

# THE SABBATH.

## 1. ITS IMPORTANCE:

AN EXTRACT FROM JUDGE RUSH.

## 2. THE RIGHT WAY OF KEEPING IT:

*From Sir Matthew Hale's Advice to his Children.*



"Hail Sabbath, thee I hail! the Poor Man's Day."

GRANAGE.

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ON  
THE SABBATH,  
&c. &c.

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FROM JUDGE RUSH.

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THE law upon which I mean now to address you, is that which prohibits all worldly employment or business on Sunday, except works of necessity and charity; and forbids, *without any exception*, all gaming, hunting, shooting, and *other* sports and diversions whatsoever.

But it may be asked, Why are the hands of industry thus bound up?—why are the people restrained from labour upon every seventh day?

Very good reasons, Gentlemen\*, may be assigned for it; otherwise the wisdom of the Most High would not have enjoined it at the creation of man; afterwards made it a part of the ten commandments to the Jews, and finally continued it under the Christian dispensation.

The gradual exercise of Almighty Power, by which this *world* was created in the space of six days, was no doubt intended as an instructive lesson to those intelligent beings who were destined to inhabit it. Upon the seventh day, we are told, the Deity ceased from his labours; and directed his creature Man, ever after, to consecrate it as a Holy Day, in honour of creation; thereby to commemorate the glorious event. Nor is it possible to conceive that any means could be devised more likely to impress the idea that the world was the work of an Almighty Hand, than instituting a certain day to be kept in memory of it. It is therefore reasonable to believe, this was one end

\* This was addressed to the grand jury of Philadelphia.



proposed by the institution of the Sabbath: at the same time, it had a direct tendency to banish the extravagant notion of the eternity of the world, and to guard against the idolatry of the sun, moon, and stars; to which, we know, mankind have been extremely prone in every age and nation. The dispute concerning the origin of the earth, which so much perplexed and bewildered the heathen philosophers, is solved in a moment, by the sublime declaration of the Jewish Legislator, "God said, Let there be light; and there was light."

It is the attribute of wisdom to proportion the means to the end; and it is the character of Infinite Wisdom, both in the moral and natural world, to render all his operations subservient to the production of the greatest possible good. Man is a compound being, consisting of both soul and body, and has the interests of both to provide for; the institution of the Sabbath has therefore a twofold aspect;—it has reference to his present as well as to his future state of existence. It is designed and calculated to promote his happiness here, and to secure it hereafter. Abstraction from worldly employment is enjoined, that religious worship may be observed. The reason explicitly given, why man should rest from his labors every seventh day, is, that he may have leisure from the noise and bustle of the world, for devout contemplations, and for acquiring those habits of piety; without which, all hopes of future felicity, are entirely fallacious. It is in the high degree irrational to imagine that religion consists in a few acts, or in the cold performance of an occasional duty. To the understanding and good sense of every man, it is evident that religion is a settled disposition,—a habit,—a temper, an entire devotion of the heart, to please that Being, whom it is our highest interest to please and to obey . . . . Considering the depravity of the human heart, there can be little doubt that, if certain periods had not been appointed by the Deity



for religious solemnities, every appearance of public and social worship would have been banished from the world. Absorbed in the busy pursuits of life, man would soon forget his duty to his Creator, unless a recurrence of fixed and stated periods had been instituted, to keep in mind his immortality, and to prepare for that untried existence, for which he is ultimately intended. In short, such is the constitution of human nature, and its propensity to keep out of sight the future world, that nothing less than the expedient of appropriating a certain portion of time for the duties of piety and devotion, would be sufficient to prevent religion, and every vestige of it, from being totally obliterated from the face of the earth.

Nor is it less undeniably true, that the institution of the Sabbath is calculated to advance the temporal, as well as the moral and spiritual interests of mankind. This will appear evident from the reflection, that in all probability, social and public worship was the principal design of instituting the Sabbath; and that in the sanctuaries of religion, it is natural to suppose, those useful impressions would be made that have a tendency to advance the interests of virtue, and the general happiness of mankind. Here it is men are taught their duty to God and to their fellow-creatures, enforced by the powerful consideration of future rewards and punishments. Here they are taught the means of pardon and the method of salvation, thro' our great Redeemer. Here they are taught, that the design of the great Author of Christianity was to inspire men with peaceable dispositions, and with an utter abhorrence of every species of fraud, falsehood, cruelty, and injustice. Here they are taught, that without holiness, the strictest morality, and universal benevolence, future felicity is absolutely unattainable;—here they are taught, in their intercourse with the world, to exhibit gentleness and courtesy of manners towards all men; not from the ignoble view of acquiring popular



applause, but as the means of cultivating that affectionate and brotherly frame of spirit which is represented in Scripture as the most decisive evidence and criterion of love and obedience to the great Parent of the Universe. In fine, here is inculcated the practice of those eminently Christian virtues, meekness, charity, and forgiveness, as absolutely necessary to our own forgiveness from our heavenly Father. And can there be any doubt that the public delivery, and frequent inculcation of precepts so sublime and benevolent, must have the happiest effect in correcting the manners and mending the heart, and thus powerfully contribute to maintain the cause of virtue and order, and the general interests of society? Deeply immersed, as the bulk of mankind are, in the laborious employment of life, it cannot be expected they should have it in their power to devote much of their time to the acquisition of religious knowledge. How admirably adapted then is the institution of the Sabbath to the condition of the poor and industrious classes in society! the main design of which is to dispense, at stated periods, instruction to those who seem to have no other means and opportunity of attaining it.

Even in the portion of time allotted for religious exercises, there is the evidence of consummate wisdom, and an unbounded knowledge of the human frame. If less than a seventh part had been allotted, there is reason to believe, it would not have produced the slightest effect, either upon the heart or life.

On the other hand, if a third or fourth part had been allotted, besides detaching men too much from the affairs of the world, it would have left too little time for their laborious occupations.

Notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of the institution of the Sabbath, as a mean of procuring individual happiness and national prosperity, melancholy experience shews, there is no law of heaven or of earth that is more generally violated. This is the more to be regretted, as it seems to be the



contrivance of Infinite Wisdom to keep up a sense of religion in our world, without which, government and morality cannot long subsist. In the present age we have not our choice of two religions; for it might be some consolation, while we are extinguishing every appearance of Christianity in our country, if we had even the wretched prospect of relapsing into the errors of Paganism. But the case is otherwise; for if we destroy the Christian religion, we shall have none. It has been often said, the Sabbath is the palladium of our religion, and that as this day is observed or neglected, Christianity will stand or fall. If this be really the case, there is reason to fear, it will not be of long continuance among us. One thing, in my judgment, is certain: If it does fall, it will fall like a strong man; it will pull down the pillars of government, and bury our country in the ruins. Every wicked man is an enemy to his country; because he breaks her laws, and spreads the contagion of vice around him; and because his conduct has a direct tendency to bring down the vengeance of Heaven on his devoted country.

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## DIRECTIONS FOR KEEPING THE LORD'S DAY.

BY JUDGE HALE.

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Children,

HAVING exhorted and required you, in a former Letter, to be frequent in reading the Scriptures with due observation and understanding, which will make you wise for this life and that which is to come, I now intend to write something to you on another subject, viz. Your observation of the Lord's Day, commonly called *Sunday*; and this I do for these reasons:

1. Because it hath pleased God to cast my lot so, that I am to rest at this place upon that day; and the consideration, therefore, of that duty, is proper for me and for you: it is the work proper for that day.



2. Because I have, by long and sound experience, found, that the due observance of this day, and of the duties of it, have been of singular comfort and advantage to me; and, I doubt not but it will prove so to you. God Almighty is the Lord of our time, and lends it to us; and as it is but just we should consecrate this part of that time to him; so I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due attention to the duty of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me:—and, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could early make an estimate of my successes in my own secular engagements the week following, by the manner of my passing of this day: and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience.

3. Because I find in the world much looseness and apostacy from this duty. People begin to be cold and careless in it, allowing themselves sports and recreations, and secular employments in it, without any necessity; which is a sad spectacle and an ill presage. It concerns me therefore (who am your father) as much as I may, to rescue you from that sin which the examples of others and the inclination and inconsiderateness of youth are apt to lead you into.

I shall, therefore, set down unto you particularly these things: 1. What is the reason and ground of your observation of this day;—2. What things ought *not* to be done upon this day;—3. What things may be done upon this day;—4. What things are necessary to be done, in order to its sanctification.

I. Touching the first of these, viz. The Reason of the Observation and Sanctification of this Day; and the reasons are these:—

1. It is a moral duty; that, since the glorious God



gives me my time, I should set apart *some* portion of that time in a special manner to his service.

2. And, because the glorious God best knows what portion of time is fit to be peculiarly dedicated to his service, he hath, by his express precept, *limited one day of seven* to be that special portion of time which he would have peculiarly dedicated to his service.

3. This seventh portion of time, under the old law given to the Jews, was determined by the precept and command of God in the Fourth Command; and likewise by his own example, confined to the seventh day from the Creation, upon which the Lord rested.

4. But our Saviour Christ, who is the Son of God, blessed for ever, and is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. xii.) fulfilling the work of our redemption by his resurrection upon the first day of the week, and by his mission of the Holy Ghost miraculously the first day of the week, and by the secret message of the Spirit to the apostles and primitive church, hath translated the observation of the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week; which is our Christian Sabbath: that, as our Christian Baptism, succeeds the Sacrament of Circumcision,—and as our Christian Paschal, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, succeeded the Jewish Passover, so our Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, succeeds the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week; and that morality, which was by Almighty God, under that covenant confined to the seventh day, is, by the example of Christ and his apostles, to us Gentiles, transferred to the first day of the week; and that which would have been *morally* a violation of the morality of the Fourth Command under the Jewish Sabbath, is a violation of the same Fourth Command, if done upon the Christian Sabbath. And thus you have the reason of the obligation upon us Christians to observe the first day of the week; because, by more than a human institution, the morality of the Fourth Command is transferred to the first day of the week, being our Christian Sabbath; and so the Fourth Command is not abrogated, but only the day changed.



II. It is certain, that what is unlawful to be done upon another day, is much more unlawful upon this; as Excess and Intemperance, and the like sinful and unlawful actions. But further: There are many things that may be lawfully done on another day, which may not lawfully be done upon this; and many things that are not only lawful upon another day, but also fit and decent, which are yet unfit to be done upon this day. Upon other days, we may and must employ ourselves in our secular and ordinary callings;—we may use bodily exercises, recreations, &c. But I hold these to be not only unfit, but unlawful to be used upon this day; and, therefore, remember it. Merry, but harmless talking, or talking about sports or worldly business, may be used another day; but not upon this. Feastings may be sometimes seasonably used upon other days; but are not fit upon this day. Let only such provision be made upon this day as may be necessary for the feeding of the family and the poor; and, therefore, I hold that superfluous provisions upon this day are to be avoided, as being unnecessary and unbecoming the solemnity of it.

III. What things *may* be done this day, is a question of a great latitude; because circumstances are many that do much diversify the actions of men, and many times render them lawful or unlawful, according to those varieties of circumstances. Therefore I shall shortly set down those things that do not of themselves directly tend to the sanctification of this day, that yet may, and sometimes must be done upon this day. For there were many things that were strictly enjoined to the Jews in their observation of their Sabbath, which were ceremonial, and concerned only that state, and do not oblige under the gospel; and many more things they did forbear and count unlawful, which in truth were not only not forbidden, but enjoined and commanded; for which our Lord reproves the Pharisees, Matt. xii.

I. Works of *absolute* necessity for man or beasts,



may be done upon the Lord's Day:—and those I call works of necessity, which cannot be done before the day, or after, without apparent danger. As for instance, stopping of the breach of a sea-wall, supporting a house, that upon a sudden tempest or casualty is ready to fall; pulling out an ox or other beast fallen into a ditch: preventing of a trespass, that by a sudden accident may be occasioned to my corn, or my neighbour's; setting of a broken bone; physic to remove an incumbent, or imminent disease or pain; milking of cows; feeding of cattle; the necessary dressing of meat for the family, and many more instances of that kind. But yet therein, great wariness and integrity must be used; for otherwise men, under pretence of necessity, will take the liberty to do what they please. Therefore take these cautions.

1. That is not a necessity that excuseth a work upon this day which might have been reasonably foreseen and done before the day: as for instance, a man hath a necessity to dress meat for his family, which he might have provided on the Saturday, and neglects it; this necessity will not justify him.

2. That is not a necessity which may be forborn to be done without any absolute destruction or loss of the thing until the morrow. If a rick of hay be on fire, I may endeavour to quench it on the Lord's Day: but if my corn be cut, and lying upon the ground on the Saturday, though the weather be rainy, or inclining to wet, I may not make it into cocks, or fetch it home upon the Lord's Day; because, possibly, Almighty God may send fair weather to-morrow. And, therefore, in my forbearance I do two duties under one, viz. observe his law, and rest upon his providence.

3. Works of Charity. Relief of the poor; administering physic upon an apparent necessity; visiting or comforting the afflicted; admonishing the disorderly; persuading peace between neighbours offended, and endeavouring to compose differences which require not much examination, or cannot be deferred without an apparent danger of greater mischief.



4. As for the fourth, what is proper, fit, or necessary to be done, in order to the sanctification of this day, I will set down particularly.

1. I would not have you meddle with any recreations, pastimes, or ordinary work of your calling, from Saturday night at eight of the clock, till Monday morning. For though I am not apt to think that Saturday night is part of the Christian Sabbath, yet it is fit then to prepare the heart for it.

2. Rise early; and when you have made yourself fully ready, and washed, and fitted yourself for the solemnity of the day, read two chapters of the Bible, and then go solemnly to your private prayer, and desire of God his grace to enable you to sanctify his day; and after your private prayer, read another chapter, and let your reading be with attention.

3. When you are in the public worship and service of God, kneel upon your knees in prayer: stand up at the reading of the Psalms, and Lessons, and the Epistle and Gospel, &c.; so you shall avoid offence, and give the same honour to every part of the Scripture.

4. Sit at the Sermon, and be very attentive at your prayers and in hearing. I commend your writing the sermon, because young minds are apt to wander, and writing the sermon fixeth them.

5. When the minister readeth any of the Psalms or lessons, turn to them in your Bible, and go along with him; it will fasten your attention, and prevent wandering thoughts.

6. Be very attentive and serious at church, use no laughing nor gazing about, nor whispering. Sing the singing Psalms with the rest of the congregation.

7. After sermon, eat moderately at dinner, rather sparingly than plentifully upon this day, that you may be fit for the afternoon's exercise, without drowsiness.

8. After dinner go to your chamber and peruse your notes, or recollect what you remember of the sermon, until it be church-time.

9. If you are well, be sure you go to church morn-



ing and afternoon; be there before the minister begins, and stay till he hath ended: and all the while you are at church, carry yourself soberly and reverently.

10. After evening sermon, go up to your chamber and read a chapter in the Bible; then examine what you have written, or recollect what you have heard; and if the sermon be not repeated in your father's house, but be repeated in the minister's house, go to the minister's house to the repetition of the sermon.

11. In all your speeches or actions of this day, let there be no lightness nor vanity; but let your actions and speech be such as the day is, serious and sacred, tending to learn or instruct in the great business of your knowledge of God, and his will, and your duty.

12. After supper, and prayers ended in the family, every one of you going to bed, kneel down upon your knees, and desire of God his pardon for what you have done amiss this day, and his blessing upon what you have heard, and his acceptance of what you have endeavoured in his service.

13. Perform all this cheerfully, and uprightly, and honestly, and count it not a burden to you; for assure yourselves you shall find a blessing from God in so doing. And remember it is your Father that tells you so, and that loves you, and will not deceive you; and (which is more than that) remember that the eternal God hath promised, (Isa. lviii. 13, 14)

And thus I have written to you of the Observation of the Lord's day; wherein, though I have omitted many things that might have been fit to be inserted, you must consider that I had but a small portion of time allowed me to write while I lay at an inn, and upon that day wherein I have performed those duties which I now enjoin you. Let the original be laid up safely for your brother R.; and every one of you take copies of it, that you may thereby remember the counsels of

YOUR LOVING FATHER.