

THE LORD'S SERMONS

(Received by the Lord through Gottfried Mayerhofer in Trieste)

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The True Observance of the Sabbath

Luke XIV, 1-6: "And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him, who had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spoke unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; And answered them, saying, Who of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things.

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The beginning of this chapter speaks of the healing of a man from dropsy, which took place in the house of a chief Pharisee and on a Sabbath, on which day, according to the strict laws of the Jews, any activity beyond the performing of religious rites and ceremonies is inadmissible.

There was a good reason for this healing to be effected under the mentioned circumstances. Although this chief was an adherent of My teaching, he understood the dogmas of the temple in their literal sense; he also liked to listen to Me as long as I did not do anything that contradicted his views and offended against his dignity as a Pharisee. Therefore, I let it happen that while we were sitting at his table, a man suffering from dropsy entered and entreated Me to heal him. The Gospel states that I did heal him. However, since I healed him on a Jewish Sabbath, this caused annoyance. Thereby I wanted to point out to the Pharisees how badly they understood their own laws and how incorrectly they taught them to the people. That is why I said: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straight away pull him out, because it is in his own interest? But to do a good work on others or for others, that you regard as a sin!"

Thereby I wanted to prove to them that charitable and good deeds do not desecrate the prescribed holiday or Sabbath, but are more likely to hallow it than many useless rites and ceremonies thoughtlessly performed.

As far as the Jewish people were concerned, there were plenty of abuses. Although they had the laws of Moses and the prophets, they did not know how to interpret them spiritually. The Pharisees and scribes encouraged

them to stick to the literal meaning, since it was important to them to have the laws interpreted in such a way that to be a Jew in the literal sense was not too much trouble.

Therefore, I came into the world in this particular nation which had for a long time possessed a religion that was the most suitable to serve as a basis for My teaching. The old laws did not have to be abolished, but rendered to the Jewish people cleansed. They had to be interpreted spiritually thus to save the human dignity which was on the point of being lost altogether in all the ceremonial rites of the temple and egoistical worldly pleasures.

During the three years of My ministry I kept pursuing this purpose. I sought opportunities or allowed events to take place, which gave cause to fight against the Jews' false notions and prejudices. Thus, also the observance of the Sabbath was a subject, which I, as the originator of My divine and sole true religion, could not ignore. To eliminate these prejudices, I began to take action in the house of a chief of the Pharisees to give rise to a discussion on this subject. Since the Pharisees always wanted to be the first, claiming to know and understand everything better, they were also the first ones that had to be cleansed of their false notions if ever the people were to be taught the truth. For this reason, I performed this healing before them and gave them an answer which silenced them, as is witnessed by verses 5 and 6. The temple chiefs had quite different notions of charitable deeds, so that I often felt obliged to explain to them in more detail, through examples and parables, the texts about the love of one's neighbor; for they were of the opinion that good deeds were only due to the temple and their own person. Everything else that was done for other people did not count with them.

Already in those times, the observance of the day of rest every week was misinterpreted, and the same applies to the present time, when this day is not observed in the right way; in other words, it is not devoted to spiritual education. Therefore, I shall now, after the healing on the Sabbath, also discuss the observance of this day and show you that you, too, are still far from celebrating this day the way Moses meant it and I Myself want it understood.

In the world, as it was then and still is today, there are always people who give orders and others who obey. Those in charge have, at all times, had their own interests at heart and have often misused their subordinates and their work, allowing them little rest and little time to, at least once a week, put aside the temporal and either listen to words of spiritual meaning or think about higher things, like the true reason for their own existence and what they actually are as men, or meant to become as beings endowed with the divine spirit. This was the reason why Moses in his laws stated, as ordered by God, that which the mighty would not grant voluntarily. In the metaphorically presented story of creation, he let the Lord and Creator Himself, after six days of work, institute the seventh day as the day of rest.

This arrangement, which was necessary for the sake of man's moral dignity, was also adopted by other nations and now exists practically everywhere. Even if now the week is arranged differently from what it used to be in those days, there is still one day during the week destined for taking a rest from physical effort, for contemplation and reflections on man's spiritual mission.

Where the Jews exaggerated by overdoing things through literal conception of their laws, the Christian nations have already for a long time gone to the other extreme. Whilst with the former a strict law demanded the hallowing of the whole day, the Christians are satisfied with a visit to church at certain times; the rest of the day being spent with amusements, feasting and gourmandizing. Generally on Sundays and holidays more evil is done than during all the week, where due to work and limited means the necessary time and opportunity is lacking.

The Christian priests followed the original practice of the Pharisees. They considered only their own reputation and power. The Pharisees put the temple before all else, and the priests of the Christians, their church. With the former the hallowing of the holiday extended for 24 hours - also outside the temple the Sabbath had to be observed - whereas with the Christians, this was limited to a couple of hours at church. Most people believe they have done their duty towards Me when they have spent some hours at church, sitting, standing or dreaming, rattling off meaningless prayers or comfortably asleep meeting the priest's sermon with a natural silence. Seeing the church filled with human bodies naturally flatters the priest's ambition; but the respective souls are either quite listless or occupied with something altogether different from what the church or the religion I have founded requires. Thus the abuse keeps spreading, and there is already a tendency for people to no longer accept this day of rest since the conscience of those who have to obey can be appeased with money and the little they still believe is disputed away without giving them something better in its place.

The decline progresses step by step. Those in charge believe that their self-interest is now voluntarily supported by the working class who are working for selfish reasons, too. However, they are so very wrong! They will see where it leads to deprive the poorer people of the few spiritual elements, which are no longer familiar to the mighty either, and by increasing their earnings to increase also their vices. They look with contempt upon everything that concerns Me and My teaching, and their example is followed conscientiously by their subordinates. Thus, finally, the material conquers the spiritual until I shall arrange things in such a way that the mighty will have to reap the fruits of their egoism, which will turn out quite different from what they are expecting.

The Sunday and holiday is meant to be a certain obstacle; it is meant to be a day on which the mighty have to give their subordinates acknowledgement of their work. And for the latter, this is to be a day on which they should

remember that one day for contemplation about one's spiritual destination is not too much to give. This shall be the day when business must pause.

On this day, nature speaks to all hearts in its never changing language: "With all your work do not forget the Creator Who has created so many wondrous and magnificent things on this earth, to keep reminding you that you are not destined only for this world, that your work shall not always be of a material nature, but also spiritual. Recognize Him Who guides you weak children with so much love and patience, Who set you down among all this splendor, and Who, at least once a week, wants to help you forget your hard work!"

I Myself as the Creator instituted the day of rest on the seventh day, according to Moses' Genesis. This was, as it were, a correspondence to My planting the spirit in the so far lifeless hull on the seventh day after I had been occupied with matter. And this day, on which I raised matter to something spiritual, was the day of celebration or consecration. Therefore, it is to be observed also by man after he has - like Me - worked and been active for six days.

On the seventh day, man is to contemplate his work to perceive in it the spiritual idea that guided him to accomplish such work. This day is to become a day of celebration in a spiritual sense, when he shall recognize that his work during the week and his own existence do not have a material but a spiritual basis which he should remember on this day more than on others.

On this day, where no duty, no working hours force him into a material trade, he shall remember My creation, My teaching, My love and My sacrifice for him individually as well as for all mankind.

Therefore, this day shall become for him a day of consecration, for then, freeing himself of the material, he can draw closer to the spiritual, sublime goal, which he and all creation are destined to attain.

Thus everyone shall celebrate the Sunday as a day of remembrance of My love and of all that I have done for him. Then this day will leave behind for all the days of work a gentle, religious feeling through which also the material work is consecrated. Thus man can put the stamp of his own divinity on everything that he does and achieves.

This is how the Sunday and rest day should be understood and observed by you. You shall always remember that once there had been such a day for Me and that everyone will experience such a holiday when, free from his material hull, he will arrive in the other, eternal world as a spiritualized soul, bringing with him as a memory the conviction to have impressed on all his material activities the seal of his own divinity.

Because of this you, too, should observe this day of rest in a higher spiritual sense. Notice the spiritual shining through the hard crust of the letter. This is what makes true happiness. Spiritualize everything, your surroundings, yourselves, your actions and your words.

Not only the seventh day, but every day on which you make spiritual progress will then be a Sunday and holiday for you - a day like the sun after which this day is called by you - and it will pour light, warmth and life over you and all around you. Every day will become a day of celebration or delight when you - worthy of your Creator and with a clear knowledge of your goal - progress from stage to stage, until you attain the eternal, never ending holiday, the holy day of eternal bliss in those regions where every day is a day of consecration and peace, prepared by a loving Father for His children from time immemorial. Amen.

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