

Sabbath Degradation

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In this disenssion it is taken for granted that the Sabbath is a Divine institution; that its essential principle is the consecration of one seventh of the time to purposes of rest and sanctity; that it was instituted in Eden; that the changes, which have attended the restatements and interpretations of the principle, from time to time, have been incidental; and that in the Gospel age when the institution has become a memorial of our Lord's resurrection, we have the law fully developed.

The word "degradation" is used advisedly. Two other terms are frequently employed in a similar sense, namely "desecration" and "profanation," but these apply to individual or specific acts of the enemies of the institution. By Sabbath degradation is meant the process by which the institution has been shorn of its glory, and while still called by the holy name of Christ, has been so distorted in meaning and purpose that this memorial has become, to a great extent, a means of forgetting Him.

Some Evidences and Forms of Sabbath Degradation

Nothing in the history of the church is more humiliating or disheartening than the record of Sabbath degradation. There was a struggle between the early Christians, who observed the resurrection Sabbath, and the members of Jewish communities, who kept the system of Old Testament Sabbaths which Jesus had abolished. In this conflict the despised sect was successful, not only against Jewish opposition, but also in so overcoming the pagan customs of Rome that the Emperor Constantine legalized the Christian Sabbath, putting it on an equality with the Roman rest-day, which was observed once in eight days. And