St. Anthony Mary Claret

THE RAILWAY TRAVELLERS

Los viajeros del ferrocarril

From the Spanish of the Colección de opúsculos, vol. III (Barcelona, 1860)

English translation

Contributed to Mind of the Church by a friend of the library who wishes to remain anonymous

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About this translation

Translated from *Los viajeros del ferrocarril, ó sea, conversación sobre la profanación de los días festivos y modo de santificarlos*, in the *Colección de opúsculos* of Claret, vol. III (Barcelona: Librería Religiosa, 1860). The translation is complete.

The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

The Railway Travellers, or a Conversation on the Profanation of Feast Days and the Way to Keep Them Holy

Entering the Railway Carriage

Don Prudencio, Don Juan and Don José.

Don Prudencio. Good morning, gentlemen and my friends.

Don Juan. A happy one to you, Don Prudencio.

Don José. I kiss your hand \[*beso á V. la mano*, a courteous formula of greeting\], my venerable and venerated friend.

Don Prudencio. I congratulate myself with all my heart, gentlemen, that heaven has given me so good an occasion to travel with you.

"The greater good fortune is ours," answered Don José, "to travel with you, Don Prudencio…"

"There is no doubt of it," added Don Juan. "And all the more so because at your side we both have much to gain from your sound, varied and profound learning. Do you remember, Don José, the enlightening and interesting conferences with which Don Prudencio favoured us two years ago?"

"Indeed I remember them," answered Don José. "What I regret is not to have heard since then, from his eloquent and authoritative lips, further instructions like those with which he deigned to enlighten us in those conferences."

"Speaking of that," said Don Juan, "do you remember, Don Prudencio, that at the end of the last conference, in 1857, you promised to favour us with others?"

Don Prudencio. So it is indeed; and since (because it was not possible for me) I have not kept the promise until now, today, when without our planning it heaven seems to have brought us together to spend some hours, we will use the time by treating of a subject of no small importance. How far are you going?

"We left Madrid for Alicante," answered Don Juan.

Don Prudencio. Well, that is where I am going too.

"How glad I am of it!" said Don José. "The hours will pass for us with double speed. Will you be so good, Don Prudencio, as to tell us the subject our conference is to turn on?"

Don Prudencio. The subject, which I called important, is the abuse, scandalous indeed, of working on Sundays and feast days.

"You are very right to call it scandalous, Don Prudencio," replied Don José, "and I believe that it is besides extremely harmful to the very people who break in this way the precepts of the Lord and of the Church."

"I believe so too," said Don Juan, "and I hold that the harm reaches not only their souls but their bodies as well."

Don Prudencio. Just so. No one could or ever can deny that, besides the sin with which those who violate the divine and ecclesiastical laws in this way stain their souls, they bring upon their bodies evils of great weight, such as the loss of health, which is usually followed by an early death. Make no mistake: the human body needs rest, not only for some hours in each twenty-four, but also for some whole days in the course of the year. Man is king of nature, but a king who, though he rules it, depends on it for his subsistence. He is also part of it, and therefore must work as it does, and as it does take his rest. By its more or less direct influence the sun divides the year into four seasons; and nature, after regaling us with the varied and

abundant fruits of its labour in spring, summer and autumn, takes the winter for itself, as though to lie asleep and rest. The trees, vines and plants usually strip off their green foliage and seem to draw into themselves to take a restoring sleep; the insects hide under the earth or in the clefts of the rocks; the birds, finally, fall silent as though so as not to wake their provident common mother. Winter is to nature what each day's night is to man.

This last alternation of light and darkness, by which the presence or absence of the sun marks the twenty-four hours of the day, shows man the hours of his work and those of his rest, according to the words of Scripture: "The sun rises… man shall go forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening."[1] "The night comes, when no one can work."[2] Nature besides, by taking its rest, as we said, during a fourth part of the year, warns man that he too must take his from time to time on days interspersed among the others. And even the moon, changing its face every seven days, seems set like a clock in space to show him that of every seven days he must take one for himself, or better, for the Lord, who commands him to keep it holy with good works, abstaining from all servile work.[3]

"There are not a few," said Don Juan, "who claim that feast days are too numerous to be observed without grave harm to public and private interests."

"Besides being wrong," replied Don José, "I believe that those who say so are so ill disposed to obey God and the Church that they would keep the many just as they keep the few now; and say what they will, the number cannot be called excessive."

Don Prudencio. Indeed it is not; for the feasts of the Church added to the Sundays come nowhere near a fourth part of the days of the year. And why, with what reason, do these creatures claim, so ill disposed, as Don José very well said, to keep the little as the much, with what reason, I say, do they claim that the days of rest are excessively numerous? Have not God and the soul, besides the rest of the body, a right to their share of time for their respective interests? Or must temporal interests absorb everything, consuming man's strength and life together with his work, without his soul having from time to time a day to prepare itself an eternally happy future?

"Not long ago I read," added Don José, "that the violation of Sunday is a theft."

Don Prudencio. Of course it is, and anyone can convince himself of it just by attending to the etymology of the name. *Domingo*, in Latin *Dominica* or *dies Domini*, means "the Lord's Day". God reserved this day; he wants it for himself; and by working on it man appropriates it against his lawful and express will. Nothing more is needed to constitute theft, since theft consists in appropriating a thing against the lawful will, tacit or express, of its owner. It would be easy to make sure that God has clearly expressed his will on this point, for at every step we find it set down in Sacred Scripture, with the explicit prohibition of working on that day. I open the Pentateuch, for example, and in verse 8 and following of chapter 20 of Exodus I see that, when the Lord gave the law to his people (a figure of the Christian people), he said to them: "Remember to keep holy the sabbath day. Six days you shall labour and do all your works; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your beasts of burden, nor the stranger who dwells within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day…"

"Truly," said Don Juan, "God's will could not be more explicit, nor the prohibition of working on the Lord's day more definite."

"Does not Scripture also give," Don José asked Don Prudencio, "some example of the penalty attached to this precept?"

Don Prudencio. Yes, sir. Read chapter 15 of Numbers, and there you will see that a man having gone to gather wood on the sabbath day, the children of Israel who saw him seized him and brought him before Moses; and when Moses consulted the Lord to know what was to be done with the guilty man, God said to him: “Let that man die the death; let all the people stone him outside the camp.” And having brought him out, they stoned him, and he died as the Lord had commanded.[4] Already in Exodus (31:14) God had laid the penalty of death on those who broke the sabbath; and he always showed himself jealous for the observance of his laws, carrying out exemplary punishments on the first transgressors. This one we have just told was a lesson and warning for the Israelites, and it should be so with much more reason for Christians, who must be very exact in keeping the feast days holy, consecrating them wholly to the service of the Lord and putting aside \[*dando de mano*\] every other business that would distract them from so essential an obligation.

“Terrible, though just, seems to me the penalty of that precept among the Jews,” replied Don José; “and although it is not in force among us, while the precept is and must be in force, being of natural and divine law, I believe that now, instead of commanding stones to be thrown at those who break the feast days, God punishes them with sicknesses and misfortunes, bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal.”

Don Prudencio. I share your sentiments entirely, and I believe besides that the penalty has changed only in the manner of its application or execution. Formerly men were the ministers of divine justice on this point; now nature itself is the avenger of its law on earth, throwing at its transgressors that kind of stones you have listed, Don José. The temporal punishment is inherent in the fault, since the man who works out of season and unlawfully destroys his health and his life, God permitting him to be in some way his own executioner. God makes the profaners of feast days swallow that same profanation, as Moses made the Israelites swallow, dissolved in water, the dust of the calf they had worshipped.[5] They eat and drink that profanation calmly, poor wretches, and it serves them naturally as a poison that sooner or later puts an end to their lives; and before their death they cannot enjoy the earnings they procured by their unlawful work, for God permits these too to slip out of their hands or to vanish suddenly or little by little.

“We have seen many examples of this,” said Don Juan, “in our own days, when the public profanation of Sundays and other feast days is so much in fashion.”

“We have seen them and are seeing them too,” said Don José, “in many workmen who in the flower of their age are already useless for work because they gave themselves to it when they should not.”

Don Prudencio. The bow that is always drawn breaks at last. So it is with man when he does not take the rest he needs on the days marked by the Lord. Weakening of the organs, chest complaints, suffocation, rheumatic pains, prostration of strength: all come to assail him in the middle of his life, whether as the penalty of his disobedience or from the very nature of the work he does. Otherwise, examine in the hospitals and in private houses the illnesses and ailments from which many workmen suffer, and it will be seen that all or most of them are the punishment of the ceaseless work to which they give themselves, in tasks which, even leaving aside the will of God, warn them of themselves that they must suspend them on certain set days, on pain, if they do not, of being at least victims of their own imprudence. Let us take first, for example, the hard and dangerous work in the

Mines

Perhaps among all the works to which man devotes himself there is none more harmful to his health, or as harmful, as the one I have just named. Shut up, not to say buried, in deep underground galleries to snatch its treasures from the earth, or to draw from its fruitful but hard bowels the coal that feeds the greatest marvels of human industry, the unhappy workers, besides the imminent dangers to which they are all exposed, breathe in and breathe out an air wholly lacking the life-giving influence of the sun. The kindly rays of the star of day do not penetrate there; and those poor men, deprived of its light and warmth, exhausted with

fatigue, covered by it with a constant and copious sweat, and their ragged clothes soaked with the dampness proper to such gloomy caverns, what can these unfortunates expect if, besides the rest of some hours a day, they do not take a whole day from time to time? Will they not be like those plants which, placed in a cellar, grow feeble and sprout long and thin for lack of the influence of air and light? If even those who are faithful to their religious duties on this point grow pale and not seldom fall ill, what will become of those who habitually set them aside? It seems impossible that man should let himself be exploited so barbarously by man, to the manifest detriment of his two lives, the temporal and the eternal!…

The absolute and inescapable need of these workers to abstain on set days from their purely servile labours, staying out of those dark and unhealthy dens, extends also in its way to those who give themselves to the

Work of the Fields

The reason for keeping holy the Sunday and the other feasts of the year is the same for both, for the precept to do so includes all alike. Here, however, it is not a matter of dens and darkness; rather, the poor country people have to work under the face of the sun, whose fiery breath sometimes scorches them. Heat, cold, winds, rains, all the inclemencies of the weather seem to conspire to make their already exceedingly hard toil more intolerable. If, then, they do not restore their strength on set days, taking care to protect themselves from bad atmospheric influences or to shake off their harmful effects, will their bodies be able to hold out for long? By alternating rest with work, as they should, they gain everything; by doing the contrary they lose everything. Another of the advantages that country people find in keeping the feast days holy is the opportunity these give them of seeing one another and dealing with other people. The result is that little by little they reform their rustic manners and become humane, kind and affable, instead of the savages and wild beasts they would be living shut in and isolated. Let us say it in a word: the country day-labourer who scrupulously observes the third precept of the Decalogue, attends the religious services, learns his duties and fulfils them, lives honourably and as a Christian, is well and is good, and in the end is saved.

“Come, Don Prudencio,” said Don Juan, “you are a regular parish priest, and it is a pity you are not one, to impress such good doctrine on the faithful from the pulpit.”

“Quite so,” added Don José.

Don Prudencio. Gentlemen, it is not precisely or always instruction that is lacking to the faithful; it is they who many times, or most times, are lacking to the instruction. I mean that either they do not have it because they do not want it, or, if they have it, they refuse to conform their conduct to it. The doctrine I am pouring out is the very same that the parish priests have taught me from the pulpit, and this doctrine is confirmed by constant experience, not in one given place, but everywhere.

“And the carters and muleteers?” asked Don Juan.

Don Prudencio. I am going to say a word about them too, the

Muleteers and Carters

Everyone knows that these men are not usually very scrupulous about the two points the Sunday precept embraces, which are the positive sanctification of the feast day and abstention on it from all unnecessary work. The second part of this precept, which concerns them personally, also requires them to let their beasts rest on that day. Otherwise, what happens when, carried away by greed, they allow neither themselves nor their animals truce or rest? What happens is that both men and beasts fall ill, for no body can stand so much. So the losses are sometimes greater for them than the gains, God permitting it in punishment of their imprudent and obstinate disobedience. By it they deprive themselves of the Christian instruction they so much need, they rob God of the worship due to him, and they break the moral and hygienic laws; and as no

one mocks the Lord with impunity,[1] he knows how to send them sicknesses, losses and misfortunes, to see whether he can correct them.

"Do you include in the same duties, Don Prudencio, the people of the office \[*gente de bufete,* "desk people": lawyers, clerks\], merchants and others?" asked Don José.

Don Prudencio. Yes, sir. There is the same law for all, and it follows that the following must observe it too:

Merchants, Office People, Etc.

There is no doubting it: these, like all the rest, must keep holy the Sundays and other days consecrated to the Lord, and not profane them with their work. Yet it is not rare to see some of these gentlemen dispense themselves at their pleasure from these two precepts, or better, from this precept under its two aspects, affirmative and negative. Possessed by the eagerness for gain in their business, their work is usually continuous, and by its nature it also usually has a disastrous influence on their health. What activity is theirs for increasing their commercial connections and developing their industry! They eat their meals at a run, without giving the digestion room or time… calculations absorb all their moments and thoughts…; the late nights and sleeplessness drag on…; cares multiply…; reverses of fortune, with their consequent vexations and sorrows, come out to meet them… Is that all? No! Sadness devours them…; appetite fails…; strength gives way…; illnesses appear…; and death… death usually makes an early end of these metallized beings, who valued time only because time is money, as people say nowadays. God and the soul deserved and demanded their time; the health of the body also claimed its share… No matter; gold was worth more than all that, and one had to gather as much as possible, in order to… In order to what? To buy heaven? Heaven is not bought with such coin, but only with the good use of time, the practice of virtue and the fulfilment of all one's duties.

What shall we say now of those who devote themselves to arts or trades, that is, of the

Tailors, Shoemakers, Carpenters, Masons, Etc.?

Here are so many classes of people who, besides usually having the ill-starred and scandalous habit of profaning the feast days, are also usually the hardest to persuade. At once they come out with the well-known and (for them) conclusive reason that the customers must be kept satisfied. They find themselves, then, between the capricious demands of the customers and the command of God; and in this frequent alternative it is always God whom they fail to satisfy in order to satisfy the customers. "God sees it," they usually say, "and as he is infinitely good he overlooks it and forgives." So they reason, without taking into account that he is also infinitely just. What God does as infinitely good is to bear with patience the contempt of his law and of himself; but a day will come, perhaps already in this life, when the turn of his justice will arrive. Then he will show them that he did not lay his precepts on us in vain, and that, for all his goodness, he can and will give their wages to those who preferred to please men rather than him. What diabolical fatality! They have six days to give themselves to work, and yet they take the seventh too, moved either by a sordid interest or by the pretext of the customers already mentioned!…

What would they themselves say of a tenant farmer whose landlord had told him: "Look, of every seven *fanegas* \[a Spanish dry measure, about 1.5 bushels\] of wheat that you gather on my lands you shall give me one, keeping the other six for yourself"? What would they say, I repeat, of that tenant if, in spite of the agreement, he took the seventh as well as the six, or at least a great part of it? What they would say of him, let them apply to themselves, for the case is identical. God is the owner of all the days. He grants six to man for his tasks; the seventh he wants for himself. It is clear, then, that whoever works on it, more or less, for his own profit, takes just so much from God against his just and manifest will.

Let them satisfy their customers, by all means, by working more during the week or sitting up later; but let them not, for anything or anyone, fail to satisfy God. For if the desire to please the customers and the fear of losing them by displeasing them can do so much with them that it makes them trample on the law of God, should not the fear of losing God and the desire to be saved hold them back from a way of acting as unjustifiable as it is harmful to themselves? I have noticed two things, each more blameworthy and punishable than the other. First: this business of satisfying the customers is often nothing but a cover with which they disguise their greed. And if, in punishment of that greed and of their excessive and unlawful work, God permits a sickness or misfortune to come upon them, then, even supposing they come through it, they lose in two ways: they stop earning while they are ill, and they spend all they had earned or saved; and this besides the discomforts and pains they must suffer because of their mishap. Second: often, too, there are no such customers and no such sheep \[*no hay tales parroquianos ni tales carneros,* a play on the proverb "no hay tales carneros", "there are no such rams", meaning "there is no such thing"\]; rather, they let themselves be carried away by the detestable vice, contracted in an evil hour, of working on forbidden days. So the devil leads them in life and carries them off after death.

"It is truly regrettable," said Don Juan, "that these people understand their own true interests so badly."

"Much more painful still," added Don José, "is that however much they are made to see and touch their folly, they persevere in their way of life, and call those who do not imitate their example fanatics."

Don Prudencio. This is exactly what makes one despair of the amendment of some. But there is no lack of others who, although in deeds and words they sing in chorus with all the breakers of God's law, still feel deep within themselves troublesome twinges which sooner or later may perhaps have a good effect. Let us say something now about

Factories and Factory Owners

The number of men, women and children of both sexes who work in our factories of cotton, wool, silk, printed cloth, etc., etc., grows every day because of the increase and progressive development of our industry. This does offer us a flattering prospect of a better future for the public wealth. But to attain it, both the factory owners and the Government itself must never lose sight of this: the more the number of these workers increases, the more they must take care that they are not demoralized and that they observe hygienic measures of every kind, taking as their basis the sanctification of the feasts, which is in every way healthful. The crowding of so many people into one workshop with doors and windows shut, the fine dust they inevitably raise with their ceaseless movement, the miasmas given off by the materials worked, and the smoke from the lamps, whether gas or oil: all this so fills the air with harmful particles that these, entering the lungs of the workers, sometimes cause no small havoc among them. The daily breaks are not enough to expel such deadly miasmas from their vitiated lungs; they need whole days to refresh them with pure air. Besides this, if on the days owed to their rest and consecrated to God they busy themselves, or are kept busy, at their ordinary work, they lack the time to go to church; they do not attend the holy sacrifice of the Son of God, they do not hear the heavenly doctrine; they live, or rather vegetate, in the most deplorable ignorance; they lose the love and fear of God, and they come to be the scandal of the Church and the plague of society.

"What shall we say, then," exclaimed Don José, "of those masters who, far from not allowing their employees to work on feast days, oblige them on those days to come to their workshops to work, to clean and get everything ready for the next day, keeping them busy until noon at least, so that the poor wretches have time neither to rest nor to attend the divine offices!"

"If there are such creatures," said Don Juan, "I think it may be said of them that they add impiety to barbarity. But… come, I cannot persuade myself that there are people so selfish and heartless."

Don Prudencio. There are, Don Juan; and in describing those persons you used, perhaps without thinking of it, words very like those of Solomon in chapter 12 of his Proverbs. Fortunately most of our honourable and hard-working factory owners, I believe, are neither impious nor have cruel bowels, to use the expression of that sacred writer. But on the other hand, unhappily, there are some, or at least there have been, to whom the saying of Solomon might very well be applied. They were impious, because it is impiety to impose on the faithful precepts contrary to those of God and to prevent them from paying him the veneration and worship due to him. They had cruel bowels, because it is cruelty to oblige men on days of necessary rest to work in rooms that are usually unhealthy, and then to abandon to their sad fate the poor wretches who fall ill or are disabled as a result.

"In France," said Don José, "there was one who said: 'In my workshops I have machines of two kinds, some animate, others inanimate. These are of iron, the first of flesh and bone. The latter serve me as motors for the former, and I make my profit from all of them. Neither kind ever stops, not even on the days they call feast days; and I have only to have the iron ones repaired when they wear out, for as the others break down I throw them into the street to repair themselves.'"

"Evidently," exclaimed Don Juan, "that monster looked on the flesh of his workers as machine flesh, just as Napoleon I called that of his soldiers cannon flesh \[*carne de cañón*, "cannon fodder"\]!… And would he not have deserved that human justice should break *him* down, without leaving him any way or means of repairing himself?…"

Don Prudencio. A little calm, Don Juan; for if human justice turned a blind eye \[*hizo la vista gorda*, "made the fat view"\] in that case, up above there is another Justice from which nothing escapes. The worst of it is that there is a share of blame for all, masters and workers. If the workers, as they should, all refused at once to break God's law, answering the masters like the Apostles, "We must obey God rather than men";[1] if, the first step taken, they took the second too, that is, if, ceasing to work on Sundays and other feasts, they tried to keep them holy with good works, both at home and in church, giving themselves to the devotions proper to a Christian, frequenting the Sacraments, attending the instructions or sermons, in short fulfilling all their religious duties, instead of spending the little time left them in dances, gaming, taverns, theatres and other places of dissipation, then they would be good fathers of families, society would have good citizens in them, and the Church good children. If the masters were scrupulously exact, not only in not demanding but not even allowing work in their workshops on forbidden days, and gave their subordinates the good example of fulfilling all those duties (for the same duties bind all), they would have good, well-mannered and respectful employees who would bless them and love them as fathers. What happens, however, when they do the contrary? With the bad example of their masters and their own personal lack of Religion, the workers, not knowing God, do not acknowledge the masters either; not loving God, they do not love them; not fearing God, they do not fear them; blaspheming God, they curse the masters night and day, because they look on them not as fathers but as exploiters, usurpers, tyrants. They do not respect them; rather they despise and hate them, grumble about them continually, steal from them all they can, and never cease to think and plot how they can do worse things… Hence the conflicts in which society has more than once found itself, and the bitter afflictions of the Church our mother, who weeps inconsolably, like another Rachel, for the irreparable and eternal loss of her children!…[2] Happiness is longed for, wanted, sought: some toil without rest, others work without truce to reach it, and neither the one nor the other attains it, because all abandon the only Guide who could lead them to temporal and eternal happiness. Since we began to boast among ourselves of being able to do without Religion in order to be happy, however much Religion strives and takes pains to suggest and lavish on us her saving warnings when she sees us gone astray, we obstinately go on along our mistaken road, unwilling to turn back or change, though it must lead us to the abyss. A blindness, surely, that can only be explained by saying that God permits it in penalty and punishment of the scandalous and continual breaking of his precepts!… Let us undeceive ourselves, gentlemen: if we want happiness on earth, it is

indispensable and absolutely necessary that we begin by learning and taking to heart our essential duties, and then try always to fulfil them, cost what it may. Otherwise everything becomes impossible for us, health, peace and happiness, and we shall gain only sicknesses, disasters, upheavals, insubordination, revolutions, robberies, calamities, death and damnation!…

“Here, if I remember rightly, is the inevitable sanction of the divine law of which you spoke a little while ago, Don Prudencio, in agreement with Don José,” said Don Juan.

Don Prudencio. Exactly.

“One thing I should now like to deserve from you,” said Don José to Don Prudencio. “It is that, with the clarity and tact that shine so in all you explain, you would have the kindness to set out for us, by classes, the duties we all have towards God, towards ourselves and towards our neighbours.”

Don Prudencio. This too, if only by the way, entered into my plan, Don José, since the precept we have been explaining includes in some way all those duties.

Man’s Duties towards God

Every man must know and continually remember that there is a God infinitely good, wise and almighty; that this God is his Creator, his Preserver, his Redeemer, his Father and his Lord. It is, then, very reasonable that man should love him, serve him and obey him, respecting his holy law, observing his divine precepts and directing all his thoughts, words and deeds to his greater honour and glory. He must at the same time know and remember that God is a most just judge who will leave not one jot without reward or punishment. He must likewise and finally know and remember that God is immense, that is, that he is everywhere, that he sees everything, hears everything, that nothing is hidden from him, not even the most secret thoughts that the soul forms in its inmost depths. Let man, then, say to himself attentively and often: GOD IS LOOKING AT ME AND WATCHING ME, and so he will avoid offending him.

Man’s Duties towards Himself

Since man consists of soul and body, he has duties towards both. As to the body, he must preserve its health and strength by eating and drinking with temperance, living cleanly and neatly, working and resting as God has ordained. Always working and never working are two blameworthy extremes, for we read in the Holy Bible that there must be a time to work and a time to rest. Always working or never working comes in its results to what never eating or always eating would be. If one were always eating, he would fall ill; if he never ate, he would clearly die. The same would happen to one who always worked and to one who never worked: the first would contract sicknesses and ailments, perhaps incurable, and the second would be the victim either of hunger or of the vices contracted through his idleness.

As to the soul, he must take pains to cultivate his understanding, to reform and direct his will rightly, and to enrich his memory. He will achieve the first by procuring sufficient and necessary religious instruction, and that which suits his state of life or the one he wishes to embrace; the second by the practice of the virtues and perseverance in them; the third by keeping the memory of God’s benefits in order to thank him for them, of his duties in order to fulfil them, and of the lessons of experience in order to make use of them. Doing so, he will always keep away from the wicked and from all that is evil, and will faithfully and always imitate the good, constantly exercising himself in good. In a word, he will live as he ought, or as he would wish to have lived when the inevitable hour comes for his soul to part from his body.

Man’s Duties towards His Neighbours

All of us men are brothers, for we all have one same father, who is God; one same mother, who is Most Holy Mary; one same redeemer, who is Jesus Christ. We must, then, all love one another with a mutual and brotherly love, so that we may all reach the same inheritance that has been marked out for us. This love, which must reign among us without any interruption, must always move us to do good to one another. The measure of the love with which we must love our neighbour can be no other, according to the Lord's command, than that of the love with which we love ourselves.[1] It follows that we must treat him as we should wish to be treated if we were in his place, and never do or say to him what we should not wish done or said to us.[2] A man must treat his superiors with submission, veneration and obedience; his equals with affability, attention and good manners; his inferiors with cordiality, kindness and tenderness. He will never get angry or ill-treat anyone, for this, besides being an offence that the Lord takes as done to himself, is a proof of coarseness and bad upbringing. If our neighbour errs or fails in something, he is not to be rebuked with shouts or with blows, for he is no mule to be treated so; rather, his fault will be shown him with reasons and with loving and charitable words, as to the rational being he is. Finally, if one of our neighbours troubles or offends us by words or deeds, and it is not easy or possible for us to remedy it, we shall bear it with meekness and patience, praying for his amendment and hoping for better treatment from him.

"Now more than ever I understand," said Don José, "the close connection that exists between the third and the other precepts of the Decalogue, and also between these and the duties of man that you have just set out, Don Prudencio; for the precepts are the source of every duty, and duties and precepts all have as their foundation and object the love of God and of neighbour."

"I understand it so too," said Don Juan, "thanks to the clarity with which Don Prudencio knows how to explain it to us; and I see plainly that both the man who breaks that precept and the man who commands or demands its breaking fail in their duties towards God, towards their neighbour and towards themselves. Ah, if Christians would reflect even for a moment on this important point of their conduct! If the artisans and their masters or employers…"

"Gentlemen, and excuse me, Don Juan," said Don José, "I think we shall have to interrupt our conference, for we are not far from Albacete, where we must take a bite. Do you hear the whistles of the locomotive?"

"In a moment we shall reach the station," said Don Juan, "and I am glad of it, for so Don Prudencio will have a little rest, which he needs."

Don Prudencio. I am indeed somewhat tired; and since we have arrived, let us go and have breakfast without losing time, for the engine with its snorting seems already impatient of the brake that forces it to stand in the station.

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[3] Ps 103(104):22–23.

[4] Jn 9:4.

[5] *opera servilia*.

[6] Num 15:32–36.

[7] Ex 32:20.

[8] Gal 6:7, "God is not mocked."

[9] Acts 5:29.

[10] Jer 31:15; Mt 2:18.

[1] Mt 22:39.

[2] Mt 7:12; Tob 4:15 ("What you hate, do not do to anyone").

Continuation of the Journey

Don Prudencio, Don Juan, Don José, Don Enrique and Don Frasquito his son.

Don José. It gives me real satisfaction, Don Prudencio, to present to you a worthy and intimate friend of Don Juan and of mine, with his dear son, a young and gifted student of law.

Don Juan. I have no doubt at all, Don Prudencio, that Don Enrique and his son Don Frasquito are going to have from this moment the happiness of being your friends, as we are.

Don Enrique. Don Prudencio would honour me greatly if he deigned to favour me with his friendship.

Don Frasquito. I do not aspire, nor can I aspire, to so much, Don Prudencio. I only wish that from this instant you would count me your most humble servant.

Don Prudencio. I am extremely glad that my worthy friends Don José and Don Juan have procured me the friendship of two others no less worthy than they. You shall not be my servant, Don Frasquito; rather I, besides the title of friend of yours and of your dear father, hope to honour myself with that of servant of you both. But leaving compliments aside, would you like us to take up again the conversation we were having with Don Juan and Don José before reaching Albacete? I say so because the speed at which we travel will carry us in a few hours to Alicante, and perhaps we should not have time to finish it. Besides, since I believe you to be good Catholics, you will appreciate all the interest of that conversation, and it is to be hoped you will take part in it as circumstances suggest ideas to you on the subject that occupied us, which is the sanctification of feast days and the abuse made of them among us.

“Not only will it be to our liking,” answered Don Enrique, “but my son and I thank you in advance for admitting us to take part in so interesting a conference.”

Don Prudencio. We finished by setting out briefly the duties to which every man is bound with respect to God, to his neighbours and to himself. Don Juan and Don José saw and acknowledged, very rightly, the close and necessary relation between those duties and the precepts of God; and they saw and acknowledged too that whoever does not keep the feasts holy as he ought fails in what he owes to himself, and in what he owes to God and to his neighbour. What do you think of all this, Don Frasquito?

“You honour me too much, Don Prudencio,” answered the learned young man, “in inviting me to speak on a matter that you will already have made clear as it deserves. I shall not refuse, however, to oblige you by giving my opinion on the point according to my small abilities. I agree at once that the duties of man, of whatever class they be, all arise more or less immediately from the law of God, the one source of all laws as he is of all being. Every law is formulated in precepts, every precept imposes duties, and every duty begets rights. These are respected or violated as the precepts, and consequently the laws, are. The general rights and duties are common and reciprocal among men; hence to violate the one is to overthrow the other and to fail against the law, because all rest upon it. It follows also that it is an offence against God not only to fail in one’s duty towards God, for then, his precepts broken, his rights are violated, but also to fail in one’s duty towards one’s neighbour, for then, together with his law, the will of the supreme Lawgiver is trampled on, whether the law be preceptive or prohibitive. These principles laid down and these consequences drawn, it is clear that every profaner of feast days (I say the same of Sundays as of the feasts established by the Church, for to despise her precepts is to despise those of God: *qui vos spernit, me spernit*) offends God by disobeying him; offends his neighbour, whether he orders him to work or gives him bad example by his own working: in the first case he violates his neighbour’s bodily and spiritual rights, depriving him of the time he needs for his rest and spiritual profit; in the second he scandalizes him or gives him occasion of spiritual ruin. He offends, finally, himself, because he fails in what he owes himself, drawing upon himself bodily harm through the excess of his work and spiritual harm through the punishment he deserves.”

Don Prudencio. I thank you, and at the same time congratulate you a thousand times, Don Frasquito, for having answered so fully and so learnedly the question I took the liberty of putting to you. I am now going to put another to your father, taking the same liberty. What do you think and say, Don Enrique, of those who

oblige their employees, under pain of dismissal, to work on forbidden days?

"I say they are barbarians, blameworthy and punishable on every count," said Don Enrique. "They set themselves above God, or at least make themselves equal to him, commanding the contrary of what he commands; they make themselves the executioners of their employees' bodies and the murderers of their souls, demanding unbearable labour of them and depriving them of the time they need for their religious duties. From this results another evil that falls back on the masters themselves and on society. The worker forced to work on days justly set apart is brutalized and degraded. While his body grows weak, his soul faints for want of instruction and spiritual food. His conscience grows dull; and, accustomed no longer to fear God, despising his precepts, how can he be expected to fear or respect men, however high their rank? Through the systematic breaking of the divine law forbidding work on certain days, the worker becomes a monster and the master a tyrant; and we have sometimes seen the master pay for his tyranny with the monstrosities of the worker, monstrosities which in various places have put society in anxious alarm and in more or less grave danger of dissolution."

Don Prudencio. So it is indeed, and we must all acknowledge it with sorrow. Once the dikes of duty are broken and conscience is falsified, it is easy and even natural that calamities and conflicts follow. Nor let it be thought possible to replace individual conscience with public force to keep man to his duty, for that force, however numerous, cannot follow him everywhere as conscience follows him. Besides, is it not unworthy of man to obey only the whip? That is why I say that

The Nobility and Dignity of Man Demand the Sanctification of Feast Days

Human society, particularly Christian society, is founded on the dogma of the dignity of man, and so rests on the respect he owes to himself and that which he owes to his fellows, his brothers. Already in Baptism the Christian is filled with the grand idea that he is a child of God, and Wisdom Incarnate itself teaches him, or teaches all of us, so high a truth, telling us: "When you pray, you shall say: Our Father, who art in heaven…"[1] "See," the secretary of divine love, St John the Evangelist, tells us next, "see what great charity is that of God the Father, who wills that we should be called, and should indeed be, children of God!…"[2] Woe, therefore, to him who despises and harms his brother! Woe to him who scandalizes him, especially if he is an innocent little one!…[3]

God says to each man: "You are the noblest of all creatures beneath the moon; you, and you alone, are my image in this world that I have given you for an empire. I, the maker of the universe, worked six days, and on the seventh, satisfied with the perfection of my work, returned to my eternal rest. You, a maker in imitation of me, shall work six days as I did. In them you shall build houses and palaces for yourself; you shall beautify your dwelling with all the works of your ingenuity, and you shall procure by your industry all that can sustain your existence and contribute to your well-being. But when the seventh day comes, as a child of God you shall remember your Father. Like me, you shall cast a glance over your works, and you shall remain the whole day in holy repose. As soon as the work I entrusted to you is finished, together with the time I granted you, you shall come to rest with me in the dwelling of eternity, of which the weekly rest is at once the condition and the image."

How great is man, gentlemen, and how sublime his destiny! What lofty morality presides over his work!

"It seems impossible," said Don José, "that so noble and favoured a creature should prostitute and degrade himself by turning his back on his Creator and Benefactor in order to follow, obstinate and unchecked, his capricious will."

"As if man were never to die," said Don Juan, "but to live for ever in that dwelling which God marked out and granted him for a time! As if he did not have to give account of that time according as he has or has not worked and rested when and as God wills!… Ah, if man would think of the shortness of his time! If he would

think that the day in which he lives is an image of life; that the night in which he sleeps is an image of death; and that the Sunday on which he must rest is an image of the resurrection and of eternal rest!…"

"If man kept all this in mind," continued Don Frasquito, "he certainly would not debase himself, nor let himself be debased by others, and so we should not still have to lament and exclaim with David: 'Man, when he was in honour, did not understand; he has been compared to senseless beasts and made like them!…'[4] How do men live nowadays? Some see in themselves nothing but a being born to enjoy, and they spend their whole life procuring shameful and unclean pleasures, though they must stoop to every kind of baseness for it. To hoard money, enjoy and enjoy again, eat, drink, digest and sleep… there is their life. Others, besides doing the same as those, and thinking themselves gods upon earth, look on and treat their inferiors not as their fellows in nature but as walking machines which they put where they like, as they like and for what they like. The countryman is a machine for tilling the earth; the artisan, for making cloth; this one, for forging iron; that other, for shaping clay; another, for planing wood or cutting stone… Everything is machines in this century of them. No account at all is taken of whether the worker has a soul or not, whether or not the delicacy of his constitution or of his feelings calls for consideration. The question is reduced exclusively to knowing what positive profit can be drawn from his strength. Would one not say that sugar mills \[*ingenios*, the slave-worked sugar plantations of the Americas\] have been set up in Europe as in America, with the sole difference that there the machines are black and here white? Such, gentlemen, is the worker in the eyes of all the masters of the English School, which has more or fewer disciples everywhere.

"Others, finally, and these are the workers who profane feast days, live without even understanding the degradation into which they have fallen. What are they in their own eyes? What men have made them, not what God made them. God had made them his children; men have turned them into machines, into beasts of burden, into… anything at all, and they have accepted this condition: *Similes facti sunt jumentis insipientibus*. So long as they have bread to eat, wine to drink, a wretched roof to shelter under, a bed, however bad, to lie on, and a few coins to take part in the brutish vices of every kind in which they wallow, there they are, content and satisfied like the unclean animal once it has satisfied its appetites. How many never enter a church! How many live and die without a right idea of God, or of creation, or of redemption! 'Who is your Creator?' a certain member of an administrative committee in England asked a miner. 'My mother,' he answered without hesitation… He asked another: 'How many Gods are there?' 'Seven, and I'd have no fear of fighting any one of them!' Another declared that he had never had occasion to know Jesus Christ, because he had never seen him working in the mine… There you have what mechanized workers are: ignorant, coarse, uncivil, libertine, blasphemous, bad sons, bad husbands, bad fathers, and therefore bad citizens and worse Christians. Christians, did I say? Ah, they have nothing of the kind about them… and even of men they keep only the outside!!!…"

Don Prudencio. What a series of truths Don Frasquito has just told us! Truly, if experience did not prove it, it would seem incredible that man, the image of God, ransomed with the blood of Jesus Christ, a child of heaven and heir of an eternal kingdom, should have come to such a pitch of degradation!…

"I remember having read," said Don José, "that the non-observance of feast days can in the end, by itself, bring about the ruin of Religion in a kingdom or province."

Don Prudencio. There is no doubting it, gentlemen, for the non-observance or profanation of those days is a manifest rebellion against God and a practical and public profession of atheism. Just observe what we see on feast days. While the bells are inviting and calling the faithful to prayer, to the sermon, to the sacrifice, the profaners of those days, far from heeding them, go on with their carts and beasts; the noise of machines and hammers in their workshops never stops for a moment; they display their goods and wares in their shops as on working days, etc., etc. It already seems a rule among them that this must last at least until noon; and when their profanation is already accomplished in its principal half, when the hour of the sacrifice has gone by, then the outward bustle calms down; some, not all, stop their work, and the warehouses and shops are

closed. The crowd then gets out its holiday clothes to show off in, leaving its working clothes; and, having taken its meal, behold them in the street, well pleased with themselves. Where are they going? Perhaps to some church to implore pardon for their sins and to restore, though late, by a doubly wholesome rest, the strength of their bodies and the health of their souls? Nothing of the sort. Where, then, are they heading? Ask the promenades, the theatres, the cafés, the taverns, the gaming houses and houses of dissipation. These prodigal sons go away from their father's house: their temple is the theatre; dances and shows serve them as sermons and religious services; obscene conversations, foul and blasphemous words are their prayers and devotions; feasts and orgies replace for them the most delicious heavenly banquet of the divine and immaculate Lamb…

What more? Night itself often fails to put an end to so enormous a scandal, and during its hours a thousand snares of seduction are laid for innocence. How many mysteries of iniquity take place in the darkness!… The next day some go back to their tasks with their bodies worn out by the intemperance of the day before, their spirits fatigued by dissipation and the most shameful intrigues, their souls crushed and their hearts corrupted. Conscience now and then cries out within them in spite of themselves; and even when they manage to stifle its reproaches, they cannot shake off the curse with which God punishes their disorders. These disorders cry ceaselessly to heaven for vengeance, because the Lord's day, which ought to be kept holy, is through their fault the most profaned of all the days of the week.

Others begin the week, not with work, as they should, but by consecrating Monday to idleness and vice. Monday for them is man's day, as Sunday is the Lord's. On their own authority they substitute the one for the other, and after profaning God's day with work, they spend the hours of their own in idleness, debauchery and licentiousness.[5] Can the outrage that both kinds do to the Lord go any further?

"I know another thing no less grave," said Don Frasquito, "because of the scandal of it. Would you believe, gentlemen, that in a certain provincial capital, where public amusements on feast days are very frequent and crowded, they are usually announced in this way: *To solemnize duly the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (or another) *there will be a ball with chorus at…*; *In celebration of the day of the Assumption of the Virgin, redowas, schottisches, polkas, etc., will be danced.* Can anything more unfit be imagined for solemnizing or celebrating a feast of the Virgin? If this were said in the announcement of a feast dedicated to the goddess Venus it would be understandable; but to announce, for the celebration of a feast of the spotless Virgin, things that are very far from pleasing to her is, besides a scandal to the faithful, an insult offered to her. Let them amuse themselves as much as they like, but at least let them stop dedicating to the immaculate Mother of the Redeemer amusements so irreconcilable with the holiness of her feast days. This is unworthy of Catholic people."

"Don Frasquito is quite right," said Don José, "and it would be desirable that such announcements should appear in a more fitting and less shocking form. But returning to Monday, which is the day of rest that many workers take in imitation of those of France, I should like Don Prudencio to explain to us the reason for so undue a preference over Sunday."

Don Prudencio. The principal reason, gentlemen, the true cause of that punishable substitution of days, is a satanic instigation, for hell aims by this means, and succeeds, at making the contempt of God and of his law more insulting. And (note the contrast) at the same time as Satan moves many Catholics (who are so only in name) to keep Monday while profaning Sunday, he contrives that Protestants and schismatics should keep Sunday and not Monday, so that it may serve to discredit the Catholic religion. But though he gains his end, he does not gain it with reason; for it is not the Catholic religion that commands, counsels or permits the profanation of her feast days, but the greed of some who on those days use other men's arms to increase their fortunes. No, the Catholic religion is not and cannot be responsible for such abuses or profanations. How could she be, when she commands the contrary? She exhorts, she begs, she threatens with eternal punishments those who break her precepts and God's; and yet there is no lack among her children of those

who do not listen to her and disobey her, exposing her to the contempt and derision of her enemies!…

“It is truly and extremely lamentable,” said Don Enrique, “that among good and docile Catholics there should be so many and such perverse children of the Church, unworthy indeed of the maternal lap of so good and solicitous a Mother.”

“And all the more,” added Don Juan, “since by their infidelities and excesses they not only harm themselves but also wound by rebound and disfigure, as far as in them lies, the unblemished name of the Church.”

Don Prudencio. Apropos of what I was saying a little while ago about schismatics and Protestants, I am going to tell you what I observed among them in my long travels. I have made two journeys to heretical England, and during my stay, on each occasion, in that emporium of activity and commerce, I saw the scrupulousness with which they keep the Lord’s day. There, warehouses and shops are all closed on that day, except some food shop or other, and that only until noon, by mere tolerance. Carriages for transport do not appear in public, nor do hackney coaches; only a few private ones are seen going through the streets on some religious purpose or errand. Those immense factories of every kind that flood the whole world with their products stop working on Sunday; the deepest silence follows on that day the thundering noise of the other days. Even the posts, which bring a numerous, important and urgent correspondence from the four corners of the globe, are at a standstill there on Sunday. Not a single letter is delivered in London or in Dublin, and only one delivery is made on that day in the other cities of the kingdom. More still: in Scotland I observed, not without admiration, that everything, everything came to a halt when Sunday arrived: business, amusements, pleasures, etc., and even the railways… Perhaps you will think that the time the English sectaries take from work they spend in theatres or taverns. Nothing of the kind, gentlemen. The taverns are closed during the hours of religious worship, and the theatres for the whole of Sunday.

The same strictness is observed in the United States of America and in the overseas possessions of England herself. I can cite an example, a recent one too, of what I myself witnessed. Not long ago an English steamer on which I was travelling called at the Bermuda Islands to take on coal. It was a Saturday, and our crew spent the whole of it loading that fuel. Very little remained for them to finish their task the next day, and yet the authorities of that port would by no means consent to the loading being completed on Sunday. The captain of the ship pleaded again and again. All was in vain. Willing or not, he had to wait for Monday to take the rest on board.

Now I ask: does the same happen in our ports, in our cities, in our Catholic kingdom? Ah, gentlemen, what we see, and what Protestant foreigners see among us on feast days, forms with all I have said a contrast painful and humiliating for ourselves. We boast at the top of our voices and to our heart’s content of being Catholics, and they, seeing our works, take us for atheists. Who is right?… From this results in great part the formal contempt they show for the Catholic religion, and their drawing away from her more and more, instead of seeking to be her children as their forefathers were.

“How sad and shameful it is for Catholics,” said Don Juan, “to see that the fiercest enemies of the Church keep the Lord’s day better than they do!…”

“I, gentlemen, have not yet travelled outside Spain,” said Don Frasquito, “but my books, and excellent ones I have, have given me curious and interesting information on the subject that occupies us. All religions and religious sects, besides the Catholic religion, the one legitimate and true religion, have a day of rest marked out in each week which they faithfully keep; and this universality is an evident proof of how deeply rooted in the heart of man is the primitive tradition of the human race on this point.

“Like Catholics, all the bodies of dissident Christians have Sunday; the Jews, Saturday; the Muslims, Friday; the idolaters of Ormuz and Goa, Monday; the negroes of Guinea, Tuesday; and the Mongols, Thursday. All of them keep holy in their own way, and with all scrupulousness, the day they have marked out. Only bad

Catholics fail to fulfil their holy duties on Sunday, which is the Lord's day and which the Lord commands them to keep holy by doing certain works and abstaining from others. I have said bad Catholics, because the good, of whom there are still no small number, keep that day holy as they ought. But since sicknesses are catching and health is not, I mean, since bad examples are contagious and are imitated much more easily than good ones, it is to be feared that this cancer of breaking the divine law may spread to the whole social body and put an end at once to the health and life of Religion in our Catholic kingdom; for the ruin of Religion is usually one of the most legitimate and immediate consequences of the profanation of feast days. And the ruin of Religion: what is it and what does it bring with it? Ah, you know already, gentlemen. The ruin of Religion is the loosening and breaking of the bond that unites man to his Creator; it is the denial of divine Providence, and consequently of God and of all authority. It brings with it the ruin of the morality of human acts, and with it that of property, of the family and of the whole of society. The ruin of Religion causes and introduces anarchy into minds, into hearts and into deeds. Religion ruined, all is doubts, darkness, anguish, sensualism, selfishness, pride, rebellion, an unquenchable thirst for gold and pleasures, and, finally, the complete unchaining of all those domestic and undomesticated wild beasts that we call passions, whose unclean and then inaccessible lair is the heart of the immoral man… Religion ruined, powers are left without right, institutions without foundations, authority without respect, society without defence, privations without consolation, sacrifices without reward, sorrows without relief… Despair, suicides, murders, revolutions, pillage, despotism, upheavals, fires, barbarism, chaos: there in a few words is what a nation gains when the true Religion is ruined in its bosom!!! See in proof of it what happened in France at the end of the last century. What horror!!!"

"Several times," said Don José, "I have read the history of the deep abjection and complete prostration in which the French nation was plunged as a consequence of having repudiated and ruined the Catholic religion in all its provinces. Certainly one cannot read without shuddering with horror the black and blood-stained pages of that history."

"And though the other nations had, and have, so much to learn from another's misfortune \[*escarmentar en cabeza ajena*, "to take warning on another's head"\]," exclaimed Don Enrique, "they have imitated more or less, or are imitating and adopting, that atheistic civilization at whose head France glories in marching!…"

Don Prudencio. And do you know, gentlemen, that one of the causes of that universal cataclysm in which France was sunk for some years was her habitual profanation of feast days? When calm returned after so long and painful a storm, anyone would have thought (and it was to be expected) that that nation, taught by adversity and knowing the causes of the evil that afflicted it, would try to apply the necessary remedy. But, gentlemen, what happened is this: they sought to reduce the number of feast days, and they obtained, with the consent of the Holy See, that the eighteen or twenty feasts that the Church celebrates during the year besides Sundays should be reduced to four. Among other things, the pretext for obtaining it was that both the feasts and the Sundays would thus be better observed; but the result was that the feasts, though few, were not and are not kept holy, and the Sundays were and are profaned as they were before. It is plain that certain persons would be content only with the fulfilment of what the impious were already saying in David's time: "Let us abolish all the festival days of God from the land!…"[6]

"This confirms," said Don Juan, "what Don José said at the beginning of our journey and conference, namely, that those who call the number of our feasts excessive are as ill-disposed to observe the few as the many. And yet they think themselves, or at least call themselves, Catholics, and as much as the Pope, or more!…"

"Much good may their singular Catholicism do them!" exclaimed Don José.

"I should like," said Don Enrique, "Don Prudencio to take the trouble, before our journey ends, to explain to us, or tell us, the reasons the Church had for substituting Sunday for the Saturday that the law of God

commanded to be kept holy."

Don Prudencio. That is a little difficulty I already wanted to clear up before reaching Alicante, explaining the reasons for that change and the way it became general. As we have been saying up to now, it is of natural law, and therefore a duty and a necessity for man, to dedicate some days to the worship of God, taking his rest at the same time. In the old law the Lord was pleased to mark out the Saturday, and so in the law, in the Prophets and in all the books of the Old Testament mention is always and only made of the sanctification of the sabbath, not of Sunday. So it was in fact practised up to the very day on which our divine Redeemer rose again; and since he did so on a Sunday, that day was ever after regarded and celebrated as a feast day. The Apostles and first disciples of the Saviour, since they were all Hebrews, celebrated the sabbath according to the law, and also Sunday in memory of the resurrection of the God-Man. But when they left Palestine and went through the world to spread the religion of the Crucified among all nations, they no longer commanded their neophytes to keep the sabbath holy, but Sunday. In this way, and by apostolic authority, the latter day was substituted for the former, as baptism replaced circumcision. The first converted Hebrews went on for some time circumcising their children before or after baptism; but the gentiles who embraced the faith of the Apostles they baptized without obliging them to that legal ceremony.

We see, then, that for the sanctification of Sunday the Apostles had the very weighty and powerful reason of the resurrection of the divine Master; but besides that they did not lack others no less powerful and weighty. Such were: 1st, the distinction it was fitting to establish between the two laws, old and modern or new, that is, between the written law and the law of grace; 2nd, the distinction that also had to exist between Jews and Christians; 3rd, that the Apostles received the Holy Spirit on a Sunday; 4th, that Jesus Christ conferred on them, also on a Sunday, the faculty or power of forgiving sins. There are other reasons of fittingness which I do not list, since those already mentioned are enough to show us that the Church lacked neither authority nor motives to command us to keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday, or to transfer to that day the obligations that God imposed on man on the other.

Besides Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, we must keep and sanctify other feasts instituted by the Church in memory of the other mysteries of Christ, of the Most Holy Virgin and of the Saints, so that the faithful, free from servile work, may more conveniently give himself on them to the due worship and veneration of God and honour him in his Saints, in whom he is wonderful.[7] I said that we must keep and sanctify these feasts, because the Church is invested with a power nothing less than divine, and by virtue of this power she instituted them and imposes on us the precept of keeping and sanctifying them under pain of mortal sin.

"And what means seem to you suitable and proper, Don Prudencio," asked Don Juan, "for re-establishing among us the punctual and exact observance of all feast days?"

Don Prudencio. In the first place it is indispensable to be inwardly persuaded of the fittingness and necessity of their observance and sanctification. In the second, it is also necessary to be likewise persuaded of the gravity of the precept that commands us that sanctification and observance. This supposed, it will be enough for anyone truly to want to fulfil his duties in order to do it. The resolutions \[*bases*\] that we should all sign and adopt for this purpose are, in a few words, these:

1. To bind ourselves not to work, nor to make anyone work, on feast days. 2. To bind ourselves not to sell or buy on those days. 3. To bind ourselves to give work to the artisans who keep the feasts holy, and never to give it to those who profane them. 4. To bind ourselves always to buy in the shops whose owners keep them closed on feast days, and never to send to buy in those where things are sold on those days. 5. What we shall practise, not only by the general law that binds all but also by the particular law we shall have imposed on ourselves, we shall never cease to urge on our friends and relatives and, as occasion offers, on all those with whom we deal.

But since the sanctification of feast days, besides abstention from work, imposes on us the duty of spending them in good works, here are other resolutions that we ought likewise to sign, binding ourselves to do, and exhorting others to do, not only the works prescribed by the Church but also others suited to sanctifying ourselves and those days:

1. To attend devoutly the holy sacrifice of the Mass on all feast days, and to see to it that all our subjects or dependants hear it too. 2. To attend the divine offices in church, to give good example to the other faithful, even though we have an oratory at home. 3. To attend, in preference to any other, the parish Mass, since it is the one at which there must be instruction or a homily \[*plática*\], and to make the parish priest understand that he is not to omit it for fear of tiring us, for being of God we like to hear the word of God.[8] 4. To attend the other services with which the Church usually solemnizes those days, and to frequent on them the holy sacraments of Penance and Communion. 5. To devote some time on the feasts to pious reading and to works of mercy, corporal and spiritual.

What do you think of these and the other resolutions, Don Frasquito?

“That they are excellent,” he answered; “and would that in 1855,” he added, “they had been signed and adopted by those who, in a certain city, obliged the public workmen, under pain of dismissal, to work the whole of the Sunday before the day of St B…, transferring the abstention from work to that day on the pretext that it ought to be solemnized in that way. As if the Lord’s day ought not to prevail over every other working day!”

“I believe, gentlemen,” said Don Enrique, “that this conference will not be in vain, and I congratulate myself on having attended it. For my part I can say, and do say, that I bind myself, so far as it concerns me, to observe and to have observed punctually the resolutions laid down by Don Prudencio.”

“We bind ourselves in the same terms,” said Don José and Don Juan.

“Gentlemen,” said a rich manufacturer who was travelling in the same carriage as our speakers, “before we part I hope you will allow me to speak, to announce a conquest to you. Since Madrid I have had the satisfaction of hearing Don Prudencio, and since Albacete that of having heard Don Frasquito too. Since these good gentlemen spoke rather loud, I thought I might listen, and I listened attentively to all they have said in favour of the precept of keeping the feasts holy. Little, very little heed had I paid to it until now, either as regards myself or my employees. I have three hundred, and I keep them busy continually without distinction of days. But from today onward I promise God and you that it shall not be so. The reasons put forward by both these gentlemen have entirely convinced me of my duties, which I no longer hesitate to call sacred. Neither in my office nor in my workshops shall there be any work, little or much, on Sundays and other feast days. I judge the resolutions laid down by Don Prudencio very good, and from now on I accept them without any exception or restriction, binding myself to keep them and have them kept. There is no danger of my forgetting them, for I was writing them down as that gentleman spoke them. To him and to Don Frasquito I am very grateful, and I beg you all to excuse the liberty with which I have just spoken.”

Don Prudencio. Let us give thanks, gentlemen, let us all give thanks to God for having granted us the consolation of seeing our conference crowned with so good a result. And you, sir… (“Evaristo, at your service,” said the manufacturer) Don Evaristo, count from this moment on my unalterable and cordial friendship, as I ask yours of you. As for you, Don Frasquito, I repeat what I said at the moment I had the honour of meeting you, and I heartily congratulate your father on having a son of such fine qualities and good sentiments. It seems, gentlemen, that the hour is about to strike when we must part, for I can see the towers of Alicante close by. On arriving I take the road to Seville at once, where I am going to spend the winter, and there you will all find me during that time for whatever you may wish to command me.

“My son and I are very sorry, Don Prudencio,” said Don Enrique, “not to be able to accompany you, for we are going precisely the opposite way, to Valencia; but there you will find us ready to serve you in everything.”

Don Prudencio. I am infinitely grateful.

“I say the same to you, my venerable friend, and to all these gentlemen,” said Don Evaristo. “In Granada you will have from today a servant and a friend from the heart.”

“Gentlemen,” said Don Juan, “here we are at Alicante. Take good care of yourselves, and a happy journey to those who go on. Don José and I are staying here a few days, intending to return to Madrid afterwards.”

“So it is indeed,” said Don José, “and both here and there you may all count on our services if we can render you any. As for you, Don Prudencio, I hope, and we all hope, that if another occasion like the present offers, you will not let it pass without favouring us with another of your so instructive conferences.”

Don Prudencio. I shall do it with great pleasure; and in case it comes about, I announce to you now the subject it will treat. It will be the horrible blasphemy and the brutal and obscene language that in these last times have become so general in all our provinces, particularly the Catalan ones. Meanwhile, keep well, and goodbye, for they will be waiting for me.

“A happy journey!” they all exclaimed.

TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD.

Barcelona, 20 June 1860. Let it be reprinted. D. Juan de Palau y Soler, Vicar General and Governor.

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[1] Lk 11:2; Mt 6:9.

[2] 1 Jn 3:1.

[3] Mt 18:6.

[4] Ps 48(49):13 and 21, Vulgate: *Homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit; comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis.*

[5] *San Lunes.*

[6] Ps 73(74):8, Vulgate: *Quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei a terra.*

[7] Ps 67(68):36, Vulgate: *Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.*

[8] Jn 8:47, “He who is of God hears the words of God.”