For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." John 5:16, 17, NKJV.

At Jerusalem, where the Savior now was, many of the learned rabbis lived. Here their false ideas about the Sabbath were taught to the people. Great numbers came to worship at the Temple, and thus the rabbis' teaching was spread far and wide. Christ wished to correct these errors. This was why He healed the man on the Sabbath day, and told him to carry his bed. He knew that this act would attract the attention of the rabbis, and thus would give Him an opportunity to instruct them. So it proved. The Pharisees brought Christ before the Sanhedrin, the chief council of the Jews, to answer the charge of Sabbath-breaking.

The Savior declared that His action was in harmony with the Sabbath law. It was in harmony with the will and the work of God. "My Father worketh hitherto," He said, "and I work" (John 5:17).

God works continually in sustaining every living thing. Was His work to cease upon the Sabbath day? Should God forbid the sun to fulfill its office on the Sabbath? Should He cut off its rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation?

Should the brooks stay from watering the fields, and the waves of the sea still their ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and maize stop growing, and the trees and flowers put forth no bud or blossom on the Sabbath?

Then people would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that sustain their life. Nature must continue its work, or mortals would die. And they also have a work to do on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved on the Sabbath or any other day.

Heaven's work never ceases, and we should never rest from doing good. Our own work the law forbids us to do on the rest day of the Lord. The toil for a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day. But the Sabbath is not to be spent in useless inactivity. As God ceased from His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath, so we are to rest.
He bids us lay aside our daily occupations, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds.--The Story of Jesus, 73, 74.