

Sunday to the end that the Lord's Day morning should be properly spent by the mistress of that house. Such and kindred scenes were impossible where the old Fourth Commandment, which, without doubt, that lady had prayed that very morning for grace to keep, is duly observed either in spirit or in letter. "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." However much the traditions of the Scribes and the refinements of the Rabbis may have made void the Word of God, the Sabbath, as instituted by the Ten Commandments, was and is a merciful provision whereby the poor man may possess his Sabbath rest unquestioned and in peace. (The severity of Numbers xv. 32-36 is evidently exceptional. There had been no precedent as to penalty, and the early instruction of a rude people in the way of righteousness may have required a severity that to us, at this distance, and with other surroundings, seems out of all proportion to the offence.) Say as we will, the seventh-day rest is a boon to the toiler, either with hand or brain, which he fails to enjoy to his manifest hurt.

Little observation is required to see how constant and unbroken employment in one little round tends to reduce man to the condition of an intelligent brute. Take for an example one of the old stage-drivers, who would be on the same line from childhood unto age—the whole existence bounded by the view given from the box of the coach, or the gossip lounging round the tavern bar-room. Surely man with lofty powers is not destined thus to walk a little round and perish. The bigotry of the sects is owing chiefly to the persistence with which men hug their own associations and close eye, ear, and heart, as persistently against any similar association on the part of others. Let men be confined the entire week, and week following week, to the selfish pursuit of business, and the inhumanity of man to man by which the thousands are made to mourn will be intensified beyond all powers of endurance. Hardness, tyranny, utter God-forsakenness would be the immediate result. Take the Fourth Commandment as morally binding now or not, the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man, and that early provision of His for a seventh-day rest is ignored by us at our

peril, both for time and for eternity. Woe to the people utterly given to worldliness with no break to remind them of God and heaven.

It has been shrewdly observed that though work is forbidden, it has nowhere been said "thou shalt take no pleasure therein." The observation is true—more so perhaps than the observer dreamed of, for what is pleasure? The observation was made regarding Sabbath excursions, open museums, and similar means of spending the Sabbath. But what if my pleasure involves the loss of the Sabbath utterly to others who need its rest equally with myself? The freshening breeze of the water may be a pleasant thing for me, but if the engineer and fireman are kept seven days at the engine and furnace thereby, my pleasure may be too dearly bought. Even a nation purchases a pleasure too dearly if it demands therefor the demoralizing of even one of its sons. Britain will not willingly let Gen. Gordon perish, though money and life must be spent in the relief, because in the matter of a public trust, expediency has no weight in the balance. The words of Caiaphas were devilish when he urged the expediency of allowing one unguilty to die that a nation perish not: in reality the nation that listens to such reasonings has perished; and Pilate has handed his name down to everlasting infamy because he delivered up an innocent man lest a tumult be made. So pleasure, at the price of the privileges others with ourselves have a right to enjoy, is purchased too dearly, and tends to increase that selfishness which is at the root of all social bitterness. It may be a convenience for me that the street car should run, but why should my convenience keep driver and conductor at their post without intermission? doom two men at least to a constancy of work which is the very essence of slavery?

Christian principle and spirit more effectually dispose of these questions than mere specific directions. What is for edification and good, not what is for convenience merely, is the Christian question. "Not finding thine own pleasure," is written in Isa. lviii. 13, regarding the Sabbath, which has to be nevertheless "a delight" as well as the holy of the Lord and honourable. Indeed that verse reveals the true spirit of Sabbath observance and Sabbath pleasure. The highest pleasure is assuredly that which is enjoyed with others