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THE LAW, OBLIGATIONS, AND PRIVILEGES OF THE SABBATH

ISAIAH 58TH. 13TH. 14TH.—*“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight the Holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”*

In these words we have the authority of the Sabbath plainly recognised; for Jehovah would not speak of an ordinary day in this manner: it is as an ordinance of God that it is thus to be hallowed and observed; while God expressly calls it *“my holy day.”* As an authoritative institution of God, and as *his* day, we are not to do our own ways, nor find our own pleasure, nor speak our own words, but are to honour him. We have the objects or duties of the day set forth; and we have the privilege, and advantage of the Sabbath represented: *“then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father.”*

Let us confine ourselves in our present remarks to the authority of the Sabbath.

It has been made a question when the Sabbath was instituted. It has been contended that it was not instituted till the giving of the law to Moses, that it was unknown before that time;

and the conclusion has been drawn from this, that the Sabbath was binding only upon the Jews, and that, since the types and ceremonies of the legal dispensation have found their end in Christ, the Sabbath is no longer to be observed as a sacred day, or as an ordinance of God.—The words in Genesis: *“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,”* &c., have been got rid of by saying that they were inserted by the historian, as the reason why God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it—viz., because that in it he had rested from all his work, although he had not yet instituted the Sabbath. But it is altogether improbable that the sacred historian would speak of the seventh day as one on which God rested, and which he blessed and sanctified, if he did not do so except by anticipation. This would be an unwarrantable perversion of historical narrative, and in this way we could not say what was history and what not. Moreover, the day was not so ceremonial and typical in its character as to belong only to a typical dispensation, and to be unnecessary ere yet the full typical dispensation was developed or appointed. It was useful for the same purposes of rest and devotion from the first ages of the world as afterwards, and was no doubt a sacred day with the Patriarchs, as well as with their descendants. It is no argument against this, that we have no mention made of the Sabbath between the creation of the world and the time of Moses, for we have no mention of it between the time of Moses, and that of David, a period of above four hundred years, and yet we know the Sabbath had been instituted, and must have been observed all that time. In ad-