabbath Day ". They would be joyful in God's House of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7) and would increasingly, according to His promise, " Delight themselves in the Lord ", Isaiah 58:14. Let us do the works Christ did on this day and none other. We shall find in these rest and peace for we shall do them with Him. Yes! God hallowed or set apart, consecrated it, as the vessels of the Temple were set apart from common to sacred uses alone. After Christ's Resurrection His disciples were taught by His appearance among them and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on them to call the first day of the week " The Lord's Day ". John speaks of it as such, Revelation 1:10. They then met for worship and breaking of

bread. It is an Institution of Christ, His own weekly (not yearly) commemoration of His Resurrection—a test of your love to Him and to your neighbour.

The great Dr. Owen says: “God sanctified this Day, not that He kept it holy Himself, which in no sense the Divine nature is capable of, nor that He purified it and made it inherently holy, which the nature of the day is incapable of, nor that He celebrated that which in itself is holy, as we sanctify His name, which is the act of an inferior towards a Superior, but that He set it apart to Sacred uses authoritatively requiring us to sanctify it in that use obediently”.

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“Therefore relinquishing Judaical observances of the Sabbath, let us see of what sort the observance of the Sabbath ought to be to the Christian. On the day of the Sabbath it behoves that nothing of all worldly works should be done. If, therefore, you cease from all secular employments, and carry on nothing worldly, and are at leisure for Spiritual occupations, and go to Church, giving ear to the reading and treating of the Divine Word, and think of heavenly things, and are solicitous about the future hope, and have before your eyes the coming judgment, and have not respect to present and visible things, but to the unseen and future — this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath.”

*Origen c. 185-254 A.D.*

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