

"Sabbath Observance"

Scripture Lesson: -

Text: *Ex 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*

Introduction: - The Sabbath is one of the vital and indispensable institutions of man. Some of the great minds of the race have described it as "The golden link in the chain of days". Still another of the great minds has "The pause in time which indicates eternity". And yet another has said that it is, "A flower from Eden's garden, which still blooms amid the universal blight of sin". Still another one has declared it to be "As the flower to the plant, so is Sunday to the home, evolving all its elements in one fair blossom". These descriptions show the esteem in which the high souls of the race have held this holy day. But not only is the Sabbath beautiful it is of the greatest practical value.

1.

THE SABBATH AND RELIGION. For one thing, no really vital and adequate church life is possible without a right observance of the Sabbath. In the southern states, where the Sabbath is observed, the churches are vigorous and strong. In the North, where the Sabbath is increasingly disregarded, the churches seem to be getting weaker year by year. I heard a minister of the Indiana Conference South, who spent his vacation in Florida this winter, say, that the E. U. B. churches all had to have two preaching services each Sunday.

I know some people are saying that they can enjoy and worship God by taking to the golf course, or simply enjoying the beauties of nature. I confess, that I cannot understand such psychology or such spirituality. We need to receive the fire of other lives, and we need to give warmth, our own warmth in return. This assertion, that we can isolate ourselves from the church and still be Christians is folly. The Bible says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together". And that means attendance upon the sanctuary as a ~~die~~ part of the proper ob-

servance of God's holy day.

We need just what God seeks to give us, through the church, week by week. When the children of Israel were marching through the wilderness God sent them manna fresh every morning. If it became stale, it grew distasteful and unwholesome. We cannot live upon our past religious experiences. There must be a renewal of God's grace in our hearts and lives day by day, and week by week. The holy Sabbath day is the time when we can gather manna fresh and sweet from the Divine storehouse. When the Sabbath is disregarded, individual spiritual life weakens, and the decay of the church is inevitable.

II.

The Sunday theater and moving picture business are also crying evils, because such institutions win the young people away from the churches and train them into habits of neglect of the house of God.

Yes, we have laws which govern the opening of the movies, permitting Sunday baseball and so on. These laws are wrong in principle, because the people already give so much of their time and strength to such things, as compared to the noble and necessary things of life. All citizens who believe in God and the more sacred things of life should be increasingly concerned, because the very foundation of our modern civilization is endangered by these tendencies to destroy the influence of the church and the integrity of home life.

III.

The Ten Commandments. People may laugh at those who defend the old-fashioned Sabbath, and call them old-fogyish and impracticable, but the fact stands, a fact written in history, that the nation that tramples the Lord's day underfoot is treading downward to moral and spiritual death. Modern Europe has amply illustrated this truth. God's law is plain and emphatic. In Exodus 20: 8-11 it is written, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt

thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth, and the sea and all that in them is, and rested the Sabbath day and hallowed it!"

What are we going to do with that? Have we modern people gotten to the point where we are ready to abolish the Ten Commandments, either for the sake of business, or for the sake of enjoyment.

We cannot claim God's promise in one place if we violate His law in another. If we have a right to violate God's law of the Sabbath, then we have a right to violate any other of the commandments.

The cashier of a bank, who was recently sentenced to the penitentiary for stealing, charged the officials of the bank with indirect responsibility for his crime. He said, "When I began work for the bank I was a religious man and believed in obeying all of God's laws; but the bank officials compelled me to work more or less on Sundays, and thus to break one of the Ten Commandments, and this undermined my regard for all other of the commandments."

Oh, business man, if you require your employees to disregard the Sabbath do not blame them too severely if they steal from your till. If you have the right to rob God of his day, why they have a right to rob you of your money.

IV.

The Sabbath is also a necessity for physical well-being. The effort was made during the French Revolution to substitute the plan of one day's rest in ten, instead of one day's rest in seven; but the results were disastrous.

Even dumb brutes are subject to this universal law. It is a well-known fact that the pioneers who travelled across our continent in the early days found

but that it paid to keep the Sabbath. We are told that those who rested themselves and their horses on the Sabbath reached the Pacific earlier than those that travelled seven days a week.

The American working people have as great a stake in this question of Sabbath observance, as have the leaders of the churches. The forces of labor, should stand with the church and battle for this vital necessity of one day's rest in seven.

Let me see, for example, there are some 200,000 caddies on the golf links every Sunday, tempted away from Sunday school by men, many of them church members, who for selfish Sunday pleasure are robbing the boys of moral and religious training.

V.

The inspirations of patriotism, as well as the interests of religion should lead us rightly to observe the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath is a national necessity. Whatever is for the physical, mental, moral & spiritual good of the people is for the good of the nation. "Righteousness exalteth a nation", and without obedience to the laws of God, there can be no true righteousness.

The Christian Sabbath had its origin in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To honor Him and to memorialize the truth of his resurrection, the Sabbath was changed from the last to the first day of the week. Our Christian Sabbath has in it not only the law of the Old Testament, but the gospel of the new; and resting upon it is the hope of all the future. To desecrate the Lord's day is not only to violate the law of rest, but to treat with contempt the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:- Oh, how we need to come back to the paths which our fathers trod. We need to follow God's guidance. We need today, as we need nothing else, to return to the old-fashioned habits which made our fathers great and our mothers good. The age at all points is living too fast. We are grinding ourselves to pieces, body, mind and soul.

We need the old-fashioned home, where children were taught to obey their parents. Where the children found their chief satisfaction within the home, instead of in the dance hall, the theatre, the card room, and other questionable places of amusement.

We need the old-fashioned church, where prophets of God stood in the pulpit and preached the word, and where the everlasting Gospel of the Son of God was preached, instead of a thousand foolish fads. We need the old-fashioned rest of the Lord's day, in which the plow rested in the furrow and the sweet Sabbath bells sounded across the fields and the quiet cities, calling the people from the feverish activities of the week and turning their thoughts to those divine and heavenly realities, which constitute at last the true life of man.

The question at last is, "Is there an increase of vital Godliness?" Morality without religion always fails. Greece and Rome had a morality but no real vital religion, and they failed. What about America. Will she fail? She will fail, if she keeps on violating the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy".