

THE SABBATH AND THE SANCTUARY.

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An important question connected with the Sabbath has reference to the extent of its obligation. Was the law which inculcated a weekly rest, intended to apply to mankind generally? or merely to the Jewish nation? There are some who espouse the latter view; chiefly on this account, that the fourth commandment contained in the decalogue was given to the Jewish nation alone. But this reasoning is very inconclusive as appears obvious from the following considerations. Is it not recorded in sacred history, that God appointed a weekly rest *immediately after the work of creation?* "and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it."—Gen. ii. 2, 3. This phraseology is plain enough, and it ought to convince any mind, that God's appointment in reference to the Sabbath long preceded the existence of the Jews, and dated indeed from the existence of man. The Saviour undoubtedly meant the same thing, when he said, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath;" if the Sabbath had been made for the Jews alone, the Saviour would have used words to that effect; but no, he said, "the Sabbath was made for man," for the benefit of mankind, for the advantage of the whole species, implying of course, that the Sabbath was coeval with the first man, and that all who derived existence through him were bound to observe it. But again the law of God in reference to the Sabbath constituted part of the moral code, which was suited and meant for the race at large. Not so with the civil, or the ritual code: many of the laws connected with these codes were applicable to any but the Jewish nation; take for example the law of inheritance, or the law of the passover, which bore upon the Jews as a peculiar people. But as to the laws of the moral code—usually called the ten commandments—they have surely no national peculiarity: the second commandment which forbids image-worship, is

binding on Gentiles as much as on Jews; and so is the third commandment, which forbids blaspheming; and so is the sixth commandment, which forbids murder; and so is the eighth commandment, which forbids stealing; indeed, with the single exception of the fourth commandment, the whole decalogue is binding on all men. But wherefore except the fourth commandment? is there anything about it to make it an exception? I trow not; and the fact of its being in the heart of the decalogue seems of itself to warrant the conclusion, that unless its neighbours have a limited reference, no limitation should be put upon it; which is just to say, that Sabbath observance is binding on all men. The reader should also carefully notice the reasons which are annexed to the fourth commandment. "for in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it;" Ex. xx. 11. Now, where is there anything, in these reasons, which bears on the peculiar circumstances of the Jews, and stamps the Sabbath as a Jewish institution? When the Jews were instructed to keep the passover, a national reason was properly annexed, "ye shall say, it is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses;" Ex. xii. 29. And so in connection with the feast of tabernacles, "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt;" Lev. xxiii. 43. But the reasons assigned for Sabbath observance have reference to mankind without distinction; the making of the world in six days, and the resting of God on the seventh day, do not these considerations bear upon Gentiles, and just as strongly as they do upon Jews? and yet they are annexed to the fourth commandment for the very purpose, of making it imperative; placing it out of fair contradiction, that if Sabbath observance