

when the Sabbath is to be set aside on account of his necessities or for the sake of his convenience. There is no rule or law which can be laid down that will meet all cases, and in multitudes of instances each conscience must determine for itself where the line should be drawn. It is better that it should be so—better for the development of true strength of character, and better in the long run for the observance of the Sabbath itself. Of course liberty of that kind is always a dangerous thing, more or less open to abuse. But only by the courageous exercise of liberty, with all its risks, is the development of the highest character possible at all, and experience may be trusted to correct the abuses sooner or later. Certainly, whatever liberty others were entitled to exercise could not be denied to Christ or His disciples.

But this explanation hardly seems to account for the form in which He puts the claim. He does not assert it as a son of man, but as *the* Son of Man. Moreover, the title Son of Man, was a sort of technical name which He had come to assume for Himself, and while it might in a proper enough sense be applicable to any man, He was not in the habit of so using it. It certainly implied an acknowledgment of His own humanity, but His adoption of it exclusively for Himself makes it impossible to suppose that it has not some distinct personal reference.

Accordingly, many would understand Him here as asserting His personal lordship over the Sabbath in virtue of His representative character, holding in His hand the authority which necessarily attaches to that character of legislating regarding the Sabbath in such a way as to change or modify the existing law. A right of this kind would not belong to Him alone, but also to any other man or body of men who had the wisdom to discern in what way the Sabbath would best serve the highest interests of mankind, and had the recognized authority to speak on behalf of the whole community.

Now, here again this is undoubtedly true as far as it goes. It follows as a natural conclusion, from the principle of man's supremacy over the Sabbath, that he should be entitled in some way to legislate regarding it. As a matter of fact, such authority has been exercised again and again both by the Church and by the State as entrusted with the oversight of man's interest. One of the first things the Christian Church did, for example, was by virtue of this authority—to change the day of observance from the seventh to the first day of the week. There is no hint of any such change in the recorded sayings of Christ, nor is it ever claimed that the Apostles had received any special revelation regarding it. But the change was made as by common consent, probably at the suggestion of the Apostles—certainly with their full knowledge and approval. There was good reason for such a change.