

from Saul. *House of God*; as the tabernacle is called, Ex. 23 : 19. *Eat the shewbread*; the twelve cakes of fine unleavened flour, sprinkled with frankincense and set on a golden table. It pictured the fellowship of God and man. God is the spiritual food on which the soul of man feeds. The argument is, that, if the need of David and his men could override a sacred provision like that of the shewbread, so was it right for the need of the disciples to override the law about the Sabbath.

Vs. 27, 28. *The sabbath . . . made for man*; for his true welfare, and therefore anything which furthers that welfare is lawful on the Sabbath. *Not man for the sabbath*. The Sabbath was meant to serve man, not to lay heavy burdens upon him. The Pharisees had made the Sabbath the chief thing, and human welfare quite secondary. *The Son of man*; Jesus' title for himself as the Messiah. *Lord . . . of the sabbath*; with supreme authority to declare its purpose and the proper method of observing it. Jesus is lord of the Sabbath, not to abolish it, but to declare its true place.

III. An Unanswered Question, Ch. 3 : 1-5.

Vs. 1, 2. *Into the synagogue*; once more in Capernaum, and on a Sabbath day. *Withered hand*; probably not withered from birth, but by disease or as the result of an accident. Luke (see Luke 6 : 6) says that it was his "right hand," and an old tradition says that he was a stone mason, who asked Jesus to heal him that he might not have to beg his daily bread. *They*; the scribes and Pharisees. *Watched him*; with a crafty purpose of finding some reason to condemn him. *Heal . . . on the sabbath*. According to the rules of the rabbis, Sabbath healing was lawful only when life was in danger.

Vs. 3, 4. *Stand forth*. We learn from Matt. 12 : 10, that the Pharisees first asked Jesus : "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" Jesus boldly met the question by presenting the crippled man before them. *Lawful to do good . . . or . . . evil? to save . . . or . . . kill?* In the eyes of the Pharisees not to heal was simply to omit doing good; Jesus regarded it as doing positive evil. Not to heal, when one had the power to do so, was on the same level as killing. One of the best sayings of the rabbis was : "He who neglects to preserve life when it is in his power is a murderer." Jesus made

his appeal to the better teachings of his enemies. *Held their peace*. They were left without a word to say.

V. 5. *Looked round about on them*; surveyed each face with an all-embracing gaze. *With anger*; holy indignation, which, in Jesus, always burned against wilful sin. *Grieved*. Along with his anger, there was divine compassion for those who had become so completely mastered by sin. *Stretch forth thine hand*; a command which served to test the man's faith; healing came only in the act of obedience. *Whole as the other*. This miracle was wrought without a word or the use of any external means, by the simple forth-putting of Jesus' divine power.

The Pharisees, leaving the synagogue in anger, went out to plot the destruction of Jesus.

Light from the East

By Rev. Professor R. Davidson, D.D., Toronto

THE SABBATH—How the Hebrew Sabbath was related to a Babylonian "day of rest" we cannot say. Nor can we trace the beginnings of Sabbath observance among the Hebrews. We are first on firm ground when we read in the prophetic writings of the Sabbath being celebrated as a festal occasion like the new moon and agricultural feasts. For such festal days men ceased from their daily labors; they were free to go to the sanctuaries. The Sabbath was a humane institution; it was a boon to the laboring classes, Ex. 23 : 12; Deut. 5 : 12-15.

The Exile carried men away from the sanctuaries, but the old habit persisted, and they left their toil on the Sabbath. So much was possible in Babylonia, and the custom came to be one of the marks to distinguish the Jew from the Babylonian. It is perhaps safe to draw two conclusions from this fact : (1) The Sabbath rest from labor must have been a fixed practice in Canaan long before the Exile. (2) If the Babylonians had any Sabbath it must have been something quite different.

By the time of Jesus, Sabbath observance was summed up in 39 rules. One was that you must not harvest your corn on that day; hence the faultfinding with Jesus' disciples. Another was that you must not give medical aid to a sick man unless his life was in danger ;