

not his master. It is a blessing, not a burden, to every one who "sanctifies" it. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified? "Let each of us lay this well to heart that our Sabbaths are a gift from our kind Father of quite unspeakable value. Used in the best way they deserve all the eloquent eulogiums which piety has pronounced upon them. They do make stepping-stones for our feet to walk to heaven by. They open to us by the way-side so many oratories and Bethel-like retreats where we may refresh our jaded spiritual nature, cultivate closer acquaintance with Christ, offer to God a less hurried praise, clear ourselves from the dust of time, re-examine the foundations of our confidence, scrutinize our motives, repair our faults, and revive our drooping ardor in the task of self-discipline for eternal bliss. To make the very best of such costly possibilities—fifty-two of them in the year's round—how infinitely is that to be desired for such Christians as we are, far behind in grace, and battling with conditions adverse to holiness! To lose our Sabbaths and all that they might bring to us, can anything replace a loss like that?" (Dale.)

**28. Therefore**—Because the Sabbath was made for man, the Son of man, the representative of normal humanity is its Lord. He interprets and administers its law. He does not claim a right to set aside the fourth commandment. As the Son of God he had the right inherently in his deity. But as Son of Man he was the authorized interpreter and administrator of it, as well as dispenser of all the other blessings bestowed upon mankind. He frankly asserts his right as Messiah to speak with authority on the subject. We rightly term it "The Lord's Day." **Also of the Sabbath day**—This is included in the empire committed to the Son of Man on man's behalf.

**II. A WORK OF MERCY. 1. He entered again**—Luke says that it was on another Sabbath. Jesus was not discouraged from church-going by the remarks his fellow-worshippers made about him. **A withered hand**—Luke says that it was his right hand. The case was incurable by medical skill.

**2. Heal him on the Sabbath day**—The pharisees thought that this was unnecessary work. He could come next day and be healed (Luke 13: 14). But every work of mercy, to body or soul, is necessary work, always and everywhere. "They came to the synagogue, not to worship, but to watch Him; and, while so particular about Jesus keeping the fourth commandment, they broke it themselves by their malice and treachery." (Lindsay.) **Accuse him**—before the rulers of the synagogue, or, perhaps, the Sanhedrim, and discredit him with the people, if not secure his condemnation to death. They hoped to stop his preaching at least.

**3**—Matthew says that the pharisees asked a question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" This was a disputed question among them; the stricter sects holding that it

was not. But Luke tells us that Jesus knew their thoughts. They did not wish to see what rabbinical school he belonged to, but to see whether he would do something which some of them at least could make the basis of a charge against him. **Stand forth**—lit. "arise into the midst." He has no desire to shirk the question. He will not discuss abstract themes, he will deal with a case in the concrete.

**4. Is it lawful**—Jesus puts his counter question. There could be but one answer and this they would not give. One of their own maxims was "He who neglects to preserve life when it is in his power, is a murderer." (Lindsay). "By this novel way of putting his case, our Lord teaches the great ethical principle, that to neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil; and by this law he bound his own spirit." (Brown.) Some think that he had a covert reference to their murderous plans in reference to himself.

**5. With anger**—better "indignation." If they had been honest men they would not have shrunk from answering these questions. Their silence shewed their determination not to listen to reason. He was justly incensed at their obstinate ill-will. **Being grieved**—The word implies the deepest compassion for them. They were blinded by sin and hardened by pride. **The hardness of their hearts**—"lit. at the hardening of their hearts." They had set themselves to prove Christ guilty at all hazards, and the result was a gradual hardening of the heart, so that in the midst of wonders of grace no impression could be made upon them. There is no more sorrowful sight than the gradual hardening of the heart and searing of the conscience." (Lindsay.) In Matthew's account of the miracle he tells us that Jesus used an illustration from their own merciful treatment of dumb animals on the Sabbath, and asks if a man is not much better than a sheep, winding up with the unassailable conclusion "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." **Stretch forth**—"He believes that Christ can give strength to execute the command. It is in that faith he acts, and, paradoxical as it may seem, let us say that, if in that faith he had not made the effort, he never would have got the strength; and yet if he had not got the strength, he never could have made the effort. Stretch forth thy withered heart to love—thy withered hand to serve—such is still his command. Fixing an eye of faith on him who has already fixed his eye of love on us, let us make the effort, and in the very making of the effort we shall get the strength." (Hanna.) **Restored whole as the other**—"Virtue goes out of Christ. The shrunken hand instantly acquires a healthful color, and swells into its right proportions. In his joy the man shuts and opens it; moves the pliant fingers; and holds the miracle aloft to the gaze of a crowd, dumb with astonishment. Give him a harp, and with that hand he would sweep its sounding strings to the praise of Jesus. Pattern to men