

Holy Saturday

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

You shall sanctify the holy day.

The word holiday is used for the Hebrew word sabbath, which properly means “to rest,” that is, to cease from labor. Therefore, we usually say, “to stop working.” Or “Sanctify the Sabbath.” Now, in the Old Testament, God set apart the seventh day and appointed it for rest [Genesis 2:3]. He commanded that it should be regarded as holy above all other days. This commandment was given only to the Jewish people for this outward obedience, that they should stop toilsome work and rest. In that way both man and beast might recover and not be weakened by endless labor [Exodus 20:8–11]. Later, the Jewish people restricted the Sabbath too closely and greatly abused it. They defamed Christ and could not endure in Him the same works that they themselves would do on that day, as we read in the Gospel [Matthew 12:11]. They acted as though the commandment were fulfilled by doing no manual work whatsoever. This, however, was not the meaning. But, as we shall hear, they were supposed to sanctify the holy day or day of rest.

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