

THREE DAYS

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by The Rev.
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The Sermon

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THREE DAYS IN ONE

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"Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord." (Exodus 16, 23).

In my text a reference is made to God's Holy day, the first time in Scripture that the word "sabbath" occurs. "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord." We face today grave attacks upon this holy Day of Rest in this land of ours. This Divine Institution is really **THREE DAYS IN ONE**: a *Rest Day*: and that is a provision for this world; a *Holy Day*: and that is a precept for His people; and a *Significant Day*: and that is a promise to His Church.

1. *God has given us a Rest Day.* In the Old Testament there are many references to the Lord's Day as a "sabbath", as in our text. There is the thought of relaxation in restfulness if we are to be busy in our activity. Our Lord Jesus brought out this thought in St. Luke 12:29. "Live not in careful suspense". God has given us a Rest Day. As I was working very early one Monday morning in our caravan in the garden, and I noticed the sounds of the din

and noise of London; I was reminded of the restlessness of the world, and I was reminded also of the strength and resilience with which we are enabled to face our work in the world because of the joy of the Day of Rest. It is only the Christian who comes to his work of the week fresh after the rest of the Sabbath: whilst there are those who face a new week jaded and tired because of an ill-spent Sunday. Incidentally I would remind my brother clergy that it is essential that they should take time for rest and relaxation during the week, for they have many duties to perform on the Lord's Day in ministering to their people. Christians need rest on God's Day if they are to make any impact upon the nation on behalf of the Gospel. There is a strong social and national reason for the work the Lord's Day Observance Society does for the good of all, for both Christians and non-Christians—the honouring of this one day in seven. This Society is a national institution for which this nation should be truly grateful.

This Day of Rest is God's plan for good living. In Exodus 16 we have a vivid picture of the provision of the manna which God made for His people in the wilderness, but they were not allowed to gather it on the

seventh day: it is recorded that those who did seek to do so "found none". (v. 27). There was provision for those who obeyed God's commands: and a warning for those who disobeyed Him. They went hungry away. There is a rhythm of activity and rest in God's over-ruling providence. It is demonstrated in creation, in the record of God resting from His work of creation on the seventh day. Six days of work, and one of rest, is found in every level of God's provision for us. There is the day to work and the night for rest. We think, too, of the seasons with the activity of Spring, and the bounty of Summer, leading on to the rest of Winter after harvest. The Day of Rest is a principle for *all*. "On the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed". (Ex. 23:12). This is a day when the family and social circle are to be drawn together into true restfulness. Here is a note that cuts right across the secularism of to-day which says: "You Christians keep Sunday as you like, and let us do what we like!". It is our duty to seek to lead people to understand the importance of the day of rest, even though they may yet have to be led to a

personal faith and trust in Christ. The Christian has a right to place a mark of authority upon the importance of honouring God's Day. Let us share with others what we have experienced of the riches of the Sabbath. In Leviticus 25:2 & 4 we read that every seven years the land was to have a Sabbath rest, thus avoiding "dust bowls" as in America.

The work of the L.D.O.S. is needed to bring the importance of the Day of Rest home to the nation. We are not only concerned with the minority in the nation who are Church-goers. We are concerned about the honouring of this Day for the sake of the nation. We care about the industrial life of the nation, and its family life. In their comment upon the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Law on Sunday Observance, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers says "If the Committee had been more aware of the social and family consequences of their proposals they might have at least proposed that the law should be altered to provide that no shop worker should be employed on both Saturday and Sunday". There is a danger of Sunday becoming a dumping ground for every commercial and financial

interest or even being used by political interests desiring to snatch every moment to make use of for their own ends. We thank God that in recent years our various Prime Ministers have been Church-goers, but we regret that Cabinet meetings have been held occasionally on Sundays. Those occupying high positions in the life of the nation would do well to recognise the importance of honouring this sacred Day. Whatever our political allegiance may be, we do well regularly to pray for our Prime Minister and his colleagues in the tremendous and heavy tasks that they have to face, that they may recognise the importance of keeping God's Day as a Day of rest and worship. Cabinet and political meetings on Sundays can only lower efficiency on week days. There are those in our country who are seeking to use this Day of Rest for financial gains and possible rewards. What a contrast with the better use described in the well-known hymn:

“O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love.”

sanctuary. The Christian Sabbath links the Lord's people at the Lord's Table, on the Lord's Day. It is a Day set apart for the worship of God. And if there are encroachments upon that Day, it will make it more difficult for God's people to come to His House on His Day: and pastoral work will be made more difficult in the days to come.

3. *God has given us a significant Day.* The Scripture links the Sabbath with certain mighty and significant facts in God's dealings with mankind. In Exodus 31:17 it is a sign of *finished creation*. And in v. 13 we read: "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". In the great feasts (Deut. 16:8 & 12), there is a sign of *finished deliverance*, and so with the Sabbath at the re-giving of the law in Deut. 5:15. It is a sign of *finished salvation*, as the *Christian Sabbath*, the first day of the week, speaking of the Resurrection. Thus Christians established Sunday as the Lord's Day, e.g., "Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). So on this the first day of the week we are reminded of Christ's death upon the Cross,

and of His Resurrection, a Day to be remembered and honoured. It is also a sign of *finished glory*; Rev. 1:10. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day". And in that great chapter we are reminded of Christ's coming again (v. 7, "Behold, He cometh"). The Christian Sunday is deeply significant as it gathers up the past, the present, and the future, speaking to us of "our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but, above all, His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and the hope of glory".

So the Lord's Day Observance Society is evangelistic too, as it not only seeks to preserve God's Day, but also to proclaim these great truths, signified by the Day, to an anxious nation that desperately needs the blessings of the Gospel.

May God richly bless and use the Society as it proclaims, from God's Word, God's Day in the coming days until the day of our Lord come and we see Him face to face.

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