**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 14. WHY SAVE THE LORD'S DAY?**

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The only command in the Decalogue which begins with the word "Remember" is the fourth: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," as if the Divine writer realized there would be more danger of forgetting this than any of the others, and of yielding to the subtle temptations of caprice and convenience as an excuse for violating it. "Remember" stands like a solitary sentinel in front of this solemn command, yet it has been chafed under, from the ancient Jew who was stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath, down to the Sunday saloon-keeper who, in commercializing his fellow-man's weakness, breaks three laws, that of the Sabbath, the State, and brotherly love.

Jesus declared the Sabbath was made for man, that is, for mankind. It is to be kept holy, that is wholesomely, so that our threefold nature, body, mind and soul, may benefit. No law more wise and merciful ever came from the loving heart of God; a law as all-embracing in its design as sunlight, meeting the needs of king and peasant, master and servant, parent and child. Whence came the wisdom condensed in this fourth commandment? Not from the Greeks, called the wisest of nations, for these words were written a thousand years before Socrates was born. Not from the Romans, masters of jurisprudence, for these words antedate the founding of Rome, by seven hundred and fifty years. They come from our Heavenly Father and they embody the great septenary law which runs through nature; therefore it is of equal application to every nation on earth. The Sabbath is the savings bank of human existence. It conserves man's physical, mental, spiritual and eternal welfare.

**WHY THE FIRST DAY INSTEAD OF THE SEVENTH?**

If you ask why the Jewish Saturday once observed as Lord's Day was changed to the First Day, the answer is that Jesus proclaimed Himself Lord also of the Sabbath day, therefore greater than the statute law of Moses. Jesus is the incarnate Legislator of the world. As Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus had the right to interpret and ennoble the day, so that it might be the greatest institution for the culture of the threefold man. The Scribes and Pharisees had misconceived the genius of the Sabbath law. They missed its underlying principle, encumbered it with intricate and inflexible rules, assuming themselves to be the judges of every act. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life." Jesus rescued the Sabbath from its burial under a mass of ceremonialism, and revealed its true spirit and meaning. "Jesus did for the Sabbath what a skipper does for his ship, when she comes laboring into port, unable to make headway, because her hulk is covered with barnacles. He puts her into drydock, and scrapes off the barnacles. He does not scuttle the ship. So our Lord does not repeal nor annul the Sabbath law when He strips it of the intolerable burdens which the ceremonialists had heaped upon it." In order to emphasize His new idea of the old Sabbath the disciples chose a new day as Lord's Day.

The disciples also desired to commemorate the greatest of all events since the world's creation, namely, the resurrection of our Lord, for it was on the first day of the week that that Jesus made His first five appearances. It was also on the first day of the week that the Holy Spirit was given, therefore Pentecost was commemorated on that day. (Acts 2.) It was on this day also that the great tidings of salvation were first preached to the multitudes. (Acts 2.) The first day became the day in which all the early Christians assembled for worship, and for communion. (Acts. 20:7 and 1 Cor. 11:23.) It was the day also in which the prophecy of Revelation was granted to St. John on Patmos. (Rev. 1:10.) All the church fathers kept the Lord's Day instead of the Jewish Sabbath, and thus the Christian Sabbath became the weekly holy day of the Christian dispensation, and is the only Sabbath day mentioned as a sacred rest day after the resurrection.

**HAVE WE OUTGROWN THE SABBATH DAY?**

Is this king of days, created by our Father, sanctified by our Saviour, preserved by the Church, worth saving? Some would have us think we have outgrown it, that it belongs to another time, governed by different conditions. A moment's thought will show that it is impossible to outgrow a law of nature, such as this septenary law is proved to be. And here are a few of the reasons:

**THE BODY NEEDS IT**

First, man has a body. Experience proves that the normal level of bodily energy cannot be maintained without the regular observance of a stated day of rest. We are like seven-day clocks that run down and have to be rewound. We are like musical instruments that play well for a time and get out of tune. We are storage batteries that leak their vital currents, and must be recharged. There was never an age when humanity needed this weekly rest-day more than now. Think of the fierce competition of modern business, and the relentless law of the survival of the strongest! Think of the feverish hurry and hustle of our American people! Ian Maclaren wrote thus about us: "I am now in New York, where everybody seems to be in a hurry. I asked a policeman what the excitement was all about. He thought I was joking. No one walks to business who can ride in a street car; no one rides in a street car who can ride in a steam car, and he regrets there is no pneumatic tube by which he might be shot to his office or shop. When there, he does not write letters if he can telegraph, or telegraph if he can telephone, and regrets is no occupation for his feet while waiting at the phone." There is magnetism in our oxygen which stimulates our blood and explains our American push and rush.

The difficulty, with our splendid American activity and achievement, is to arrest the momentum. Men rush so hard through the week that the Day of Rest finds them in the rushing mood. It is hard to stop. They want to do something or go somewhere, or keep up the pace by some dissipating use of the Lord's Day. Hence the Sunday excursions which generally make an incursion into the week's wages, the working man more tired on that night than the week. And there are Sunday amusements and dinner parties and receptions. But the human organism is not a machine of iron to run without rest, but a delicate bundle of nerves and tissues. But even iron machinery does better work and lasts longer when it has periodic rests, as the superintendent of the Pennsylvania railroad said recently about their locomotives.

**THE MIND NEEDS IT**

Second, man has a mind. It is a fact of common record that no set of men can keep working the same mental treadmill day after day without blunting the keen edge of their intellectual faculties. Note the employees who are held at their monotonous grind seven days out of seven, month after month, and you will observe that the average intelligence and moral standards are low. They read scarcely anything and take practically no interest in current events. A boy asked his father to take him "next Sunday to see the animals at the Bronx Zoo." The father has to work seven days a week, and he replied, "You needn't go to the Bronx to see animals; look at me, I am not much different from the horses I drive in front of my milk wagon." Do you wonder Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man? For man, that he might be something different from an animal. As soon as God had created man He ordained the Sabbath, because He knew the needs of man.

We can ill afford to make light of God's merciful provision of this weekly arrest of physical and mental toil. Science supports the Divine law by showing in the analysis of the blood, that during our application to work through the week we recover in one night's rest only five-sixths of the ounce of oxygen consumed out of our system by the day's labor. Each morning finds one-sixth of an ounce lacking, so that a man is run down at the end of the week to the extent of that whole ounce of vitality. The Lord's Day is a physiological necessity for the restoration of that one ounce. When a man presumes to be wiser than this law of nature and of God, he usually pays the penalty by breaking down with that peculiar malady "Americanitis," a compound of Insomnia and nervous debility. Then the physician most likely prescribes a sea voyage, for that will be an enforced rest for the depleted system. But a proper observance of the Lord's day would have supplied that very need, because the Lord's Day is a sea voyage between the two continents of monotony and drudgery. There would be little need of prolonged trips abroad, or sojourns in a sanitarium, if the Sabbath could have its claims respected. Fifty-two Sabbaths a year mean nearly two months vacation to every worker. When a man wipes the Sabbath out of his calendar he breaks a law of nature, and nature always squares accounts with broken law. Of many another could this doggerel be truthfully spoken concerning a man:

"Who spent his health to get his wealth,

And then with might and main

He turned around and spent his wealth

To get his health again."

**THE SOUL NEEDS IT**

Third, man has a soul. A great jurist recently said: "In he this strenuous age, our republic, instead of making light of one Sabbath, ought to have two each week, not only to repair its jaded nerves, but to tone up its moral sense." We have not fulfilled all the command when we have rested the body and diverted the mind. The soul has its rights, and not to recognize them is to leave our nature a truncated cone, the highest, finest part left undeveloped. We read of Jesus that "He went as His custom was into the synagogue on the Sabbath day." That His soul might keep its tryst with God, have larger breathing space, clearer light, and glimpses of the center of the spiritual universe, in which our spirits join and have their being. If Jesus needed that privilege, much more do we ordinary men. The shell fishes on the sea-shore live without water while the tide is out, but they depend upon the tide's return. If any of them are tossed by the waves beyond the reach of the tides, they die. Our souls are refreshed and nourished by communion with our Father in prayer, and through the means of grace provided by Divine worship on the Lord's Day. It is then we lay hold of our best yearnings, and stiffen them into fighting fibre for victorious warfare with the world, the flesh and the devil.

The artist Turner kept on his easel a handful of precious stones of beautiful colors. For a half hour each morning he would silently sit and gaze at those glorious tints. He said he did this to keep his color-sense acute. If the artist's eye needed that influence to keep its color sense toned up, surely the human soul needs the tonic influence of spiritual worship. What is the cloud that looms over every man's path every day? Not sorrow, not poverty, not sickness, not business reverses. The cloud that looms over every path is TEMPTATION. Some time ago a man who had not been in church for many years, secured a pew in his old church, and is now one of its regular attendants. Someone asked him the reason. He said, "I have a growing family of sons and daughters. I have been watching my boys with some anxiety. I am alarmed at what I read in the daily papers about the ways of the world, the ease with which men under temptation go down like reeds in the wind, the frequency with which husbands and wives break up their homes. I am convinced there is only one place to bring up a family of children, and that is the church." Who will question that father's judgment? He does not want his sons to grow up without moral anchorage, he does not want his daughters to marry those who will play fast and loose with honor, and he knows that the church with its worship is the place where ideals are burnished up, where the dust is cleansed from the soul's wings, where false standards are corrected.

If a busy brain worker could see a photograph of his mind as it appears on Saturday night, with its six layers of toil and grime, representing the six days contact with the world, he would see himself much in need of a spiritual bath on the Lord's Day. The average breadwinner is a human football, tossed hither and yon from the goal of Monday to the goal of Saturday, and literally dumped into the Sabbath morning bruised from the battle. He is apt to feel soured and out of sorts; and nothing so soothes the wounds as contact with the people of God in the Lord's house.

**A COMPLETE MAN**

So the Sabbath was made for man, that he might be in every sense MAN! Something more than a beast of burden, something more than a cash-register, something more than a pendulum swinging between his home and his business. In an ordinary lifetime of seventy years there are ten years of Sundays. Therefore the manner in which a man keeps those three thousand six hundred and forty Sabbaths will make its impress on the man's life for all eternity.

When a man says and thinks that he has a right to do as he pleases on the Lord's Day, with no reference to the sacredness of the day, or its claims upon his soul, we may conclude that man has not accepted his Heavenly Father's estimate of the worth of a man. He assesses himself at a lower value. God created man in His own image, in the image of, God created He him. But the man says, "I will rub out the Divine lineaments. God started me on an immortal journey but I am satisfied to let it end in the graveyard." There isn't much use trying to reason with a man who puts the body first and last, who regards his face as a mere opening for the alimentary canal, and who allows the lower nature to preside at the funeral of the higher.

Man, do you think the Almighty God made a mistake when He started you on an eternal journey? Is your soul a joke? Has God not said: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day and call the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord and honorable and shall honor Him in not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. 58:13, 14.)

**THE LAW OF LIBERTY**

There are those who say, "If the Sabbath was made for man, why may he not do as he pleases with it?" Because it was made for man's liberty, not for man's license, and the highest liberty is always found in conformity to law, so long as my doings affect no one else's liberty, I may do as I chose, but the moment I cross someone else's rights I am not free to do as I chose. I am limited by the higher law of brotherly love. If you think you are at liberty to travel on the Lord's Day or attend a ball-game or concert on that day, you are not conforming to the law of brotherly love in that you force your fellow man to work for you on the day that you enjoy your freedom. But you reply, "Those people who toil on the Lord's Day get extra pay," Extra pay! My friend, there is not gold enough in the bosom of the eternal hills to compensate a single toiler for his loss of the day of rest. Every man has a right to his manhood, and no money compensation can replace the loss of manhood. "But the train of cars that I board on the Sabbath would run anyway, and I might as well go on it." My friend, how does that cancel your share of the moral responsibility for having forced your brother man to violate the law of the Sabbath?

"Well, I am so busy during the week that I have no other day for recreation. From Monday to Saturday I grind like Samson at the mill." Yes, but you are no busier than the Sabbath-keeping toilers who manage to get their recreation other times. If you honestly believe that you have no other day than the Lord's Day for your pleasure seeking, I ask you in all solemnity, have you any other day for the culture of your spiritual life? When are you going to attend to your immortal soul? Now is the accepted time, what are you doing with it? Someone has said, "The Lord's Day is like a rented house; it belongs to the proprietor, it is occupied by the tenant, but the tenant has no right to say, 'I will do what I please with this house, damage it, desecrate it, turn it into an evil resort.' No, the house is his to use and not abuse. The Sabbath is ours in the same way; he who diverts it from its proper purpose is dishonest. Will a man rob God? If a tramp tells me a pitiful tale and I have seven silver dollars and six of them, what would you think of the ingrate if you were told he came at night and robbed me of the seventh? I wonder what God thinks of the man to whom He gives six days for his own free use and finds the man appropriating to himself that which is specially stamped as God's."

What is the use of a Lord's Day if it is to be swamped between the secular tide of one worldly week gone, and of another coming, and to have nothing about it that distinguishes it from all the other days, except in some fanciful alteration in the style of its wordliness or carnality? Look at the people who have spent the entire Sabbath in pleasure seeking. Not one gleam of spiritual light in their faces, not one crumb of spiritual food in their souls, going to bed at night a day's march nearer home. Home? Yes, if home is the grave and eternal death. Otherwise a day's march farther from home, if home is God, and if heaven is an experience into which men graduate from this earthly season of moral training and spiritual acquisition.

**BLUE LAWS BETTER THAN RED ANARCHY**

We are not pleading for a Puritan Sunday of bigotry or tolerance. We are not pleading for blue laws

But as between bigotry and a mush of concession give us bigotry every time. And even the bluest of blue laws would be preferable to red anarchy. We appeal for a safe and sane Sabbath, not in the interests of the Church or religion, but not in the interests of all the people, believers and unbelievers, because the Sabbath was made for mankind. When I stood the other day in the little log cabin where Abraham Lincoln first saw the light, I thought of his regard for the Sabbath, and there came to my mind these words of his: "As we keep, or break, the Sabbath day, we nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope by which man rises."

It is true there are many noble people who never get a Sabbath to themselves. They are busy in works of necessity and mercy. Jesus Himself sets the example of this, and leaves to our enlightened consciences to judge what is necessary, and what is not, to do on His day. The fundamental principle is to be "in the spirit on the Lord's Day," to be in tune with our Lord's mind, to be in harmony with our Lord's will. So if you ask what rules do you suggest for the proper observance of the Lord's Day I answer, THERE IS NO RULE BUT THE GOLDEN RULE THAT CAN GOVERN OUR RELATION TO THE LORD'S DAY. Therefore, before I give a Sunday house party, or travel for my own pleasure, or talk a lot of twaddle at the telephone on the Lord's Day I will say "I would not like to be obliged myself to work on Sunday; therefore it is wrong for me to oblige others to work. I will not buy a Sunday paper, knowing that I am forcing a hundred and fifty thousand compositors and pressmen to work seven days out of seven, and robbing a great army men and boys of their right to a day of rest and worship. True, that newsboy is poor, and needs the money, but I refuse to take advantage of that boy's poverty by contributing, to his moral detriment. It is bad that he is poor, it is worse that I should make him a law-breaker." All over this country a hundred thousand boys are training for manhood with no reverence for the Sabbath, and no respect for authority, in order to supply a Sunday newspaper for people who would be infinitely better off to have one whole day in which the dust and rubbish of six secular days could not enter. When the attempt to introduce a Sunday newspaper was made in London, the "Evening Post" commented: "The best view which can be taken of our own Sunday newspapers must be that they are a nuisance. They are twice cursed; they curse him that prints them and him that reads them. They add terrors to Sunday. On purely humanitarian grounds, without allowing theological reasons to have any weight whatever, we could wish them all away. If there is any more pathetic sight than a man deliberately sitting down to wade through a sextuple Sunday newspaper, we do not know what it is."

That is the new indictment of the Sunday press from a secular viewpoint. We may easily see the harm it does from a spiritual viewpoint. A mind that has waded through the Sunday sheet is no more prepared for spiritual thoughts than is a man's clothing for appearance at church after rambling over fields of burdocks and nettles. The very purpose of the Sabbath was to give God's children one whole day free from the suggestions and contaminations of a wicked world.

**IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY**

O men, does it not touch a tender place in hearts when you hear of the multitudes of wage earners who are pleading for a Sabbath restday? Railroad men, miners, actors, craftsmen of all sorts, signing petitions for a recognition of their right to a weekly day of rest, making their appeal on the grounds of common humanity. Here is one from a member of the bartenders' union. He said: "I cannot of course appeal to you from the standpoint of religion, but we have some interests in common with other men. I am myself the father of three children, but I scarcely know them. I am up in the morning before they are awake, and I return at night after they are in bed. This I do seven days a week, year in and year out." That from the bartenders' union. And similar appeals are made from thousands of other toilers; because every man has a right to his manhood, and the Sabbath was made for man.

**THE PLAIN DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN**

For Christian men and women there can be only one course of action. There may be perplexing situations at times, where even a Christian will be puzzled to decide just what to do; but with a mind brought, as the Apostle says, "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" the ground is level and the air cleared for meeting them. When we fully recognize the Lord's lordship of this Day of days, we will never go far astray. Every question as to the proper observance of it will be dealt with in its Divine relations to our Divine Master. It is more than half the answer to any question to be in tune with the principles involved in the solution of the question. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day," said the Apostle. To keep that pregnant phrase in mind will settle the details of every program of conduct on that day.

God help us all to resist the drift of Sabbath secularization. Doubtless it will cost us something to be loyal to principle in this day of many jelly fish Christians, who have opinions without convictions, and prejudices without principles. A refreshing shadow of a great rock in a weary land is the man of convictions and principles who can resist the drifting sands of a loose interpretation of the Divine commands. The demand today is for rock Christians. We are living in a time when the people who settle questions of right and wrong seem to be in a minority. In matters of morals and dress most of us go in droves. A few people act as brain for the many, a few people act as conscience for the many. But we who have the light of God's Word need not be mastered by the mob. One is our Master, even Christ. A great many people are doing certain things on the Lord's Day, not because they have settled the question, as between themselves and their Lord, but because they have settled it as between themselves and their own preferences, or as between themselves and their associates.

Let us be rock Christians, who will keep the Lord's Day holy because it holds us in touch with eternal and Divine things, and because it celebrates our relation to our Divine Master; and because the Lord's Day is the guerdon of our national prosperity, the hope of our civilization; and because the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken: "Them that honor Me I will honor."