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## THE SABBATH: ITS CHARACTER AND CLAIMS.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Such was the utterance of the Holy One, amid the "thunders and lightnings" of Sinai. Such is the unchanging law of the Eternal to every human being still, and will be, until the angel shall "set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be time no longer."

The law relating to the Sabbath occupies a central position in the decalogue—between the first and second tables. This position is suggestive of the relation that the Sabbath sustains to both classes of precepts; that the whole moral code, to a large extent, hangs upon it, and derives life and authority from it. The Sabbath is a powerful auxiliary to virtue in all its other departments. By a people's regard for that institution may be measured their practical regard for "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Hence a distinguished writer says:—"History shows that nations which have been strict in the observance of the Sabbath have had the purest morals." President Robinson, of the United States asserts: "In our own land, wherever the Sabbath is misused, our institutions are recognized as in peril." Another distinguished jurist has declared: "If the Sabbath laws be neglected or despised, the laws of person and property will soon share their fate, and be equally disregarded." They are the true conservatives of the rights both of God and man who stand up for a better observance of the Sabbath.

It is one of the many heresies of the present day, that the Sabbath was exclusively a *Jewish* ordinance—that it was peculiar to the Jewish economy—and that, like the other rites of the ceremonial law, it was abrogated, as a religious institution, at the setting up of the Gospel dispensation. Such a theory is contrary to scripture, reason, and historic fact. The Sabbath was not an ordinance peculiar to the Jewish people. It was instituted at the creation of the world when "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all His work which God created and made." The first morning that dawned upon the father of our race was a Sabbath morning. It is true that nothing is said about the Sabbath during the long space of two thousand five hundred years from the creation until Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. But that silence no more proves that it was not observed during that time, than the silence of scripture concerning the practice of circumcision from the entrance of Israel into Canaan till the birth of John the Baptist, proves that there was no case of circumcision during that long period. The ceremonial law was not instituted when the manna was given, and yet the Sabbath was then mentioned as an institution already