

Sabbath-day sit down and see if the conscience is perfectly clear and the record of the day perfectly satisfactory. You read in the Bible that you must not think your own thoughts, speak your own words, nor do your own works. And this rigid rule, be it remarked, is in perfect harmony with New Testament teaching. Now apply these rules to your conduct. You point to the fact that you have stopped unnecessary household labors. But are you sure of this? Have no unnecessary fires been kindled? No unnecessary utensils been used, calling for additional labor in their cleansing? One additional piece of delf, polished for luxury or convenience sake, and not as a work of mercy or necessity, breaks the spirit of the law as certainly as the act of the Israelitish woman who was stoned by Moses for picking up some chips to light her fire.

Then as to the words spoken. Have none been uttered at the table concerning what was on it, or concerning individuals whose names chanced to come up in conversation, but what were in perfect harmony with this law? What about thoughts? One minute's thinking our own thoughts breaks the rule as certainly as hours spent that way.

Any one who examines the subject thus closely will find that in endeavoring to keep holy the Sabbath-day by the help of the laws of Scripture, he is at a tremendous disadvantage, and his state is aptly described by a garrison trying to defend itself against open enemies and secret traitors lurking within the walls. Defeat under such circumstances is absolutely certain. As a matter of experience, we have never ourselves succeeded in keeping *holy* the Sabbath-day after this method, although the effort has been many times repeated, and with a determination and persistence which would have secured success had success been possible; and further, we never yet met another who achieved perfect success along this line. And yet we have met Christians who rivalled the Pharisees in their observance of minute rules concerning its sanctity.

The same result would be arrived at in examining efforts to keep the laws of the Bible concerning "Always abound-

ing in the work of the Lord," "Redeeming the time," "Praying without ceasing," etc. No matter how satisfactory the conversion has been, no matter how clear the testimony of the Spirit to sins forgiven or to entire sanctification, if efforts are made to obey these precepts as laws of holy living; if, in short, there is any attempt to walk by these rules in place of walking by the one rule of the New Testament, the law of the Spirit, certain failure is courted, and he illustrates this state of temptation from within and without.

But when this figurative language is made to do duty for one who rejects this law of liberty both in theory and in practice, then its use is both misleading and is apt to be ruinous to Christian character. Those who reject this obedient walk in the Spirit are spoken of by the apostle as going about to establish their own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God. Of course, most, if not all, of those whom we aim at will not accept this description of themselves as true; and yet we maintain that it aptly describes every Christian who rejects, in theory or in practice, the law of the Spirit as the one and only law of life; for thereby they reject the only way whereby the righteousness of the law, that is, the righteousness of God—being perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect—can be fulfilled in them.

To make it evident to all lovers of the truth who may read these lines that they are trying to establish their own righteousness, and not to secure the righteousness of God, if they reject the law of the Spirit, we ask them to examine their thoughts and the sensations of their minds when they read the following personal experience of the writer during the last Sabbath. We select it not because it was a special case, but simply as one of very many. We, by following the law of the Spirit, were enabled so to live that we did not think our own thoughts, speak our own words, or do our own deeds for one minute of the entire day. And we do not arrive at this as a deduction from some mystic belief about imputed righteousness, nor yet as the outcome of dwelling in the fountain, *i.e.*,