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An essay on the

sanctification of the





AN  
E S S A Y  
ON  
THE SANCTIFICATION  
OF THE  
LORD'S DAY :

HUMBLY DESIGNED TO  
RECOMMEND THAT IMPORTANT DUTY.

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BY THE  
REV. SAMUEL GILFILLAN,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, COMRIE.

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Dies Dominica, Regina dierum !—TERTULLIAN.

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THE TENTH EDITION.  
CORRECTED AND GREATLY ENLARGED.

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EDINBURGH:  
PRINTED FOR WAUGH & INNES;  
M. OGLE, GLASGOW; R. M. TIMS, DUBLIN; J. NISBET,  
AND F. WESTLEY, LONDON.

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1825.

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ANDREW JACK, Printer.

# NOTICE

TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

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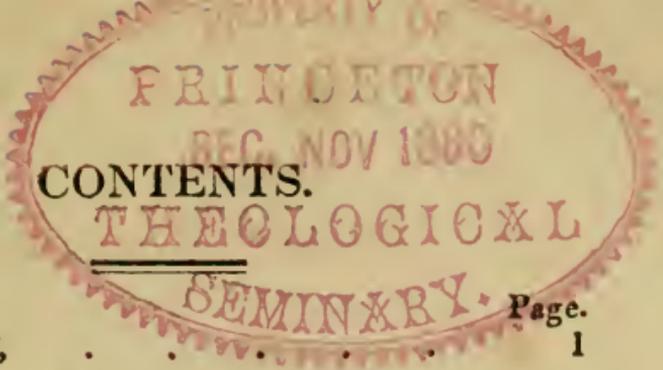
THE Author of this Essay returns many thanks to his friends and the public, for giving it such an extensive circulation. In this edition, which has been greatly enlarged, he has quoted authorities from several celebrated writers, in confirmation of his sentiments. He again commits the work to the protection and blessing of the Lord of the sabbath, and to the candour of the friends of religion.

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IT will be observed, that in this Tenth Edition a few verbal corrections have been made, and two new quotations, in further illustration of the subject, inserted. The latter circumstance has necessarily occasioned the exclusion from this edition of the extracts from "The Sabbath, a Poem."

*Comrie, August 1825.*





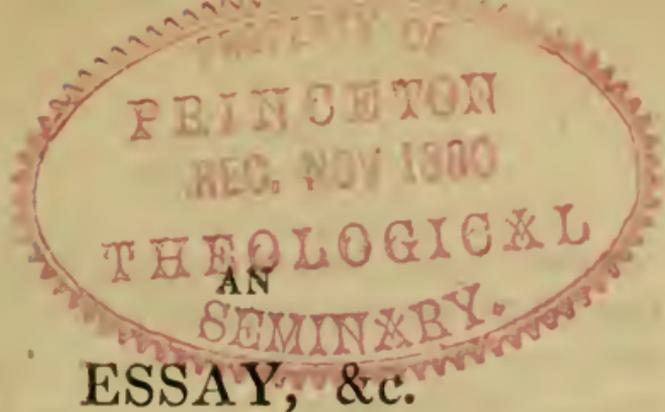
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ESSAY, &c.

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EXOD. xx. 8.

*Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

THESE words are a part of the moral law, which was delivered to the children of Israel, with awful solemnity, from Mount Sinai. The people of God, here addressed, had but lately come out of Egypt, the house of their bondage, where they had been surrounded and polluted by idolaters. The worship of the Egyptians was about that time most base and superstitious; the meanest and the most despicable creatures were the objects of veneration and regard; and there is every reason to believe that the Israel-

ites had in part learned the way of these idolaters, for the golden calf which they made in the wilderness bore a striking resemblance to Apis, one of the Egyptian idols. The Lord had, however, preserved his people from many of the grosser impurities of that country, having designed them to be henceforth a people who should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations, but to be to him a name and a praise above all the people on the earth.—The time of the promise drew nigh, and every thing was tending to its accomplishment. Instruments were called into action by Providence, and qualified for the part which they were to act in that grand scene. Moses, a shepherd, far advanced in life, was sent, with Aaron his brother, to a proud despot, not with fleets and armies, or with other engines of great power, but with the rod of God in his hand, and a message in his mouth from the great I AM! The tyrant, as might have been expected, refused to let the Israelites depart from his land; but his obstinacy only tended to illustrate the power of God, the truth of his promise, and the deep interest he had in his church. A series of miracles was wrought; Egypt was punished, and

left inexcuseable ; and the people of God were conducted, in spite of all opposition, out of their enemies' country. They passed through the Red Sea about the middle of March, or at the vernal equinox, and after journeying about six weeks in the adjacent deserts, they came to Mount Sinai in Arabia. *There* God was to reveal his moral law, on the day of Pentecost, or on the fiftieth day from the Passover which they had celebrated in Egypt ; and the circumstances attending its publication were inexpressibly sublime and awful: " So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. That terrific scene at once discovered the infinite purity of the divine nature, the holiness and extent of his law, with the utter impossibility of being saved by the covenant of works. In order to show that God was even then a God in Christ, he prefaces his law with a promise of grace, *I am the Lord thy God* ; demonstrating, by this exhilarating declaration, that all acceptable obedience to the law must flow from the application and belief of the promise : " Because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments." The law originally

written on man's heart, had been effaced by sin. The moral law was but obscurely known in the patriarchal state ; and now, when the church was to be organized, it became the Governor of the world to publish a system of laws for the use of his people, to be a standard of morals to them as rational beings, and as immediate subjects of a peculiar government, they being a typical people. The law concerning the Sabbath was no doubt greatly neglected and forgotten during their continuance in Egypt, partly on account of the oppression of their enemies, and partly on account of their own irreligion. God therefore, in republishing it, with others, from Mount Sinai, to the church, restored it to its primitive design and use ; and declared, in a manner never to be forgotten, that the observation of one day in seven, as a holy Sabbath to himself, is intimately and indissolubly connected with all the other branches of religion.

## GENERAL DESIGN OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.

IT is a truth not to be questioned, even by the most ingenious sceptic, that God is the absolute proprietor of all our time ; and of course that he possesses an unquestionable right to require as much of it, for his own immediate service, as he pleases. God can do with his own whatever seemeth good in his sight, and none can say to him, without consummate arrogance, "What doest thou?" For of him, as to original design ; through him, as to invincible efficiency ; and to him, as to their ultimate issue, are all things ; and to him be all the glory, Rom. xi. 36. Time is ours only in trust, and it is a talent highly valuable in itself and in its application, very important for promoting the honour of God, and the benefit of men. Happy were it for men if they would always act under the belief of this affecting consideration, that for the use of every moment of their time, as well as for the improvement of

every other faculty of their being, they must render an account to God at the day of judgment. The appointment of the Sabbath is not only an act of justice in God, but it is evidently an act of kindness to man. If any person refuse the seventh part of his time for the more direct purposes of religion, he would, according to the natural tendency of that perverse principle, deny God one day in three hundred and sixty-five; nay, he might proceed to dispute the divine claim upon any part of his time at all! So unjust are men to God! so ungrateful are they to him who is the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort!—The Jews were long the peculiar people of God; they lived under a theocracy or immediate divine government, which secured to them, in connection with their obedience, every thing pertaining to life and godliness; hence, it was infinitely reasonable, that much of their time should be devoted to the service of Jehovah their King. Their sacred festivals, especially the rest of the Sabbath, were not left to be fixed by the will of any man, but were defined and enacted by God himself, with indisputable precision, and none under that dispensation durst say, nor, if devout,

would say, "Why hath the Lord required such a great proportion of our time?" Such a complaint would have been reckoned ingratitude, rebellion, and iniquity, against their God and Sovereign.—The rest of the Sabbath-day was designed by Infinite Wisdom to be an universal benefit to the world and to the church in every age. God, in appointing it, hath connected his own glory with the good of the church, and the repose of the world. He might have required more of our time for his immediate service than he hath done, and on that supposition, none can dispute his right, or arraign his sovereignty; but the appointment of but *one day* in seven to himself is so equitable, and at the same time so kind, that no person who fears God can refuse it. The gratitude of a good man's heart, which is always ingenious in finding out ways to express itself, would cheerfully give more. No man who knows that he holds of God all the benefits of providence, and all the blessings of salvation, can for a moment refuse to give him any portion of his time he requireth. His renewed mind perceives in the institution the authority of his Father, and his heart anticipates the time when he, with others, can appear be-

fore God in the ordinances of grace on the Lord's day.

The Sabbath is an appointment of mercy to our bodies, and to the brute creation employed in our service. He who himself rested and was refreshed on the Sabbath-day, hath made this day an ordinance of mercy, to be an interruption of painful toil, a restorer of exhausted nature, and a season of repose to the world. On this sacred day, there is, or should be, an universal pause of labour, and thus rest and comfort is diffused through the whole Christian world at the same time. The lowest classes of our species, and the brute creation, are refreshed and recruited by this benevolent institution. How cruel and impious are they who are continually perverting the merciful purposes of Heaven on the Sabbath; who will neither rest themselves nor allow their servants and cattle to rest, although these have been generally strained beyond their strength on the other six days of the week, and have a just claim to a suspension of labour on the seventh day! A merciful man, a man who serves and loves a merciful God, is merciful to his beast at all times; and surely himself cannot treat it un-

mercifully, nor will he allow others to do so, on that day when it ought to rest. The groans of these poor beasts, which are exhausted and overdriven on the Lord's day, have entered into the ears of the God of Sabaoth. They have an advocate in God himself, who made them, and who will revenge every injury done to any of his creatures; for amidst the mighty movements of the universe, which he influences by his presence, he *careth for oxen!* He heareth the sound of the whip which goads on poor worn-out horses, as well as the profaneness of those whom they carry or drive.—If this were the sole design of Providence in the appointment of the Sabbath, carnal men would perhaps acquiesce in its institution; but it was chiefly designed for the rest and spiritual improvement of our souls. It is a holy rest, a season of mental exertion, of devout contemplation, of beneficence, and of virtuous and religious intercourse. This is a season on which all men who have tasted that God is gracious, endeavour to raise their minds to those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, to meditate on the works of God in creation and providence, and upon the still more transcendent

wonders of redemption by the blood of Christ. These spiritual thoughts are excited by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in them ; they grow out of their divine nature which he hath imparted to them ; and they are often very vigorous on that day on which their Saviour rose from the dead. On that day they are taught to expect the gracious presence of God in his ordinances ; they follow hard after him as the portion of their inheritance and their cup ; they examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, and whether they be growing or declining in the divine life. Surely such a day is a high privilege to the church of God ; and where could the church find a substitute for this day which God hath made ? This is the day on which the saints renew their strength ; their resolutions are generally prompt, their thoughts are vigorous, and they call into action the whole force of their renewed natures. On that day they cheerfully go with the multitude into the house of God, to join in praise and prayer, to hear the word of God read and preached, and, with their brethren in Christ, to shew forth the death of Christ in the sacrament of the supper. O ! how delightful is it to draw near to God in

company with the saints of the Most High,—to climb the walls of heaven by faith, and prayer, and divine love,—to press into the kingdom of God by an earnestness in spiritual worship not to be denied access, and an importunity not to be abated !—Ye infidels ! have ye any enjoyments like these ? Ye savages in a Christian country, who despise fellowship with God, and disdain the society of the godly ; who seldom assemble but for riot and every evil work ; who flout at that glorious gospel of the blessed God, which alone produces an antidote to the miseries of human life ; who shelter your crimes behind your infidelity, and hate that law which you do not find it convenient to obey ;—how long will ye turn your glory into shame ? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing ; how long will ye continue to profane that day which is to the church the happiest of all her days ? O ! taste and see that our God is good, and that in keeping of his commandments there is a great reward. Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Them who honour his Sabbath, and do those things which please him, God will bring to his holy mountain, and make them joy-

ful in his house of prayer. But irreligion, by whatever name it is called among men, and Sabbath profanation in particular, embitters all your comforts, tarnishes your honours, degrades your learning, and fills you with anguish unutterable in the prospect of an approaching eternity. Without true religion, you cannot be safe from the ills of the present life; and without it, how can you escape those formidable dangers which extend their mischief to a future state?—“The Sabbath was sanctified from the beginning, that there might be a fixed time for the children of Adam to unite with solemnity in spiritual worship. It is natural and fit for Christians, when they approach the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to adore the illustrious and harmonious display of his perfections in our redemption, and to recollect the spiritual blessings which are secured to his people by the death and resurrection of our Redeemer. The Sabbath was changed from the seventh day of the week to the first, for the purpose of drawing Christians to that great event which, connecting the humiliation with the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, at once establishes our faith, and cherishes our hope. While Christians, in assembling on the Lord’s day,

are thus called to remember both the creation and the redemption of the world, they are called by the religion of sinnersto acknowledge their own unworthiness, and under the impression of entire dependence, to that forgiveness of which they stand in need.”—HILL'S INSTITUTES.

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### THE MORALITY OF THE SABBATH.

THE institution of the Sabbath was nearly coeval with the world. From the beginning God appointed one day in seven to be peculiarly his own, as holy to himself. He made the universe in six days, and in every part of it there are the most striking signatures of his perfections, especially of his wisdom, power, and goodness: “He rested also on the seventh day from all which he had created and made;—he rested and was refreshed.” When he reviewed the effects of his infinite power, it was with indescribable complacency; and he continued to preserve them, by his universal agency, from relapsing into their original nothing. As his procedure with his rational offspring is always worthy of himself, we may infer, that an inti-

mation was made to Adam and Eve, that one day in seven was to be peculiarly appropriated to his immediate service ; or if no such intimation was explicitly made, it was made in effect by the law which was written on their hearts. If they were prompted by this law to obey God in every thing, it is impossible to conceive that they were ignorant of this devotement of a day to God, seeing this precept holds such a conspicuous place among the precepts of the moral law. A suspension of those labours which were consistent with a state of innocence, that man might enjoy pre-eminent tokens of divine favour, was infinitely befitting God to appoint, and man to enjoy. This was to our first parents a type of the more sublime felicities of heaven, where the Sabbath is endless and wholly spiritual. But the appointment of the Sabbath could not have been for a local, a temporary, or a ceremonial use ; but was, beyond controversy, designed to be perpetual in its obligation, and universal in its practice. Whether the Sabbath shall be the seventh or the first day of the week, is a circumstance entirely dependent on the will of the supreme Lawgiver, and alterable at his pleasure, and does not affect the

great argument or spirit of the fourth commandment, which is, *That a seventh part of our time shall be devoted to the service of God.* The law concerning the Sabbath was given to man in innocency, (Gen. ii. 3.) long before the existence of any ceremonial usages, and even before the revelation of the Saviour, whom these rites and ceremonies were designed to prefigure to the church under that dispensation. The fourth precept of the Decalogue was, with the other nine precepts, written, not upon paper or parchment, or leaves of trees, as the temporary laws of the Jews were; but upon tables of stone by the very finger of God, to point out its peculiar excellence, and its perpetual obligation. Moreover, it was not mingled with the ceremonial and judicial laws which were given to the Jews as a typical people, but held a distinguished place among those precepts which even Anti-sabbatarians confess to be perpetual. Such an admixture would have been unworthy of the infinite wisdom of God, the Lawgiver; an incongruity never discernible in any of his words or ways. Precepts which are moral must not be blended with those which are ambulatory, or temporary, or which concern a portion of

God's rational offspring only. The principal reasons for enforcing and recommending the observation of the Sabbath, are reasons which equally concern Jews and Gentiles, and of consequence must be moral. If God give man six working-days, or days for his own employment, and if this be adduced as a strong reason for sanctifying the seventh day to God, there is nothing in this motive peculiar to the Jews. God is the common parent of all men. The Gentiles are as nearly related to God as a Creator, as the Jews are, or ever were; and if the Jews observed the Sabbath because it was God's due or right to claim it, the same obligation extends to the Gentiles, especially when his claim is revealed in the promulgation of his moral law. The rest of God on the seventh day from his works of creation, which is propounded as a reason for our cessation from labour on the Sabbath, is an example which is exhibited for imitation by the Gentiles as well as by the Jews. If God blessed the Sabbath and hallowed it, this is the general concern of all rational beings on earth; for all want his blessing, all are the work of his hands, and the objects of his providential care. It has been

urged, indeed, by the opponents of this doctrine, that the Jews were bound to observe the Sabbath, because God (Deut. v. 15.) brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; and hence they reckon it to be a reason peculiar to the Jews. But this argument has no solidity in it, and cannot affect the morality of the Sabbath; for this good reason, the general promise, *I am the Lord thy God*, contained in the preface to the law, has not a reference to one precept more than to another, but is exhibited as a motive to obey the whole; and surely that grand and comprehensive promise may be supposed to have more force in promoting obedience than the other, which has a reference only to the Jews. It sounds harshly in a pious ear to affirm, that the grace of the gospel supersedes or destroys the moral law of God! The deliverance from Egypt was truly a magnificent display of the power of God, and was strongly interesting to the Jews; but this deliverance portrayed something grander than itself, even the redemption of men by Jesus Christ, in which all nations are interested. If the Jews were induced to sanctify the Sabbath, because of this striking interference of God in

their behalf; how should the Gentiles, who glorify God for his mercy, be strongly impelled to devote to God that day on which the Son of God arose from the dead! Surely no person who believes that Christ was delivered for his offences, and was raised for his justification, can neglect the sanctification of the Lord's day!

It is evident also, that the Sabbath hath been sanctified by the church of God in every age since its first institution. The Scripture makes no mention, indeed, of the Sabbath, from the time of its appointment in Paradise till the time of Moses; but the silence of the Scripture on that head is no evidence that the celebration of the Sabbath did not obtain. The history of the patriarchs is comprised within very narrow limits. We have only brief notices, outlines, and hints in relation to their worship, their experience, and their walking with God. Many things are doubtless omitted which we might have wished to know, but which God hath judged proper to conceal. The history of the saints, both before and after the flood, till the giving of the law, was only an introduction to a grander scene in the church of Israel when she was organized. If the Sabbath was sancti-

fied in Paradise, if God, in the future ages of the theocracy, vindicated the honour of that holy day by his judgments upon violaters of it, as well as enforced it by gracious promises; how is it possible to conceive that he allowed it to fall into disuse during a period of more than two thousand years? The thought is impious and irrational. Moses, when he narrates its first institution, does not give it the name which it bears by anticipation, as if the law was in force only after the promulgation at Mount Sinai. This reasoning, if carried to its legitimate issue, would go to destroy the relations between God and his rational creatures; for no reason can be given why a law, founded in the nature and will of the Deity, should cease to bind its natural subjects to obedience. Holy men of old times walked by faith, they believed the divine promises about salvation by the Messiah, and hence they endeavoured to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. We have many instances of their personal piety on record, both before and after the deluge. When persons are really religious, they quickly become religious in all the relations of life. Man is formed for society,

and saints cannot live without fellowship with their brethren in Christ. If the public worship of God obtained in the earliest ages of the church, (of which there can be no doubt,) if prayers and sacrifices were presented to God, it is reasonable to suppose, that they assembled on the seventh day of the week in preference to any other day. On that day they met to refresh their memories and to warm their hearts, by rehearsing the promise of the coming Messiah, to listen to the preachers of righteousness who then explained and applied these delightful truths, and to strengthen each other's hands in the work of the Lord. It is extremely probable that the first man taught the necessity of sanctifying the seventh day to his children, both by example and precept; and that they, especially those in the line of Seth, taught their children through a series of generations to do the same; till, on account of the increase of human wickedness, a republication of the whole law became necessary for the honour of the Lawgiver, and for the benefit of a particular people. The words in the beginning of the precept, *Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy*, evidently prove, that the Sabbath was no new thing to them, but that though they knew

the letter of it, they had forgotten its spirit and importance; more particularly, that during their abode in Egypt, their morals had been contaminated, and their worship leavened with superstition. It is also very evident, that the account which Moses gave of the Sabbath to the Israelites (Exod. xvi. 16. xxii. 23.) would have appeared very abrupt to them, if they had not previously known it: *To-morrow, says he, is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* And it is to be remarked, that this injunction was delivered before the republication of the moral law from Mount Sinai. From this latter event, the Sabbath was clothed with additional glory, and the observation of it became an eminent branch of religion among all the Jews, in all places, and in all their circumstances.

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THE CHANGE OF THE SABBATH FROM  
THE SEVENTH TO THE FIRST DAY OF  
THE WEEK.

HAVING proved, as we apprehend, the morality of the Sabbath, it is of much consequence to establish the change in question. This has

generally been acknowledged by the whole Christian world, and has been so since the earliest periods of Christianity. In the primitive ages, no dispute, as far as we can learn, obtained about it. The Jewish converts, indeed, paid a great deference to the seventh-day Sabbath, until the destruction of Jerusalem; but it does not appear from the Scriptures of the New Testament, that ever the Gentiles conformed to the Jews in this particular. On the contrary, it is evident, that after that memorable event, the whole church, Jews and Gentiles, joined together in observing that day on which Christ rose from the dead, which, by way of eminence, was called *the Lord's day*. This name, as *the Lord's supper*, and *the Lord's table*, indicated that our Lord, as the supreme God, and as the Head of his church, appointed it for the benefit of his people, and that himself rested upon it, as an example to all ages. This change, so important to the church, was most probably among those things in which Christ instructed his disciples during the forty days he continued with them after his resurrection; for it cannot be supposed, without arraigning the wisdom of our Saviour, that he should leave the day on which

the church was to rest, to be appointed by men, or to be subjected to the caprice of human opinions. This was eminently of the things which pertained to the kingdom of God, and contributed extensively to the glory of Christ, as Lord of the Sabbath. That there was a change in various other particulars relating to the worship of God, intimated to the apostles during that period, and which was to be applied when the Spirit should be poured out upon them, cannot be doubted; hence we may infer that there was also a change in the time. The original law concerning the Sabbath could not be repealed; but the immutability of the law is not affected by the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. The Jews enjoyed a rest on their Sabbath, but this rest was partly typical; and, having restrictions which could not suit all men, it was not designed for the kingdom of the Messiah, nor to last for ever. If the rest of the Jewish Sabbath had been designed to be coeval with the existence of the church, God would not have spoken (Heb. iv. 8, 10.) of another day: "But there remaineth," saith Paul, "a rest, or the keeping of a Sabbath, (Sabbatimos,) for the people

of God," distinct from the Jewish Sabbath. The seventh day was appointed to commemorate the divine glory in the creation of the world; but when a more memorable event took place, it became Infinite Wisdom to appoint another day on which it should be remembered, and the church should enjoy her rest. As the resurrection of Jesus from the dead forms the most wonderful æra in the works of God, so God hath stamped an indelible honour upon the first day of the week. He hath made it a day peculiarly his own; a day which all the friends of the Redeemer anticipate with pleasure, hail with delight, and enjoy with exultation and interest. "He that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his work, as God did from his," Heb. iv. 10. Christ did not enter, indeed, into a place of rest immediately after his resurrection; but he entered into a state of rest on that first day. His rising again was an infallible evidence that his humiliation and his sufferings had terminated, that his atonement had been accepted by God, and that his glory had commenced. If God rested on the seventh day from his works, and was refreshed; if Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the

week, and entered into his state of glory ; the argument hence is invincible, that the rest of the church is to be henceforth on the first day of the week. On that day Christ met his disciples in person, and diffused among them the most affecting evidences of his gracious presence : “ He breathed upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” It is certain, that the apostles were authorised and appointed to teach the churches of Christ those things pertaining to the kingdom of God, wherein he had instructed them ; the Spirit was poured out upon them, to enable them rightly and faithfully to execute their commission, so as to answer all the great ends of it. Now it is evident, that the apostles and the primitive Christians did religiously observe the first day of the week, as the day of their solemn assemblies for divine worship. On that day they stately met to hear the word preached, to collect for the poor, and to commemorate the death of Christ, Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. x. 21. and xvi. 1. If the apostles had convened the churches on that day, without regard to Christ’s precept or examples, they had been chargeable with the most outrageous contempt of his authority, and the churches them-

selves could not have had reason to expect his gracious presence among them. The earlier fathers of the church expressly affirm this change to have been made by the Lord himself, to have been universally promulgated by the apostles after the day of Pentecost, and to have been submitted to by the whole Christian world. Their testimonies could be produced, but the limits of this Essay forbid their insertion.

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#### GOOD MEN IN ALL AGES HAVE SANCTIFIED THE SABBATH.

As experience in religion is a species of proof that it is true, so the examples of good men afford the best evidence that the laws of God are practicable and excellent. Reverence for the authority of him who commands in the law, and promises in the gospel, is a test of true religion, which cannot be appealed to by the profane, or by hypocrites. That religion which has no influence upon the heart, and no command over the life, may in truth be pronounced to be no religion at all; for they who have believed in God, are ever ready to shew their

faith by their works. Even charity itself, that thinketh no evil, must call that man's religion a pretence, if he shall habitually profane the Sabbath-day, because such conduct is every where through the Scriptures branded as impious ; and the very character of times is drawn as favourable or unfavourable, as men sanctify or profane the Sabbath. Holy men in all ages have been witnesses for God in the midst of the crooked and perverse generation in which they lived. They shone as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, being guardians of the divine glory, and depositaries of the divine will. Though they existed and acted in different periods of time, differed in rank, in circumstances, and in some religious opinions, and had various degrees of gifts and grace ; yet they were all unanimous in this,—to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. One cannot open the Bible, cannot read the history of the church, nor the particular lives of ministers or private Christians, without perceiving that the sanctification of the Sabbath was a striking feature of their piety. Whether saints inhabit palaces or hovels, whether they be the great, the mighty, the noble, or the

small and despised, and embrace dunghills ; whether they acted in concert with others, or in solitude did the will of God ; they devoted the Sabbath to the Lord. This, above every other thing, distinguished them from the world lying in wickedness, or from those who halted between two opinions. Under the legal economy, the religious Israelites observed it with the greatest reverence and most scrupulous attention. God was among them as their King. He was so jealous of his honour, and blended so frequently the displays of his holiness with the communications of his grace, that he would not allow his highly-favoured people to sport with his institutions, and he punished the slightest deviations from the letter and spirit of his law with merited severity. He especially set up among them fearful tokens of his indignation at their profanation of the Sabbath. A profane person, who either did not know, or did not regard, the sanctity of the Sabbath, presumed to gather a bundle of sticks upon that day, and God commanded that man to be stoned to death. In the eyes of the world this man's sin was trivial, and the punishment awarded disproportionate to the crime ; but surely the Su-

preme Lawgiver is the best judge of the nature of sin, and of the proportions of punishment. This instance of the divine severity was designed to operate as a warning to the church in all her generations. In a later period of the Jewish history, that is, in the days of Nehemiah, the Sabbath became eminently a sign between the church and the world. The Jews had lately returned from Babylon, and had probably contracted much pollution in that country, as they had done formerly in Egypt. The circumstances connected with their captivity had occasioned a forgetfulness of the Sabbath-day. The neighbouring nations also all mocked this peculiarity of their worship. God, therefore, at the period referred to, raised up several holy men, who were zealous of his honour, and of the credit of his laws,—men who punished sin by their authority, and brought it into disgrace by their example. Nehemiah the governor, in particular, exerted all his power as a ruler, and all his influence as a good man, to retrieve the honour of the Sabbath, and to prevent its profanation. He was not a man that could be frightened or cajoled from his duty. The mongrel nobles, the false-hearted Jews,

the interested vulgar, all coalesced in order to terrify or seduce him from his attempt at reformation ; but such a man as he was, scorned to flee, and refused to yield.—See Neh. xiii.

In the days of Isaiah, and of Jeremiah, good men are generally described from their profound veneration for the Sabbath, Isa. lvi. 4—6. Jer. xvii. 21—26. While the majority of professors of that age despised the holy Sabbath, following their own pleasures, there were a blessed few who dared to be singular, by keeping that sacred day from polluting it, and by keeping their hands from doing any evil. That happy minority had to struggle against all the influence of the upper ranks, and all the despite of the vulgar ; but as they had the promises of God to fortify their minds, they did not decline from the paths of the Lord. God exhibited them as his friends, who would keep his Sabbath, although the nobles frowned upon them, and the multitude laughed them to scorn. As the reverse of this, an aversion or an indifference to the holy Sabbath, is a sufficient indication of public corruption, and of the absence of personal piety. When men think or say, (whatever they profess to the contrary), “When

will the Sabbath be over, that we may set forth wheat," or pursue occupations more suited to the temper of our minds? they are far advanced in practical impiety, Amos viii. 5. The spirit which breathes in the question now quoted, is a spirit which animates unrenewed men in every age. The holy Sabbath offers a restraint to their pleasures which they cannot endure, and which they endeavour to remove by a thousand ingenious devices. They either wish there were no sacred seasons at all, or they endeavour to sink these to the level of their own wishes. But let these persons know to their shame, or to their conviction, that no person can possess a truly noble spirit, nor enjoy genuine liberty, but in keeping God's commandments. Religion cannot exist nor be prosperous, if the Sabbath-day be profaned. He cannot be uniformly and consistently pious, he cannot walk with God as a friend and Father,—he cannot recommend religion to his friends nor his acquaintances, who neglects or carelessly performs the duties of the Lord's day. His vigilance over his children, his attention to his servants, his intercourse with the church, will be constrained and inefficient, while he himself is not animated by the fear of God, and while he mutilates the

duties of the Sabbath. The world itself, which he endeavours so much to please, will deem him inconsistent. His family will yield him a partial obedience, his servants will grow insolent and imperious, his visitors will mark his disingenuity, when an attention to the Sabbath is not preserved with unbending fortitude. All the branches of personal and domestic piety, with all their ramifications, terminate here. The vigour, or declension, of any man's grace, may be safely inferred from his conduct on the Sabbath-day.

In the primitive ages of Christianity, in the times of the first and second Reformations in Scotland, and in New England for several generations, the sanctification of the Sabbath was a prominent and decided evidence of religion. In some of our great cities also, where so much profligacy now prevails on the Lord's day, there was a decorum in behaviour, and solemnity of spirit, as well as diligence in the duties of religion on that holy day, which we fear are now very rare in their occurrence. In England also, in her better times, this marked the character of the friends of Christ. These good men had to contend, not only with the iniquities

of the times, but with an iniquity decreed by a law. King James VI. in the true spirit of his family, who were always infamous for Sabbath-profanation, issued, in the year 1618, the following order, in opposition to the law of the Most High! “As for the recreation of our good people on the Sabbath, our pleasure is, That after the end of divine service, our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as dancing, either men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other harmless recreation, nor from having of May-games, Whitsun-ales, and morrice-dancers, and the setting up of May-poles, or other sports therewith used, so as the same may be had in due and convenient time, without compeding or neglecting of divine services; and the women shall have leave to carry rushes to the church for decorating the same according to the old custom!” This order from the court was equivalent to a licence to profane the Lord’s day; and being issued under a penalty for disobedience, had a most pernicious influence upon the manners of the nation. The Puritans, as they were reproachfully called, together with all the serious people in Eng-

land, were panic-struck and alarmed at such horrid profaneness. Many treatises were published in vindication of the honour of the Christian Sabbath, meetings convened for deliberation, and spirited remonstrances were presented against such iniquitous innovations. Many men, of whom England may justly boast, resigned every thing the world calls dear, rather than comply with those public corruptions. They exerted all their influence, in order to counteract the orders and example of the court. Even some of those who read the Book of Sports in obedience to the king, were fully convinced, that in so doing they were offending the Lord of the Sabbath. The great and the good Bishop Hall read the royal proclamation encouraging sports, on the morning of the Sabbath; and on the afternoon of the same day, he preached upon the fourth commandment, to please the Lord of Hosts! How this eminent man reconciled these parts of his conduct, we have no means of knowing; but surely, the very attempt to please God and man in one day, was unworthy of his character. From the period specified, profaneness flowed for many years like a torrent over that country, and per-

haps the effects of this relaxation of the holiness of the Sabbath may be seen in England till this very day.

In order to confirm the above statements, we beg leave to introduce the following extracts from authors of high reputation. “ There is a decent behaviour not uncommon in the world, which preserves men from gross and open vices; but from this nothing certain can be deduced, because it discovers no particular veneration for God, nor regard for his authority; but particular practices, which give decision to character, and lead others to form a favourable opinion of his piety—such as family-worship, and the sanctification of the Sabbath-day. If, after the public worship of the Sabbath, the rest of the day is given up to business or pleasure, to unprofitable visits, and worldly conversation, what is there to stamp his character as a Christian, and to distinguish him from the world lying in wickedness? Whatever he may be in civil society, he will, by the majority of religious people, be excluded from the rank of an exemplary disciple of Christ. The Puritans devoted the whole of the Lord’s day to the services of religion. Public worship was reck-

oned by them the first of duties ; and after attending in the house of God, they devoted the rest of the sacred time to the instruction of their families, and secret exercises of devotion. The complaints of the tediousness of such a day, and of the irksomeness of such regulations to the younger branches of the family, which are urged against this manner of spending the hallowed time, will be found destitute of foundation, when children have been trained up to it from their earliest years." *Hist. of Dissenters, by Messrs Bogue and Bennet.*—" Let me," says the celebrated Wilberforce, " appeal to that day which is especially devoted to the offices of religion. Do they joyfully avail themselves of the blessed opportunity of withdrawing from the business and cares of life ; when, without being disquieted by any doubts whether they are not neglecting the duties of their proper callings, they may be allowed to detach their minds from earthly things, that by a fuller knowledge of heavenly objects, and a more habitual acquaintance with them, their hope may grow more full of immortality ? Is this day cheerfully devoted to those holy exercises for which it was appointed ? Do they indeed come into the courts of God

with gladness? And how are they employed, when not engaged in the public services of the day? Are they busied in studying the word of God, in meditating on his perfections, in tracing his providential dispensations, in admiring his works, in revolving his mercies, (above all, the transcendent mercies of redeeming love,) and speaking good of his name? Do their secret retirements witness the earnestness of their prayers, the warmth of their thanksgivings, their diligence and impartiality in the necessary work of self-examination, their mindfulness of the benevolent duty of intercession? Is the kind purpose of the institution of the Sabbath answered by them, in its being made to their servants and dependents a day of rest and comfort? Does the instruction of their families, or of the more poor and ignorant of their neighbours, possess its due share of their time? If blessed with talents or with affluence, are they sedulously employing a part of this interval of leisure in relieving the indigent, and visiting the sick, and comforting the sorrowful; in forming plans for the good of their fellow-creatures; in considering how they may promote both the temporal and spiritual benefit of their

friends and acquaintance? Or if their's be a larger sphere, in devising measures whereby, through the divine blessing, they may become the honoured instruments of the more extended diffusion of religious truth? In the hours of domestic or social intercourse, does their conversation manifest the subject of which their heart is full? Do their language and their demeanour shew them to be more than commonly gentle, and kind, and friendly,—free from rough and irritating passions?—Surely an entire day should not seem long among these various employments. It might well be deemed a privilege thus to spend it in the more immediate presence of our heavenly Father, in the exercise of humble admiration and grateful homage; of the benevolent and domestic social feelings, and of all the best affections of our nature, prompted by their true motives, conversant about their proper objects, and directed to their noblest end; all sorrows mitigated, all cares suspended, all fears repressed, every angry emotion softened, every envious, or revengeful or malignant passion expelled; and the bosom thus quieted, purified, enlarged, ennobled, partaking almost of a measure of the hea-

venly happiness, and become for a while the seat of love, and joy, and confidence, and harmony."—*Wilberforce's View*. "I have found," says the eminently pious and learned Judge Hale, "by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing of the duty of the Lord's day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week thus begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments, so that I could easily make an estimate of my success through the week, by the manner of my passing this day."—*Lord Hale's Advices to his grand-children*.—In like manner, the great Boerhaave of Leyden was wont to declare, in the most solemn manner, that none of his schemes ever succeeded to his wish, if he did not conscientiously devote the Sabbath to the service of God.

It may not be improper, in this part of our essay, to mention briefly, that the judgments of God have been visible and striking upon nations and individuals who profaned the Sabbath day. On this subject it becomes us to

speak with reverence and holy caution. Our views of the divine government are very limited, and we are too prone to reckon that to be the cause of divine judgments, which is not really the cause. We know that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, and that he connects sin with its punishment ; but it becomes not us to affirm peremptorily, that such and such tokens of divine anger either point to particular sins, or are connected with the punishments of eternity. While, however, we abide by the general principles of Scripture, and advert to its examples, we may conclude, without presumption, that the nature and aggravations of some sins are distinctly marked in their punishment. If the Lord of the Sabbath hath done so much to guard his holy day from profanation and abuse, it is fair to infer, that his judgments upon Sabbath-breakers shall be signal and severe. These judgments may be invisible, or in the open sight of others ; they may be immediately connected with the crime, or they may be inflicted long after the sin has been committed and forgotten ; but the connection between sin and punishment is still entire. Upon these general principles we are

allowed to affirm, that the ruin of communities and of individuals may be dated from the time when they ventured to trifle with this important part of the divine law. For this sin, thrones have been overturned, and princes made to wander in a wilderness where there is no way; fat lands have been turned into barrenness, and made to enjoy their Sabbaths, being desolate. As a moth and rottenness, this sin hath wasted the beauty and prosperity of many honourable families; and their houses, though once great and fair, (Isa. v. 9.) are now without inhabitants. For this sin God hath long since kindled a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, and it hath devoured the palaces thereof, Jer. xvii. 27. In the days of Augustine, a general declension of religion had begun, not only in Africa, but all over the christian world. The Sabbath was greatly profaned, both in the palaces of the emperors, and in the cottages of the peasants. The church, on account of her errors, her divisions, and her immoralities, was ripening for divine judgments. God therefore thrust in his sickle, with awful effect, in permitting the Goths and the Vandals to ravage the empire, and to persecute the church. In the desolation

of the provinces, the conflagration of churches, and the universal ruin effected, the serious of that age contemplated the anger of an insulted God, and the danger of sporting with divine institutions. In England, too, the calamities which, for upwards of thirty years, afflicted the country, were nearly coeval in their commencement with the publication of the Book of Sports. The family of Stuart, as before hinted, generally led the way to Sabbath-profana-tion ; and all the world knows, that the wrath of God hath come upon them to the uttermost. Carnal men trace their destruction to the impo-licy of their councils, or to the cruelty of their natures : but serious observers of Providence give a better account of the matter, when they see in the extinction of that House, the anger of God against senseless bigotry and daring profaneness. He rooted them out, because they were enemies to the liberties of men, and to the prerogatives of God.—It is an irksome task for one who loves his country, to become its accuser ; but public duty should at all times control private inclination. That the Sabbath is generally venerated in our country at the present time, cannot with truth be asserted ;

on the contrary, it is evident to every person who has the slightest discernment, that we are become bare-faced in the profanation of the Lord's day. But how or when the Lord of the Sabbath shall plead his controversy with us for this sin, it becomes not us to say. The aspect of matters is such, however, as to create a necessary alarm in every serious heart. Divine judgments are abroad in the earth ; they have been performing a tremendous circuit in the other nations of Europe for many years, and in nations, too, infamous for violating the Christian Sabbath ; and who knows how soon the cup may pass through unto us ? Individuals, also, of great eminence in rank and literature, have, in those moments when deceit can serve no purpose, lamented most bitterly their contempt of the Lord's day. We could give a long list of names, and detail many anecdotes in support of this assertion, but our studied brevity compels us to forego that intention. The celebrated Mr Samuel Johnson of London may be mentioned as one equal to a thousand witnesses. It is well known that his conscience and his inclinations were at perpetual war ; that he had a strong bias to religion, but his life was too frequently

the reverse of his resolutions. On his death-bed, he earnestly intreated his friends to cultivate an habitual reverence for God, and a deep regard for the Sabbath. *The holy Sabbath!* he pronounced with the emphasis of a dying man. This testimony might be supposed to have some influence upon learned and wise men; but how evanescent is the impression of human testimony upon those who forget the awful words of him who hath said, *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy!* We ourselves have heard and seen persons, dying as victims to the justice of their country, lament, with tears rolling down their faces, and but one step between them and eternity, Sabbath-profana-tion as the primary cause of their ruin; and that their parents, instead of controlling them on that day, led them astray by a pernicious example, and were their counsellors (2 Chron. xxii. 3.) to work wickedness! How solemn the spectacle! How venerable are divine institutions in the light of eternity! In what light to contemplate the many accidents which befall watering-parties on the Lord's day, and other parties of pleasure, we leave others to judge; but the frequency of their recurrence speaks a

language not easily misunderstood, and says, that there is a God who taketh vengeance,— a God who judgeth in the earth.

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### PREPARATION FOR THE SABBATH.

Good men, in ordinary cases, walk by rule. What is done by no fixed rule, is done awkwardly, feebly, and confusedly. When a thing is done seldom, and by no certain plan, it is generally done with reluctance and dislike; and from dislike, the natural transition is to omission, to total neglect, or to contempt. On the contrary, what is subjected to a fixed standard, and to a set time, is done accurately and effectually, and with ease and delight, because it is done from habit and custom. Custom, all men know, is a kind of second nature, and there is scarcely any thing to which custom will not reconcile. It is recorded of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it was his *custom* to enter into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day; a day which he always sanctified by a course of active benevolence. Applying these hints to our-

selves, it would greatly facilitate the performance of the duties required on the Lord's day, if we made conscientious preparation for it before it came. In other cases, our interest or our reputation induces us to anticipate what is proper to be done, in order to receive our friends, or to bring our plans to a happy issue. Six days shalt thou labour, *and do all thy work*, are words which plainly and forcibly intimate, that we should wisely arrange our affairs through the week, and especially on the last day of it, that, in ordinary circumstances, we may meet with no interruption or disturbance in the great work of that day. Our attachments to the things of time should always be moderated by religion ; and our regard to the world should, in no instance whatever, be allowed to tempt us to encroach upon what is due to God, or to clog our minds in spiritual services. We should prudently and diligently dispatch the business of the week, that we may be prepared for the rest of the Sabbath ; that, in as far as our care and foresight can extend, it may be said of our Saturday as was said formerly of the day preceding the Sabbath ; *It was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on,*

Luke xxiii. 54. Every thing subjected to our influence should be put into such a state through the week, as to prevent solicitude about it on the Lord's day. Our houses, our worldly business, our attire, and our necessary provisions, should be in a situation favourable to the exercises of devotion on that day, which is holy to the Lord, and honourable. Magistrates, men of business, ministers, and heads of families, with every person of influence, are under the strongest obligations of reason and religion to do so. They are bound by a law, paramount to all human authority, to watch over their concerns during the week, and to put them into such a train, that their children, subjects, servants, and acquaintance, shall not be exposed to the temptation of sporting with the obligations of the Christian Sabbath. A pernicious example in this respect, and even a neglect, in persons of influence, may occasion many breaches of the Lord's day. It speaks little for their good sense, and less for their piety, when men who profess to fear God, by their heedlessness and improvidence, lead those astray who have not fortitude to obey God rather than man ; and is it any wonder that con-

fusion seizes upon those men's affairs through the week, when they have not ordered them with discretion with a view to the approaching Sabbath? It should also be the first of our concerns, to exercise grace during the week, in reference to the Lord's day, as the best portion of our time, and as the most delightful of our days. "When shall we again appear before God? How amiable are thy tabernacles, Lord God of hosts! A day in thy courts is better than a thousand!" should be the language of our desires. These desires after fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, should be strong and ardent, and should mingle themselves with our ordinary occupations during the week. If we are born again; if we are spiritually minded; if we have really tasted that the Lord is gracious; this will be our attainment. In this spirit, as the excellent Hervey says, "every ordinary meal is a kind of sacrament, and every common day is a Sabbath." To persons of this character, the return of the Lord's day is a privilege of the highest order, a felicity superior to that enjoyed by persons who hail the return of a feast, or who, in darkness and among dangerous pits

wait for the morning-light. Watchfulness over our spirits every day, will tend to elevate our affections on the first day of the week, and prevent us from carrying into spiritual duties a carnal temper, or from shewing that we are by no means in our element, when assembling and worshipping with the people of God on the holy Sabbath. The carnality of men's minds, and of their conversation, on the Lord's day, is easily accounted for upon this principle, that they do not walk with God any day. If the mind be in league with sin, if it grovel continually upon the earth, how is it possible for a mere change of a day to produce a spiritual revolution in the heart? The most of men make a rapid transition from the cares and business of the week, to the exercises of the Sabbath, in which, whatever they pretend, their hearts find no pleasure.

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#### GENERAL SKETCH OF THE DUTIES OF THE SABBATH.

“THE Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly

employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of religion, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.”

This description, which we have taken from the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, is both comprehensive and perspicuous. We have never seen any thing equal to it for comprehension and perspicuity, in relation to the subject before us. The law of God requires a whole day for the rest of the Sabbath, and a whole day spent in the service of him who appointed it. It never was disputed that the six days of the week, given to us for our own employment, are days taken in their ordinary duration; but how men began to conceive, that the Sabbath should be understood as meaning only part of a day, is impossible for us to comprehend. As, in the other days, the refreshment of sleep, with the time in which men take food, are included in the work of the day; so works of necessity and mercy on the Sabbath, are deductions provided for in the law itself. It becomes us, however, to distinguish between those which are invented by men, and those which the law allows. It is

very evident, that many call these things works of necessity and acts of mercy, which are not provided for by the divine law. The stations in which they are placed, as well as the sinful customs which are familiar to them, induce them to interpret the law of God according to their wishes, and not according to its genuine spirit. It is certain, also, that in performing these works of necessity and charity, we are glorifying God, and displaying the mild genius of our religion. It is a piece of nice casuistry, in which carnal men generally take the wrong side, when duties which we owe directly to God interfere with those which we owe to men. It is a work of no little difficulty to form a correct list of the works of necessity and mercy; because these may vary according to the state of the church, and the exigencies of society. To administer to our bodily wants; to flee from danger; to extinguish destructive fires; to feed cattle that are dependent on us; to defend ourselves from aggression, whether of war, or of thieves and robbers; to stand by the helm, and work a vessel; to visit the sick; to bury the dead, in certain circumstances; to make collections for the poor; and to use

means for the recovery of our health, in the use of medicines ; are a few of those works of necessity and mercy which we should perform in the spirit of the gospel on that holy day. These duties, performed in connection with duties hereafter to be specified, may well be supposed to fill up the whole of that sacred season for the honour of God, and the benefit of men. It was the fashionable doctrine of the times alluded to already, to assert, and to profane the Scriptures in support of the assertion, that *Sunday was to be sanctified no longer than during the time of public worship!* This blasphemous avowal was not merely a theory which pleased the court, but the majority of the nation acted upon it, and willingly followed the impious commandment. That foreign churches, and some in the United Kingdom, thus profane the Lord's day, is a melancholy fact, too obvious to be denied, and too important to be concealed. How they can justify this practice to God, or to sister churches, we are not prepared to affirm ; but in the great issue of things, we may believe, the great Lord of the Sabbath shall retrieve the honours of his own day, and stamp infamy upon every species of Sabbath-

profanation. Many things which constituted parts of the holiness of the Sabbath among the Jews, do not concern us ; but no lapse of ages, no change of the day, can authorise men to vilify that holy time, or to abridge its duration.

In order to the true enjoyment of the Sabbath, it is requisite that our minds be in the Spirit on that day, Rev. i. 10. " I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." That these words may partly refer to the Spirit of prophecy which was given to John, cannot be denied ; but that they have no respect to the temper of his mind, seems extremely absurd to maintain. It is more than probable, that while he was driven by Domitian to the solitudes of Patmos, he was greatly affected with the love and grace of his Saviour, that glorious person who would never leave him nor forsake him, and whose presence turns a wilderness into an Eden, and a desert into the garden of Jehovah ; that he meditated frequently upon his death, his resurrection, and glory ; and that the first day of the week, or Lord's day, powerfully reminded him of these great events. When his mind was in such a frame, the divine Redeemer ma-

nifested himself to John in another way than he did to the world. He said in effect, "Fear not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God ;" and John, " though ready to perish, drank and forgot his poverty, and remembered his misery no more." It is not at all credible that any person can be prepared for, or can delight in, the duties of the Lord's day, if he take no heed to the temper of his mind. " As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." If he be habitually carnal, the holy exercises of that day will be a task and an inconvenience to him, whatever he pretend to the contrary. Carnal thoughts will intrude themselves into the holiest minds, even after all their serious endeavours to prevent and exclude them ; but still they are not carnally-minded, for it is a part of their infelicity to be troubled with them, and a part of their happiness to oppose and overcome them. It is truly as grievous to a spiritual mind, to find the motions of sin in his members, as it is for a living man to have a putrified corpse tied to his body, and which he is compelled to bear till it becomes a skeleton ! It is a melancholy fact, justified by the experience of all saints, that Satan practises most

effectually upon their corruptions during that day set apart for the service of God ; when they would do good, evil is present with them. God permits that enemy to try whether they be girt about with their spiritual armour, whether they be in a posture of holy vigilance, and whether, on that day, divine things have their due ascendancy over their minds. The lively exercise of faith, an habitual watchfulness over our hearts, and sweet meditation upon God, are the great means of escaping his snares and resisting his influence. Meditation upon divine things is a direct proof of a mind renewed by the grace of the gospel, and is an excellent preparative for all the duties of the Lord's day. Hereby grace is exercised, the heart is disposed to secret and private prayer, the attention is raised to hear what God shall speak by his servants, and especially faith and love are put in motion towards their blessed object.

When the mind is intensely fixed upon God by faith and meditation, abstraction of the thoughts from the things of time is the natural consequence ; and such an exercise will lead to retirement and secret devotion. The sacred flame in the heart cannot be kept burning, holy

ejaculations cannot ascend to heaven, without a frequent perusal of the Scriptures and other religious books. The Scriptures are the fuel of meditation, the food of faith, and the life of prayer. How delightful is it, on the morning of the Lord's day, to find the mind turn to God "as the clay to the seal;" to rise together with Christ, and to start from our slumbers to enjoy communion with our heavenly Father! Early rising has been recommended by philosophers and physicians, as promoting the health of the body and vigour of the mind; and surely it becomes the friends of Christ to say, "Our voice shalt thou hear early in the morning." Christ himself arose from the dead early, even while it was yet dark; the women were early at his grave; and worldly men can prevent the dawning of the day, that they may pursue their favourite schemes: Why, then, do the saints of God slumber so long upon their beds on the Sabbath-day? Servants and labourers, on account of the toils of the past week, are more excusable. But there can be no apology made for those who are not worn out with fatigue of body or anxiety of mind, and who only loiter on their couches, because the duties and enjoy-

ments of the Sabbath are a burden to them. The love of glory made Demosthenes, the celebrated orator, to be angry at himself, if any workman in Athens began his work before he was in his study; and what influence will the love of Christ have upon the heart which knows and believes it!

When a man has enjoyed fellowship with God in his meditations, in his ejaculations, in his closet, or in reading the scriptures by himself, the savour of this is diffused to all his family, in his worship and in his walk. Secret prayer holds such an eminent place among the duties and privileges of a saint, that he cannot neglect it without offending God, and injuring the interests of his soul. The church of Christ is found "in the clefts of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs." We introduce this remark, to shew that secret devotion has an influence upon domestic piety: He who hath found the pearl of great price himself, cannot be indifferent whether his family find it or not. He who walks with God in his closet, will not neglect the worship of God in his family. Every saint would say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." There

are some professed Christians who worship God in their families on the Lord's day, who totally neglect this duty through the week. From this neglect we may candidly infer, that these persons would not worship God on the Sabbath, if it were not suited to their own convenience. This custom may be condemned as inconsistent and impious, as highly injurious to families, and as indicative of an inordinate attachment to the world.

The Lord's day is consecrated for the worship of God, in secret, in private, and in public. Family prayers and praise, with serious reading of the word of God, are duties on that day never to be dispensed with. As, under the old dispensation of grace, the sacrifices were doubled on the Sabbath, (Numb. xxviii. 8, 9.), so the church was taught by this to abound in the duties of religion on that day; and the people upon whom the ends of the world are come, are instructed to go and do likewise. Family-duties, when rightly performed, are an excellent means for preparing to hear the word preached, and for other parts of public worship. These tend, by the blessing of God, to solemnize the mind, to warm the affections and heart,

and to show to the junior branches of the family, the connection there is, or should be, between one duty and another. The ordinances of God are that only to us which he is pleased to make them, and his blessing is to be sought by frequent and importunate prayer. To restrain prayer before our families, from whatever motive we do it, is a dreadful instance of indifference to their present and eternal welfare. It argues much inconsistency of conduct, not to give it a worse name, when persons, as it were, step from their beds, their tables, or their dressing-closets, to the house of God on the morning of the Lord's day, without the intermediate duties of secret devotion. And what shall we say of those who consume a great part of this hallowed season in adorning the body, in plaiting the hair, and putting on of apparel, (1 Pet. iii. 3—5.), while they neglect the hidden man of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God? "For these things our land mourns, and Zion weepeth sore in the night."

Good men in every age, and under every dispensation of grace, love the habitation of

God's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth. When public ordinances are dispensed according to the will of God, and are at all accessible, the saints will come over a thousand obstacles to enjoy them. The fertility of a country, the security of its political state, the beauty of its scenery, are nothing to them, if they are denied access to God in the means of grace. Like the ancient Rabbin, they value their houses and possessions as they are near the synagogue; see also Psal. xliii. lxii. and lxxxiv. These psalms breathe a spirit common to saints in every age. Their religion is not to be envied, who can voluntarily absent themselves from the places where God has promised to meet his people, and to make all his goodness pass before them,—who can despise those wells of salvation whence believers draw and live,—and who reckon it not a privilege to appear before God in Zion. The Son of God himself, in the days of his flesh, attended the worship of God in the temple, in the synagogues, and in every ordinance of divine appointment. It has been the custom of the church, from the earliest ages of Christianity, to assemble in her several congregations upon the Lord's day, and

to reckon it a special honour and privilege to do so. If the states of Greece were all in commotion every fifth year, to meet their brethren upon the plains of Olympia; how much more should the friends of Christ rejoice, to meet one another in the courts of God's house, to see together the goings of their God and King in his sanctuary! The saints, therefore, when acting in character, are conscientious and punctual in their attendance upon all the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed in his word. His authority delightfully constrains them, his loving-kindness is before their eyes, and his favour manifested in the gospel is better to them than life. When he says to them, "Seek ye my face," their hearts re-echo at his command, "Thy face, Lord, will we seek above all things. Our souls pant after God, as the heart panteth after the water-brooks." They therefore, with as many of their children, their servants, their friends and visitors, as can conveniently attend, are early, or at least timely, in the house of God.—"In early times in London, and in the country, householders walked to the church before their families: But now these very fa-

milies which are kept together by business on the week-days, are on the Sabbath-days dispersed, like sheep that have no shepherd, whither humour or whither pleasure calls. The master too often beholds this with indifference, if not with approbation. And this is one cause, as well as fatal consequence, of that astonishing licentiousness of manners, which hath in these present days loosened, and almost destroyed, every relative band of duty and obedience."

As it is a part of the religion of good men, not to disturb others when worshipping God, so they reckon punctuality in the outward decencies of public worship to be not only commendable in itself, but encouraging to fellow-worshippers, and to the ministers of religion. How comely is it to see a whole assembly waiting, like Cornelius and his friends for Peter, till their minister enter the pulpit, and all, but those whom necessity detains, prepared to join with him in praise and prayer! Coming into a church when some of the most delightful parts of worship are over, and habitually doing so, argues little sense, and small concern for the interests of religion. Ministers ought not to be left to commence public worship with but a

small part of their congregations present. People in the present state of society generally know the time when worship begins, and should therefore be conscientious in keeping it.—A grave, serious deportment during all the parts of divine worship, is highly becoming Christians ; and levity is altogether unsuitable at such times. During worship, it is very improper to look around at other people. Though this be a practice much too common, it deserves reprehension ; because it betrays an indifference to the gospel preached, and it hinders the edification of others.—It is exceedingly painful to ministers and lively Christians, when they behold the house of God converted into a dormitory, or place of sleep. This is a custom highly indecent and sinful. If the word of God be enlightening our minds, nourishing our souls, and impelling our consciences, it is hardly possible to suppose that it will not engage our attention ! This is the infirmity of some good men, but they should pray, watch, and strive against it.—It may be mentioned here, in one word, that parents should not permit their children to mingle promiscuously with the audience, but should keep them in the same seats with themselves, that

the children may learn decorum and reverence in divine worship from the example of their parents. As the religion of Jesus sets all men on a level before God, it is proper that servants should also sit near their masters in the house of God, and thereby be prevented from being absent, or from behaving improperly when present.

The reading of good books at home on the mornings and evenings of the Lord's day, or where public ordinances are inaccessible, is a duty ; but it ceases to be such, when the word preached is within our reach. In ordinary cases, the one duty ought not to supersede or interfere with the other. The gospel preached is the great means of conversion and of spiritual life ; the glorious chariot in which the Spirit of all grace rides ; the sword girt upon the thigh of our Redeemer ; the channel in which the waters of the sanctuary glide into the church and the heart. The reading of sermons, or even the Scriptures, at home, as a divine of the seventeenth century says, is like *milk cold in a vessel*, but hearing the word preached, is like *drawing milk warm from the breast* ! It is one thing when the word comes as the word of

man, adorned with the wisdom of words, and recommended by the powers of eloquence ; and quite another, when it comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, and worketh effectually in them who believe, 1 Thess. i. 5. ii. 13. The preaching of the gospel is an ordinance of divine appointment, of standing obligation, and of universal benefit. But for this blessing, the nations who enjoy this glorious light had yet remained in darkness. To this very day God hath furnished his church with pastors after his own heart, who have fed the people with knowledge and understanding, and successive generations have been trained up for glory. The preaching of the gospel in its purity and simplicity, constitutes one important duty of ministers on the Sabbath ; and this duty involves in it a reciprocal obligation on the part of the people. They must receive the word at the hands of teachers. To this there is an awful reluctance in many, and in others a dreadful indifference even under the preaching of the gospel. But it is a consideration of the most alarming nature, that those who *will not hear*, and that those also *who will*

*not obey* when they do hear, are alike inevitably exposed to final perdition. It is not sufficient, therefore, that men pay a decent attention to the preaching of the word, but they should hear that their souls may live. When faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, the attention is so eager that it cannot be diverted. Hearing for eternity, hearing the truths of God, hearing as men who have their eternal all identified with the gospel preached, is the true way of hearing. The heart is alive, the ear is fixed, the conscience is over-awed, and God is in the word of a truth. Men should not only take heed *how* they hear, but *what* they hear. If they cannot find spiritual food for their souls in one church, let them go where they can find it. If the waters of the sanctuary are defiled, and the pastures of Zion trodden down, let them go and seek "richer pasture and a purer air." They cannot be satisfied with merely moral declamation; for a system of ethics is not a body of divinity, nor is a string of dry moral precepts, the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ. The moral preacher expatiates on the beauty, importance, and advantage of virtue; but the Christian

pastor tells men roundly and plainly, that they are universally depraved and helpless; he points them to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and acceptance; he recommends the grace of the Saviour, as the alone cause of sanctification of heart and life. He shews that true religion alone effectually serves the cause of morality; for though a man may be externally moral and not holy, he cannot be holy and not moral. It is in fact an outrage upon the gospel, as well as a lie against God himself, to assert, that evangelical preaching leads to licentiousness. The gospel alone provides an antidote to human evils; and the gospel, by its native tendency, secures the honour of the moral law. Men should hear without prejudice, should hear with attention, receive the word with meekness in a good and honest heart, and apply it faithfully and impartially to their own circumstances. It should be accompanied with prayer, that it may become the word of their salvation; it must be deposited in the mind with care, and guarded with solicitude, that it may not be lost, but live within them, and produce fruit in their lives. They should come to it as to a living fountain of consolation, draw largely from it,

and remember, that the word they now hear has an awful influence upon their character and state; and must be heard again, and they judged by it, in the great and terrible day of the Lord.

The Sabbath is a day consecrated to God. Every moment of it is sacred, and ought to be improved to the greatest advantage. It is not practicable nor expedient, that the whole of it should be spent in the public exercises of religion. There are intervening spaces in it: but it is necessary to be cautious, lest these intervals of public worship be abused, and the effect of the foregoing duties be obliterated and lost. Those hours which intervene should not be spent in idle and unprofitable conversation. If saints are alone, they should meditate upon what they have heard, should pray to God for his blessing upon what is past, and upon what remains of the public services of the day; and if they are in company, they should, like the disciples going to Emmaus on the Sabbath, converse seriously and frequently upon the truths of religion which were delivered to them in the name of the Lord. The Scriptures and religious books may be perused. It will be

advantageous in a high degree to recall what they have heard, and to do it in all the familiarity of conversation ; they must have heard with little attention and to little purpose, who cannot retain something of what was delivered. If it is not practicable to recollect much, it is necessary, however, to preserve what has been impressed upon the mind. Men have different talents, the word may have had different effects, and the discourses of some ministers, from their plainness and familiarity, may be more easily recollected than those of others. It is not easy to be credited, that if the word of God has been quick and powerful upon the heart, it can altogether perish from the memory. It is a law of the memory, that we remember long that which we clearly comprehend, which makes a powerful impression, and in which we have a deep interest. If but a single sentiment were gathered from every sermon we hear, and if that truth were fixed in the memory, a large stock of spiritual knowledge would be acquired in the course of time. When the head is clear, the heart warm, and the memory retentive, when one is willing to supply the defects of another, and when all love Christ, how profitably might the intervals

of public worship be spent!—But as the reverse of this, how sinful and scandalous is it, for ministers and their hearers to talk about the news of the day, about every common incident, to read the newspapers and letters of business, during the intervals of worship on the Lord's day! If this be not departing from the letter and spirit of the law on this head, we have never understood the one nor the other.—They who have found God in the forenoon, and enjoyed him during the interval, will not be reluctant to see him again in the worship of the afternoon, or in the evening. They must be far advanced in wickedness, and in contempt of the Sabbath, who can prefer a good dinner, a convivial entertainment, a walk of pleasure, or a friendly visit, to the service of God in the afternoon of the Sabbath! This is a custom with many, an inveterate habit, from which they cannot be deterred by the terrors of the Lord, nor charmed by all the charms of the everlasting gospel. Ministers testify against it, some in the lower ranks of society condemn it by their practice; but still it continues, and resists every means to abolish it, until the grace of God shall draw men from their tables to the

house of him who is our Father and Friend ; then shall their pleasures be sacrificed to the salvation of their souls.

The saints having heard the word of God in public, they return to their houses in company with others, as far as is practicable, conversing with them about the things they have heard, to tell their friends what God hath done for them, (Mark v. 19.), and to rehearse the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. If they cannot repeat many of the truths which they heard, they love them in their hearts, and live under their spirit and influence. A holy life is a better recommendation of religion, than a retentive memory or an eloquent tongue. Hearing with interest or appropriation in public, makes the face to shine in the closet and family. The good which saints enjoy is diffusive ; they cannot hide it from others, nor monopolize it to themselves. When they imbibe the spirit of religion, they become relatively holy ; they bless God for the return of the Lord's day, as it promotes their own spiritual welfare, and affords them an opportunity of more immediate intercourse with their families. Then they converse with them about God,

they impart all the instruction they can to them ; they read the Scriptures and other good books to them ; they rehearse some of the doctrines they heard delivered in public, and they invoke God in prayer before them as their God and Father. These, and other things which might have been specified, are such essential branches of domestic piety, that no person of conscience or principle can neglect or carelessly perform them. Children rise in importance to good men, in proportion as they live near God themselves, and as they know the worth of precious souls. It is truly a gratifying spectacle, to see parents in the midst of their children, of various dispositions, features, and ages, attempting to accommodate themselves to the size of their understandings, by familiar instructions, gaining their hearts to the love of religion, and putting words into their mouths, which they are to address to that God who hath said, "I love those that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me!" Of how much pleasure are they deprived who trifle with the Lord's day, and who sport with the eternal interests of their children ! Their servants also have precious souls, and therefore

good men earnestly endeavour to make them acquainted with that Saviour, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. How pleasant is it to consider, that our children are those young captains, (as Melancthon said to Luther, when he heard the boys of Wurtemberg repeat the Orthodox Catechism), who are to fight the battles of the Lord when we are dead ; that all that is important to the church shall soon be surrendered into their hands ; that they shall, in consequence of our example, be sanctifying the Sabbath when we are asleep in the dust of the earth ; and that our servants, relatives, and visitors, shall have reason to bless God through eternity, for having come under our roof!—What time is so suitable for the most of Christians, to attend to these important concerns, as the evening of the Lord's day ? At that time they are generally sequestered from the world ; the impressions of divine things are *then* most likely to be strongest ; and good men, whose hearts have been warmed with the love of Christ through the day, wish *then* to diffuse a similar spirit among all within the sphere of their influence. How much good might be done, by the divine blessing, in a few hours,

if heads of families and parents were diligent, conscientious, and faithful! Thus their houses should be Bethels, and nurseries for the church and society, and the youth would escape the pollution that is in the world through lust. Then society should be ameliorated, iniquity should be ashamed, and stop its mouth. Then men might dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.—Men of talents and piety might also spend an hour or two in visiting the sick, in instructing their ignorant neighbours, comforting the dejected, in private families, or Sabbath Schools, and then return to their families, commending them to God by prayer. In this manner they enjoy a divine rest, in never being idle. The transition from one duty to another, from the church to the family, and from the family to the closet, would be easy and pleasant, because the whole is a labour of love. In the close of the Lord's day, all saints should recollect, that their Sabbaths shall soon terminate, and ordinances disappear. Life is precarious, and time is uncertain. Let every Sabbath be concluded, in the family and in the closet, with the solemn reflection, that it may possibly be the last; that though, that

event may be postponed, it must shortly come. Influenced by these considerations, let every Sabbath be spent in preparation for that Sabbath which is to be enjoyed in the immediate presence of God. Thus the word of God affords those instructions to us, which are calculated

“ To light our way to ceaseless joys,  
Where Sabbaths never end.”

We shall conclude this part of our Essay with an extract from the late and justly famous Mr Cecil :

“ It belongs to our very relation to God, to set apart a portion of our time for his service ; but as it might have been difficult for conscience to determine what that portion should be, God himself hath prescribed it ; and the ground of the observance remains the same, whether the remembrance of God’s resting from his work, or any other reason, be assigned as the more immediate cause. The Jewish Sabbath was partly of political institution, and partly of moral obligation. So far as it was a political appointment, designed to preserve the Jews distinct from other nations, it is abrogated ; so far as it was of moral obligation, it remains in force.

Our Lord evidently designed to relax the strictness of the observance. Christianity is not a hedge placed round a peculiar people. A slave might enter into the spirit of Christianity, though obliged to work as a slave on the Sabbath; he might be in the spirit on the Lord's day, though in the mines of Patmos. Difficulties often occur in respect to the observance of the Sabbath. I tell conscientious persons, 'If you have the spirit of Christianity, and are in an employment contrary to Christianity, you will labour to escape from it, and God will open your way.' If such a man's heart be right, he will not throw himself out of his employment the first day he suspects himself to be wrong, but will pray and wait till his way shall be opened before him. Christ came, not to abolish the Sabbath, but to enforce it, as he did the rest of the law. Its observance was nowhere positively enjoined by him, because Christianity was to be practicable, and was to go into all nations; and it goes thither stripped of its precise and various circumstances. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," seems to be the soul of the Christian Sabbath. In this view of the day, a thousand frivolous questions concerning its

observance would be answered. ‘What can I do?’ says one. ‘Do what true servants of Christ will do; bend not to what is wrong; be in the spirit, God will help you.’ In short, we are going to spend a Sabbath in eternity. The Christian will acquire as much of the Sabbath-spirit as he can. And in proportion to a man’s real piety, in every age of the church, he will be found to have been a diligent observer of the Sabbath-day.

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#### SOME SINS FORBIDDEN IN THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“THE fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, and works, about worldly employments and recreations.”

This is also a very happy and comprehensive description. If we examine ourselves and our country by it, or by the scriptures from which

it is drawn, and if we extend our observations to other nations in Christendom, we shall have abundant cause of humiliation before God, and shall find the evil to be very alarming. It is beyond measure astonishing, to see that law which is so clearly defined, so beneficent in its tendency, as promoting the temporal and spiritual advantage of nations and individuals, so wantonly and contemptuously violated! Many persons in a Christian country would make no distinction in the days of the week, but in the very name, were it not from conformity to a laudable custom, or in submission to the laws of the land, or from fear of singularity. The institution of the Sabbath, as from the highest authority, seems to have no influence whatever upon their thoughts, words, or actions. Such persons would coincide with the appointment as calculated to polish and civilize society, or as tending to clear away the rust of the whole week, (see the Spectator, No. 112.), or as a holiday on which they might feast with their friends; but have no relish for it as a holy rest, or as abridging their usual pleasures. If men had no immortal souls, if there were no future state of retribution, or if the in-

terests of the soul required no time to arrange, this conduct might be vindicated ; but if these things be true, their behaviour is stamped with daring impiety, who profane the Lord's day. In the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and in the other periods of the Jewish history, the Sabbath was greatly profaned by men who pursued their ordinary occupations, and who found their usual pleasures upon it ; and the Jews are exhorted to bear no burden upon that day, Jer. xvii. 21. As the Sabbath was a sign between God and his church, and between the church and the heathen, it ceased to be such, its very nature was destroyed, if ordinary work was performed upon it ; and it always happened, and it shall always happen, other circumstances being equal, that in proportion as the Jews declined in religion, or were conformed to the idolatrous nations around them, the holy Sabbath was neglected and profaned. If the adversaries, as before hinted, mocked at their Sabbaths, they would surely encourage their profanation ; and is not the same spirit of insult apparent at this very day ? While the society for suppressing of vice are most laudably employed in guarding the honour of the Lord's day, there

are reviewers and pamphleteers, who turn their zeal into ridicule, and lampoon their exertions. So far are some men advanced in irreligion and profaneness in a Christian country !

The sins of omission of which men are guilty, are reckoned altogether trivial, and almost not worthy of a thought. If a crime be not flagitious, if it excite no horror in the world, or do not expose to punishment or reproach, then it is generally committed without remorse. Many persons seem to tremble at sins which are odious in the sight of men, while they live at ease during the omission of duties which they owe to God and man ; they forget, that in the scriptures of truth a man is held equally criminal who is idle or slothful, as he who is active in the commission of sin ; that in the procedure of the Last day, sins of omission alone are rehearsed in order to be condemned, and that he who does nothing for God or his church, shall soon be employed by one whose work is not very honourable. An idle servant will soon become a wicked one ; a barren tree shall be cut down, as well as one which bears noxious fruit. From these hints we have reason to fear that many duties are omitted on the

Lord's day which ought to be performed. It is to too many, literally, a day of idleness; they consume it in doing nothing, and observe it only as the cattle do it, *in a mere cessation from labour*. A great part of it is wasted in sleep, or in loitering in their houses, or in strolling in the fields. Persons of this character generally neglect the public ordinances of religion, and by this neglect do an essential injury to their own souls, and exhibit a most pernicious example to their families. Houses of this class are commonly nurseries of vice, and from them spring those youths who disturb society so long, that at length they become victims to its vengeance. Many kings and righteous men desired to see those days of the Son of Man which these persons see, and do not improve them. There is somewhat peculiarly wicked in that neglect of public worship which so much prevails, even in our own highly-favoured country. We are not certain if such conduct can be matched in any nation under heaven. The followers of Mahommed hasten to their mosques, and in large cities five times a-day; the Jews greatly esteem their synagogues; the heathen count the days till the return of their festivals;

and yet Christian churches are deserted, or thinly attended in many places upon the Lord's day. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the gates of Ashkelon." How anxious are many persons to fill their places, in every society but in the meeting of the saints! to meet in every place but in the house of our God! The great and the noble of our land, who are in general an honour to it, and a blessing by their public spirit and charities, would greatly endear themselves to good men, as well as produce an excellent effect upon their inferiors by their example, if they were regular and punctual in their attendance upon the public ordinances of religion. There is no reason which they can give, why they should not attend, or why they should not wait the entire service. The gospel is equally addressed to them with the poor. Providential distinctions do not relieve men from their dependance on God, but should increase it. They need every thing from God as a benefactor or as a Father, equally with the poor. They have sinned, they deserve the wrath of God, they need salvation by Christ, in all respects as the poor do; they hope to meet the poor in the heavenly world, when these differences in their lot shall disappear; why then do they not de-

light to join with them now in the worship of God? That it is the duty of all ranks to honour the Sabbath, and to attend the public ordinances of God, will be strikingly illustrated by the following extracts from Bishop Horsley.—“ By keeping a Sabbath,” says he, “ we acknowledge a God, and declare that we are not atheists. By keeping one day in seven, we declare that we are not idolaters; and by observing the first day of the week, we protest against Judaism. As the reason of the institution rests on such common benefits as the creation of the world and man’s redemption, it is evident, that all descriptions of men stand obliged to the duties of the day. No elevation of rank may exempt, no meanness of condition may exclude, no inexperience of youth disqualifies for the task; no decrepitude of age is unequal to the toil; no tenderness of sex can suffer from the fatigue. Since the proper business of the day thus engages every rank, every sex, and every age, it is evident that it requires a suspension of the ordinary business of the world; for none can be at leisure for secular enjoyments, when all are occupied as they ought to be, in devotion.”—*Horsley’s Sermons.*

A spiritual mind savours the things of the Spirit, but a carnal mind the things of the flesh. Carnal thoughts, or rather thoughts about carnal things, are lawful and proper on other days, but are sinful and injurious upon the Lord's day. The best of men cannot prevent the intrusion or the operation of vain thoughts; for it is a part of their spiritual warfare, to resist and overcome them; but they ought not to indulge or to excite them. They should trace them to their origin in the alienation of the mind from God; should resist their earliest motions, and cry out with the Psalmist, "We hate vain thoughts;" "for lust, when it conceiveth, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The eggs of the cockatrice in due time become fiery flying serpents. If persons allow their thoughts to roam at large, and to be with the fool's eyes at the ends of the earth on the Sabbath, without being grieved at their extravagance, or endeavouring to impose a check upon them, it is a melancholy symptom that their hearts are not right with God, nor sound in his statutes. If men drank deeply into the

love of the Saviour on the Lord's day, it would powerfully, yet delightfully, elevate the heart to things above, and bring them into a difficulty mentioned by the excellent Leighton, "when it takes some time and great force to bring the mind to the level of common things!" It must therefore be a sin of omission, in relation to the duty before us, to take no heed to our hearts upon the Sabbath-day. If we suppose that any frame of mind is acceptable to God, we are far removed from just conceptions of his holy nature and law. If we apprehend that it is equally indifferent to him, whether our services are polluted by the filth of worldly and sinful thoughts, or sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, and performed in the true spirit of religion, we have the very first principles of saving knowledge yet to learn.—There is also reason to fear, that family-worship is sadly neglected on the Sabbath. The scriptures are a sealed book, and there is an indifference to the interests of the soul apparent. The neglect of domestic piety is peculiarly inexcusable, especially among the lower classes in the community; because they generally have the Sabbath as their own, and should improve it as a

golden opportunity for increasing their own religious knowledge, and for instructing their families. If persons would pause for a single moment, and consider their relation to God, their obligations to the Redeemer, their own promises at the baptism of their children, and the responsibility growing out of their connection with their families; they would not, nay could not, neglect the worship of God on that holy day. It is delightful, in no common degree, to hear the praises of God sung in great cities, in villages, or in separate houses, on the mornings or evenings of the Lord's day.—See this beautifully illustrated in a poem called the Sabbath.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” They cannot long maintain a spiritual conversation on any day, at least consistently do it, who do not keep their hearts with all diligence. Our speech should at all times be seasoned with salt for the use of edifying; but on the Lord's day especially, we should be constantly solicitous that no word escape us that is idle or sinful. Cicero, the celebrated orator, was wont to declare, that he could not endure to hear philosophers converse about com-

mon things, as about ploughs and cattle, (*de aratro et bove,*) but about the sublime truths of philosophy. If this great man abhorred trifling conversation among wise men, how devoid of dignity and decorum may Christians pronounce their conduct to be, who talk about ordinary things on the Lord's day! If an estimate be formed of our character as a people professing Christianity, from the conversation of the *many* on this day, it will be difficult to discover, that we possess the spirit of our religion at all, or regard its precepts; so unlike are the speech and conduct of men to that religion which inspires the surest hopes, and teaches the sublimest virtue. To give an unbounded licence to our tongues on the Sabbath, is a sure indication of insincerity of heart before God, and classes us with the enemies of true and undefiled religion. If ministers and parents, and men of authority and rank, be guilty of this sin, they become doubly criminal; for thus they not only dishonour their stations, but spread the infection through the whole sphere of their connections, and harden many in their crimes. In ministers especially, this

becomes a crime of singular enormity, as it offends and grieves all good men who witness or hear of it, and renders them contemptible in the eyes of men, who laugh to scorn those men who enjoin one thing from the pulpit, and who meet the world more than half way in their lives. The mischief that such persons do to the interests of the gospel by such conduct, is incalculably great. Who shall honour the Sabbath, if the ministers of religion profane it? It is alarming to serious minds, to hear the unguarded language of professed Christians on the Lord's day, in going to and returning from the church, during the intervals of worship, and even on solemn occasions; and there is reason to believe, that the evil extends to their families. They know little of the preciousness of Christ, or of the fulness of scripture, who dishonour their lips by such conversation. "O! my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." In some places there are customs which tend to increase the evil, such as proclamations of sales of timber, grass, or corn, and the placarding of notices on the gates and doors of churches. Hearing and reading

these prevent the influence of the truths delivered, beget an association of carnal ideas on the Lord's day, and occasion worldly talk. Though these customs be authorised by the law of the land, they cannot be vindicated upon any principle of reason or scripture. If their utility be pleaded as an argument in their favour, or that they have continued from time immemorial; it may be answered, that there are other ways of announcing the sales; that our private interest ought never to interfere with the honour of God; that no length of time can sanction the commission of sin; and that no prescription can bind, in opposition to divine authority. Magistrates and ministers, by a prudent exercise of their power, might speedily abolish them, and doing so would be creditable to themselves, and honouring the Lord of the Sabbath.—In this place it may not be improper to remark, that mutual converse about the truths of religion on the Lord's day, seems to be every year we live more rare and uncommon. This defect may be traced to a want of love to the truth, to a decay of love to God and to the brethren, and to a haughty selfish spirit. Such silence and contempt must be dishonour-

ing to God, disheartening to ministers, and ultimately pernicious to the church. If the conversation take a religious turn, it too commonly degenerates into common-place remarks about the gifts of the speaker, the place of worship, the number of worshippers, or some other topic altogether void of interest. These things may be adverted to, as an introduction to higher matters ; but not as in themselves suitable to the sanctity of the day. It frequently happens in the present state of things, that if a pious individual drop a hint about the love of Christ, or the power of his grace on the heart, this becomes a signal for separation or silence. Or if the company do not separate, the religious hint is imputed to an affectation of singularity, to ostentation, or to enthusiasm. Alas for the times into which we have fallen, when to speak of our Saviour is a burden, when Christian experience is branded with the name of hypocrisy, and when regeneration and communion with God are said *to be things not found in the present circumstances of Christianity!* In the best times of the church, and in the days of our forefathers, such carnal conversation on the Lord's day was not known, or if known, was

not to be endured. Oh! when will God revive us again, and renew our days as of old?

The Jews were allowed by their law to go a Sabbath-day's journey, which perhaps was the ordinary distance from the synagogue where they worshipped; and this behoved to be to some of them greater, and to others less; and when performing works of necessity and mercy, they might exceed these limits: but it does not appear from their history, that ever they were allowed to commence or to prosecute a journey of business or of pleasure on the Sabbath. One should think that it would not be difficult to prove, that the law of God, in the fourth precept, most pointedly prohibits every kind of abuse just to be mentioned.—Strolling in the fields, under whatever pretence, and frequenting public walks on the Lord's day, must be reckoned obvious breaches of the law. In a sequestered place, or sometimes with a religious friend, a walk may be lawful, and a work of necessity; but if it tend to unfit us for the duties of religion, by withdrawing the mind from the concerns of eternity, if it interfere with other important services, if it shall harden the wicked in their crimes, and if it make us postpone or

trifle with the secret, or private, or public worship of God, it should by all means be avoided. The scenes of nature are enchanting, the health of the body is greatly to be prized ; but the work of our salvation, and the duties we owe to God and our families, ought to predominate over these, and every other thing. It is exceedingly offensive to God and good men, to see persons who bear the sacred character of Christians, foremost on the walk on the Lord's day, tossing their heads with a fulsome levity, with a smile of contempt at God and his holy day diffused over their countenances, and an endeavour strenuously made to convince their associates that they were born only to trifle or to be amused ! The streets of our great cities, with every avenue around, present mortifying spectacles of the arrogance and depravity of man on the day of our God.—Travelling on the Sabbath, both for business and pleasure, or upon improper visits, is now become so common and shameless, that it ceases to excite wonder or abhorrence. The noise of chariots, the prancing of horses, the bustle of pedestrians, are every where witnessed. Many of the rich, the fashionable, the gay, with men also

of low degree, sally forth from our cities and towns on the morning of the Lord's day, as if the plague were raging in these places, or as if they fled from the devastation of an earthquake ! The upper ranks of society are in this respect highly culpable ; and their conduct in travelling in a kind of cavalcade upon Sabbath without any plea of necessity, reflects infinite disgrace upon their rank and character. If they be magistrates, who are entrusted with the execution of the law, they weaken its sanctions by their example : For they should be " a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them who do well." Their laws and proclamations in favour of the observance of the Sabbath, cannot be efficient, nay, may be pronounced ridiculous, if they themselves are breakers of the divine law, and of their own. If they are noblemen and gentlemen, though not in any office, their example may be supposed to produce much good or much evil. If their servants, dependants, and servile imitators, observe that they pay no regard to the Sabbath, they unhappily imbibe the same spirit, and tread the same path. An ancient philosopher was used to say, " that he feared to do an unworthy thing because of the

presence of his servant." And another, when solicited to commit a crime, indignantly replied, "*Turpe, quid acturus, te sine teste, time ;*" that is, Reverence thyself, and do no base thing, though no witness be present. These are elevated sentiments, and may create a blush in the faces of many who enjoy the light and liberty of the gospel ! As the above hints about travelling on Sabbath, may be by some deemed precise and puritanical, we beg leave to furnish them with an excellent extract from Bishop Horsley, who never was suspected of enthusiasm.

" It appears," says he, " from what has been said, that the practice which has become common in this country, of performing long journeys on the Sabbath-day, without any urgent necessity, is one of the highest breaches of this sacred institution. It breaks in upon the principal business of the day, laying some under a necessity, and furnishing others with a pretence, for withdrawing themselves from the public assemblies ; and it defeats the ordinance of its subordinate ends, depriving servants and cattle of that temporary exemption from fatigue, which it was intended both should enjoy. This, like many other evils, hath arisen from

small beginnings, and by an unperceived, because a natural and a gradual growth, hath attained at last an alarming height. Persons of the higher ranks, whether from a certain vanity of appearing great, by assuming a privilege of doing what was generally forbidden, or for the convenience of travelling when the roads are most empty, began, within our own memory, to make their journeys on Sabbath. In a commercial country, the great fortunes acquired by trade, have a tendency to level all distinctions, but what arises from affluence. Wealth supplies the place of nobility; birth retains only the privilege of setting the first example. The city presently catches the manners of the court, and the vices of the highest peer are faithfully copied in the life of the opulent merchant, and the thriving tradesman."—*Horsley's Sermons.*

There are many other sins forbidden in the Fourth Commandment, to which we can only advert in a very brief sketch, and which only to name is to condemn. We indeed despair of being able to effect a reformation by any thing we can say; but we hereby lift our feeble testimony against every abuse of the holy

Sabbath, and against every person, whatever be his rank, who is guilty of it.—Every kind of intemperance should be avoided on the Lord's day, with a religious solicitude. It is the duty of all men to feed and refresh the body with moderation on that day, in order to strengthen it for the services of Christ, and for the duties of mercy to others. In this the strictness of the Jewish Sabbath is relaxed, and the comforts of life to be received, while they do not militate our own spiritual interests, or hinder others from attending the means of grace. It is a pleasant enjoyment to feast moderately on the Lord's day, while the comforts of time are converted into emblems of the bread and the water of life; while our society bears a distinct similitude to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and while we are prevented, by veneration for God, from making the most distant approach to excess in eating or drinking. The Sabbath is to many a day of feasting: Though they have almost starved through the week, they feed on Sabbath with all the ingenuity of epicures, and in a manner, too, totally inconsistent with that abstinence required by the re-

ligion of Jesus. In those also who wait on God in the ordinances of grace, there may be occasionally an approach to intemperance which is not altogether compatible with sobriety of mind, or with the enjoyment of God as a Spirit. How can the mind be prepared for meditation, self-examination, and communion with God, how can the spirit be eager in attention to the word preached, or sprightly and active in the duties of religion, if the body be glutted or overpowered with the delicacies of sense? A plain diet with simple beverage, is most becoming Christians, and the spirit of the divine law. It may be asserted with confidence, that none who fear God can lounge in an inn, or be present at convivial entertainments, far less approach a nightly revel, on the time consecrated to religion. The riot and tumultuous conversation, which in country places accompany baptisms on the Lord's day, as well as on account of those who have lately been married, are shameful and offensive.

In a commercial country, like our own, the speedy circulation of intelligence by posts and mail-coaches, is necessary to give energy and dispatch to trade. The anxiety so natural to

merchants who have their all at stake, should be relieved by every lawful means in the power of the public. But as, in a Christian country, where the Sabbath is at least nominally honoured, there is a suspension of all active employments in relation to mercantile concerns, it is surely fitting that every thing which tends to confound the Sabbath with the other days of the week should be avoided. If the divine law allow men to dictate or peruse letters on business ; if it permit them to inquire at the post-office for letters, which themselves know relate to secular affairs ; if it authorise Christians to assemble in coffee-rooms for the express purpose of reading newspapers, and conversing about politics and trade ; if all these things be consistent with the duties they owe to God and their souls ; *then* they are bound to produce a dispensation from the great Author of the Sabbath : Till that be done, we must pronounce such conduct to be a flagrant breach of the law of God.—Printing, circulating, and reading newspapers on the Lord's day, are such outrages upon the feelings of good men, and so obviously contrary to the laws of God and our country, that the publishers of them dare not

send them to the post-office, nor openly disperse them on that holy day. They indeed assiduously circulate them by stealth, vend them in corners, and put them into the mail-coaches at some distance from the great mart of intelligence. We have not been able to procure exact information as to the time when the reading of newspapers in coffee-rooms on the Lord's day commenced ; but we may assert, that it was a fatal era to our religion and morals whenever it did begin. This practice of reading the papers by ourselves, or in the society of others, on the Sabbath, is not only a literal breach of the law on that head, but it removes the mind as far as possible from the spirit of our religion ; it tends to withdraw the attention from the blessed Bible, which records scenes infinitely more interesting to immortal beings than any which a newspaper can present ; it tends also most powerfully to prevent the efficacy of the gospel, which they may hear in their respective churches, and it gives a secularity to the heart, which renders the other duties of the Sabbath a task or an inconvenience. If our feeble voice can be heard amidst the

noise of wordly concerns ; if this small tract shall ever come into the hands of any of those who are chargeable with this crime ; we most earnestly beseech them to abandon the practice. It may be, that when they take a retrospect of their conduct from the borders of the grave, they may be thankful that a friend admonished them to forsake the foolish, and live. If those things are to be realized at some future time, why should they not at present possess a dominant influence over our hearts and conduct? For

“ In this one point is all true wisdom cast,  
To think that *early* we must think *at last*.”

We beg leave again to confirm our sentiments by an extract from an eminent writer :—

Speaking of the evil of Sunday newspapers, he says, “ Of all the evils against which we should provide, and to which the most conscientious and resolute discouragements should be given, I know not any which will demand a greater portion of our zealous opposition than the baneful but increasing enormity of Sunday newspapers. Whether the immorality of ancient or of modern times be greatest, I presume not to decide ; but of this I am convinced, that

no period of our Religious History, since the Reformation, can shew an instrument so palpably insulting to the commandment of God, so diametrically hostile to the laws of the land, and so injurious to the interests of piety, as the Sunday newspaper. This is an invention, the whole praise of which is due to this age of innovation ! and I feel a conviction, which it is my duty to avow, that it will produce, if not speedily and effectually checked, effects more mischievous to the great cause of religion and godliness, than many of those changes which we have already beheld with such astonishment and regret. That the careless and the corrupt, the deist and the libertine, should seek to repose, in the lassitude and the irksomeness of their Sunday-hours, upon this expedient, so suited to the vacuity of their minds, or the depravity of their hearts, is no matter of astonishment ; that those who regret the interruption of their business, or their pleasures, should rejoice in this substitute, which amuses the merchant with a table of markets, the politician with a cabal, the licentious with intrigue, the splenetic with scandal, and all with some

matter adapted to their different tastes, is little surprising ; but that among the abettors of such a traffic, should be found men of reputed virtue and discretion, whose minds have been alarmed at the progress of infidelity, and who have seen with sorrow the strides of irreligion and profaneness, is a mystery which can only be accounted for upon the supposition of their not having sufficiently attended to the nature of the fact, nor conjectured the mighty mischiefs which it portends to society. Persons of this description would do well to consider, what numbers of their fellow-creatures are involved (some from fear of offence, others from love of gain) in this enterprise of unlawful and un-sanctified commerce ; how many are confined to the labours of the press ; how many employed in the circulation, and how many decoyed in the purchase, of this baneful commodity ! Many, very many, of the venders and readers, it is probable, were once found upon the Sabbath in the sanctuary of God, attended to the concerns of their souls, and regarded the breach of this day with Christian abhorrence. To many of the first, the emolument arising from the traffic, has appeared a sufficient counter-

balance against all they might lose by sacrificing a good conscience, and flying in the face of a positive law. To many of the last, the perusal of this paper now stands in the stead of a pious discourse, or a portion of God's word; and finding some food for the levity of their minds, and the looseness of their affections, in this modern contrivance, they seem to want leisure, because they want inclination, to seek some employment of a more profitable nature. Those, therefore, who have fallen into this snare, are conjured to consider how many engines are kept at work, in order to afford them this gratification; and in how complicate a scheme of mischief and transgression they are concerned. Ye friends of order, virtue, and social happiness! be admonished of your delusion and your danger. Regard not with indifference such an artful innovation upon what you have learned to revere, and what you have shewn yourselves so forward to maintain. In pledging yourselves for the public welfare, in bringing your property into the treasury, and your engagements before your fellow-citizens, you have done well. Give to God and religion this other sacrifice, and offer your Sun-

day newspapers upon the altar of your country."—*Owen's Christian Monitor*.

It is a fact known to every serious observer of the state of our country, without our specifying the particulars, that many occupations are followed on Sabbath, which ought not to be endured by a religious public. Many of these may indeed be reckoned necessary, from the present state of society ; but if the matter be candidly investigated, it will be apparent, that many of them minister to the vanity or vices of men, rather than to their necessity or comfort. There is not any thing which tends really to the comfort of men on the Lord's day, but which might be provided before it arrive, if we except medical aid in the case of distress. 'Tis pity when men, by their negligence and want of foresight, whether they be masters or servants, trench upon the holy Sabbath. Every article of dress might be prepared for the decorum of the Sabbath, before it come ; all necessary provisions might be purchased in ordinary cases. The business of the world should be taught to make a pause, when the great Lord of the sabbath interposes his authority. It is unworthy of a christian country, to allow men to make

the Sabbath a day of merchandise, either openly or clandestinely, especially as the sales made might have been made on the day before, or may, without injury to either party, be postponed to the day following. It is painful to some persons who retain some veneration for the Lord's day, to be reduced to the disagreeable necessity of either acting contrary to their consciences, in complying with the importunity of persons who tempt them to sell on the Lord's day, or injuring their temporal interests if they refuse. There have been persons who have, by their insidious conduct, almost overcome the virtue of good men, in addressing temptations to their poverty or their avarice. There are instances on record, of persons who have seen their substance moulder away before their eyes, while they, contrary to their convictions, have courted the friendship of the world, by vending their goods on Sabbath ; whereas these very persons have found Providence to smile on their affairs when they returned to their duty, by resolutely sanctifying that holy day. The driving of cattle to markets at a distance on Sabbath, the sailing of ships from port, the travelling of posts and waggons,

are public evils and nuisances that reflect dishonour upon every christian country where they exist. There can be no reason why vessels, in ordinary cases, should sail on the Lord's day, more than a man can give for yoking his plough, or for following any other secular employment: and they who have witnessed the crowds and bustles in maritime cities on these occasions, can be prepared to judge in this case. Our brave tars seldom enjoy the means of grace, and should be permitted to enjoy, as frequently as possible, opportunities of hearing those things which belong to their eternal peace; things which, when they exert their influence on the mind, fortify in danger, and reconcile to death in every shape. In relation to the driving of cattle, it is evident, that though, on account of bad weather, and being detained at ferries so long that it becomes a work of necessity to drive them on Sabbath, that they may be in time to the market; yet as these cases seldom occur, the evil might be remedied by the care and foresight of the proprietors, or by the interference of magistrates in executing the law upon offenders. The law concerning the Sabbath, is a part of the law of

the land, and christian magistrates, who ought not to hold the sword in vain, but judge for God, ought to execute the law for the benefit of society, and the welfare of the church. Good laws should never be slacked, Hab. i. 4. for, bad as the world is, it would be infinitely worse, were not men restrained by the fear of salutary laws and the indignation of society ; and many of the evils specified might be in a great measure removed or prevented, if magistrates and ministers did their duty. “ If any man,” says a pious writer, “ hath prevented but one sin in the course of his life, he hath not lived in vain.”—It has been asserted, and there is reason to believe the assertion is founded on the fact, that many professed Christians devote a portion of every Sabbath to the arrangement of their secular concerns. These persons indeed retire from the world, but not to hold fellowship with God, or to converse with the things of eternity, but to wind up their affairs, to balance their books, and to read or answer letters to their correspondents. Dreadful abuse of the Lord’s day ! We have reason to hang our heads, and to blush deeply for the Christian name, when we hear of such contempt of our blessed Redeemer. The Spirit of God, whose delineations of human

characters are exact and true, hath in the Scriptures informed us, “ that there is no fear of God before their eyes ; that their sin, though concealed from men, will find them out as certainly as the Lord liveth, and their soul liveth ! ” Though these persons be not principals in these crimes, yet if they are accessory to them, by employing their servants or clerks in the nefarious business, while they have it in their power to prevent them, they become doubly criminal before God ; for they have not exerted their authority to recommend the sanctification of the Sabbath, but have abetted its profanation, by precept, advice or example.

We are not ignorant of the dispute among ministers and people, Whether it be a duty to lead in corns on the Lord’s day, when it happens to be favourable in the time of inclement weather ? That it is a work of necessity to remove the fruits of the ground from the ravages of fire, from the sphere of an inundation, on Sabbath, no person can deny ; but the case before us is of a description totally different : For, not to mention that the impatience discovered in the case specified, is irreconcilable with trust in Providence, we shall confront those persons who plead for its expediency,

with the direct testimony of God in his word, Exod. xxxiv. 21. "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; in *caring-time* and in *harvest* thou shalt rest." These seasons are the seasons of peculiar anxiety to agriculturists; but their anxiety is not to be removed by transgressing the Divine law; neither can they have permission from the lawgiver, in any age, to follow a servile employment on the holy Sabbath. We unequivocally deny that this is a work of necessity or of mercy. The principle assumed in the arguments of those who plead for its propriety is false, and the consequences absurd; for it goes to relax the obligation of the Sabbath, and if pursued to its legitimate issue, would teach men to regard it as a bugbear of superstition, or the offspring of political contrivance; and then, what security remains for the survival of any religious institution among us?

Visiting our distressed relations or neighbours on the Lord's day, is a work of mercy,—a work of mercy to their bodies and to their souls. When we are honoured to administer relief to either of these, by our instructions, advices, prayers, or our charity, we glorify the

God of mercy. It is an eminent part of true religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. This is the best expression of Christian sympathy, as well as an evidence that we partake of his Spirit, who is afflicted in all our afflictions ; who was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor ; was sent to heal the broken-hearted ; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised, Luke iv. 18. But when crowds of idle and irreligious people rush into the chambers of the afflicted, (especially in a carnal frame of mind, and because they have got nothing else to do,) they are frequently chargeable with a twofold impropriety to the sick or dying,—with inhumanity to their bodies, and cruelty to their souls. The sympathy of these visitors may be alive, but is surely ill directed, when their conversation is about the world, and the news of the country, and bears no reference to the comforts of the gospel, or the certainty and glory of the heavenly state, with other topics, which are truths to the living, but are inquired after as blessings by the dying. The sick cannot

remove from the sphere of their impertinence, and seem to say to persons of this class, " Miserable comforters are ye all !"

The Lord's day, which is appointed for the service and enjoyment of God, is by very many converted into a day of visiting their friends, whether near or at a distance. They reckon this day to be their own in a peculiar sense ; hence they judge that they may use all freedoms with it, being their own. Such persons are frequently informed, that the Sabbath is the day of God, appropriated for his honour and service, and that it is theirs only in use and enjoyment. Were servants to use the same freedoms with the six working-days which are devoted to their masters' work, that they do with the Lord's day, which is the property of God, their connection with their masters would soon terminate. The restraints of religion, and of the Sabbath, are blessed restraints, or blessings under the form of inhibitions ; but are an intolerable yoke to carnal men. They love to walk at liberty, but it is as a lamb in a large place, without an inclosure around the pasture, and without the protection of the shepherd. They promise themselves liberty, while

they are the slaves of sin. They love to gad from place to place, from house to house, and from company to company; an association of worldly imaginations, converse about the news of the day, or the occurrences of the past week, or, as the highest ground which carnal men can occupy, some account of the last minister who preached, are the fruits and concomitants of such unhallowed visits. At those meetings also, appointments, bargains, and projected journeys are indirectly made, which are not only unlawful before men, but which tend to bring the curse of God upon all their comforts and prospects, while they occasion sorrow and sadness to all good men. Their seats, also, in their respective churches, are left empty; their pastors are breaking the bread of life to the people, but many of their flocks are not present to receive it; they are unnecessarily at home, or at a distance, and their souls suffering hunger. How melancholy is the reflection which arises in the mind of every faithful minister who loves his people as his own soul, "That many of his flock are this day falling into the snare of the devil, by loving pleasures more than God, by dining with

a friend, travelling with a party of fine fellows; are on a water-excursion, in quest of natural curiosities, or the relics of art; are visiting their friends without necessity: and while he is talking of those things which astonish angels, they are diverting themselves in an inn, joining in the loudest laugh of fools, or sanctioning, by their presence, orgies of pleasure!" Such visits as we have alluded to are contrary to the very letter of the Divine law; good men are described, (Isa. lviii. 13.), as "not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words." If the character there described be ours, how incompatible with it is it to join in that idle, trifling, insignificant chat, which engrosses our ordinary visits? Whether it be possible to mingle with modish company on the Lord's day, and obey this law, let those judge who know the world. They who are sick of the Sabbath and its services, seek such triflers to afford them some relief from the intolerable burden. They want relaxation; they seek recreation in the company of the giddy and vain. Their hearts are ill at ease; they are empty at home, and therefore must go abroad to seek refreshment in the

company of those who are like themselves. "Business," say they, "is suspended; all are in their best clothes; and all circumstances invite to pay visits to our friends." How is the soul of a saint refreshed? By having his faith increased, his hope elevated, and his views of heaven enlarged. Is it the best part of our time? Let it then be improved to the best of purposes, and devoted to the best of Beings. Is it a common custom of this world to pay visits on the Lord's day? Then let us not be conformed to the world. This custom is the idol which we are called to renounce. In opposing this soul-destroying custom, all religious persons should, by all means, be singular; should distinguish themselves by a becoming zeal for God and his holy Sabbath; should set an example to others, and should shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. If they have visited their friends on Sabbath without a call, let them do so no more. Let the honour of God, the credit of religion, and the welfare of their own souls, counterbalance every other consideration. Henceforth, remember to keep the Sabbath holy to the Lord.

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SKETCH OF THE MANNER IN WHICH  
THE SABBATH WAS KEPT UNDER THE  
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSA-  
TIONS.

THE design of this section of our Essay is, to endeavour to bring the serious reader to the actual practice of the church, and to let him see with his own eyes, how the saints walked with God on the Sabbath, or on the Lord's day. In order to do this with effect, we must speak in the language of Scripture, or refer the reader to certain passages which he can peruse at his convenience. The word of God has an emphasis peculiarly its own, on the conscience and heart of every saint. The people of God, in obedience to the divine command, rested from all their labours, and reckoned the Sabbath, immediately after its republication from Mount Sinai, a holy rest, and truly a holy day, Exod. xx. 8. and xxxi. 14. They began the day with preparations for its solemn services. They endeavoured to wash their hands, and

purify their hearts,—to keep their feet before they entered the temple, or ascended the hill of God, Eccles. v. 1. Psal. xxiv. 3. They were reconciled to their brethren, before they presented their offerings upon the altar of God, Matth. v. 23, 24. They washed their hands in innocency, or had a clean conversation, Psal. xxvi. 6. They had a high esteem for the ordinances of God, as the scenes of their gracious enjoyments, and the places where they were to meet their brethren. They longed, they panted, their flesh and heart cried out, for the living God. His ordinances were delightful to them for his sake. Their meetings were holy convocations, the place was the house of God, and they reckoned those truly happy who dwelt there for ever, Psal. lxxxiv. 1—4. xxvi. 8. xxvii. 4. xlii. 1—3. They not only attended themselves, but they earnestly intreated others to go likewise. The pastors exhorted the people, and the people exhorted one another. The great sentiment in their hearts, and the common language of their lips, was, “Let us go up to the house of the Lord,” Jer. l. 4, 5. Mic. iv. 2. Psal. cxxii. 1. They entered the gates of the tabernacle or the

temple with praise, as honouring the God of the house, and as anticipating the discoveries he was to give them of himself. They went up to be instructed in their duty and privileges, Isa. ii. 2. Nehem. viii. 13. They worshipped at the entrance of the temple; they kneeled down before God in earnest prayer; they gave thanks, and joined together in the praises of God, Psal. xcv. 6. 2 Chron. vi. 13. Psal. xcii. a psalm for the Sabbath-day. The holy scriptures were read by the officiating priests, and an exposition was made, and the sense was given, Deut. xxxi. 11—13. xxxiii. 10. Mal. ii. 7. It was a blessing to them when their priests' lips preserved knowledge, and it was a curse upon them when they had no teaching priests, 2 Chron. xv. 2. Serious exhortations, drawn from the subjects explained, were addressed to them, Neh. viii. 3. Luke iv. 16. During the time of preaching, the people stood up, their eyes were fastened on their teachers, and their ears were attentive, Neh. viii. 5. Luke iv. 20. Neh. viii. 3. Their offerings were then presented to God, and money was cast into the treasury, Mark xii. 41. A solemn blessing was then pronounced over them in the name of

the Lord, and in the form prescribed, Num. vi. 23—27. When the congregation was dismissed, it was the duty of all, and it was the privilege of some, to meditate upon what they heard; they searched the scriptures in relation to those things which they were taught, Psal. i. 2. Acts xvii. 11.; and they hastened to their houses to instruct their children in the great things of God. This was their duty every day, and much more on the Sabbath, Deut. vi. 6, 7. This holy day recalled to their remembrance their deliverance out of Egypt, and how to shew mercy to their man-servants and maid-servants, to the strangers among them, and to their cattle, Deut. v. 14. They remembered the Lord their God, who wrought all these wonders for them, and sanctified them for himself as a peculiar people, Ezek. xx. 20. They were reminded also on this day of another rest, a spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter in heaven. On this day they were to declare their delight in the Lord, reckoning it holy to the Lord, and honourable; and so far to deny themselves, as not to think their own thoughts, speak their own words, nor do their own works, Isa. lviii. 13, 14. In one word, it was to be

spent, not as a fast-day, in mourning, but in spiritual gladness, in sending portions to others, or to them for whom nothing was prepared; and this joy was chiefly on account of their understanding the word, and enjoying the presence of God, Neh. viii. 10. *for*, on that day, the joy of the Lord was their strength.

When the day of Christ's resurrection was known by the church to be a holy day, the saints rested upon it under the New dispensation, as the Jews had done on the seventh day under the Old. We have not many particulars in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the Epistles, in relation to the Lord's day: but such as we have are sufficient for our purpose, to establish its divine authority, and the necessity of keeping it holy to the Lord. On that day the whole church came together, or met in her respective congregations. The temple was no longer a centre of worship to them, and therefore they met where they conveniently could; but their meetings were always on the Lord's day, Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, inform us, that "On the Lord's day all of us assemble in the congregation; all that are in our great cities, or

in the country, do meet together in some place." The unconverted Gentiles occasionally visited those assemblies, and again discontinued their attendance; but none professing Christianity might forsake the assembling of themselves together, without being chargeable with apostacy from the faith and profession of the truth. In those assemblies, prayers were offered to God and to Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, the God of the Jews and of Christians, the true God subsisting in three persons. We have not so frequent notices about any part of Divine worship among the primitive Christians, as about their prayers, Acts i. 14—24. iv. 23. xvi. 16. The scriptures of the Old Testament were devoutly read, accompanied with an exposition of them suited to the infancy of the Christian church,—an exposition which shewed that the great truths of the Christian religion were to be found in the shadows of the law, and predictions of the prophets. That part of the gospel history which was extant, together with the Epistles in circulation, were also read in the meetings of the faithful, Coloss. iv. 16. 1 Thess. v. 27. There was also preaching, properly so called, in their congregation: on the first day of

the week, Paul preached to the disciples at Troas, Acts xx. 7. In this important service, the apostles spent their strength, and reckoned every other duty, except prayer, comparatively unimportant, Acts v. 42. vi. 4. The apostle Paul exhorts to this duty with great vehemence of spirit, and in a thundering charge, 2 Tim. iv. 1. The word preached was then faithfully applied to all the circumstances of the church, for reprehension, exhortation, admonition, consolation. The matter was the pure gospel; the manner was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and in power; the end was the conversion of precious souls, and the edification of the church. On the Lord's day the Christians met to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus, Acts xx. 7. In their congregations, the saints sang praises to Christ as to God, even frequently, in those times of persecution, before the break of day; they then generally sung with understanding, and with great ardour of affection, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. They could not forget the poor amidst the raptures of their piety;—the true church of Christ has always had a care over the poor; hence, in all their assemblies, they

made collections for them according to their ability, Acts ii. 46. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. For this purpose were deacons appointed to superintend this business, and to apply with prudence and discretion the charities of the church. This, among many other considerations, proves, that Christianity is a religion of benevolence to the souls and bodies of men. How amiable is that religion, which, amidst the grandeur of its prospects, provides for widows, for the fatherless, for the sick, for the captives, for exiles and strangers ! On the first day of the week, as is generally supposed, the Holy Ghost descended upon the church. The offices of the church were generally then received by those who were appointed to them by Christ ; and on that day judicial sentences were pronounced against offenders. When the public services were ended, the apostles visited private houses for prayer and mutual conference, Acts xvi. 16. The private members returned to their houses, to instruct their families, read the scriptures, and to pray, Acts xvii. 11. The fathers of the church inform us, “ That the people in their times were conversant with the word of God night and day ; that those who could not read, were

fed by conference, on the mornings and evenings of the Lord's day." Chrysostom exhorted his flock at Constantinople to this effect, "That presently upon their coming home, they should take the Bible into their hands, and rehearse, with their wives and children, all that they had been taught from the word of God during the public service." These primitive teachers of Christianity warned their people against joining the company of rambles, or those who go about on Sabbath, the company of the lewd and unclean, the vain and idolatrous; and exhorted them to spend the day in hearing religious sermons, singing spiritual hymns, visiting the sick, comforting the poor and dejected, and in remembering the coming of Christ to judgment.

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THE MANNER OF SPENDING THE LORD'S  
DAY IN A PRIVATE FAMILY.

*(Extract.)*

"IN the mean while, the secret of God was upon our tabernacle, and a consciousness of his

favourable presence, added a peculiar relish to all our enjoyments. The Lord himself was our Shepherd: he made us lie down in green pastures, and led us forth by the still waters; by his bounty our wants were supplied, and under his protection we felt security and peace. He anointed our heads with the oil of gladness, and, while our cup was running over with comforts, we said in our hearts, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life. Every day was a day of tranquil satisfaction, in which we had little to wish, and much to enjoy; but the Sabbath presented us with peculiar consolations. We saluted every return of that holy day with undissembled joy, cheerfully laying aside all our usual studies and employments, except such as had a manifest tendency, either to enlarge our acquaintance with, or to advance our preparation for the kingdom of God. It was a day truly honourable in our eyes, and marked as a season of sacred delights. Its various exercises, whether public or private, produced an exhilarating effect upon our minds, and never failed to set us some paces nearer the object of our supreme desires. It was a kind of transfiguration-day,

shedding a mild glory upon every creature, and enabling us to view the concerns of time, in connection with those of eternity. Through all its happy hours we sat as on the holy mount, looking backward with gratitude, and forward with confidence, taking sweet counsel together, for the advancement of our highest interests, and scarcely considering ourselves inhabitants of this lower world. The company of even our most intimate friends, on these occasions, would have rendered our intercourse with each other more reserved, and our pleasure proportionally less lively ; but, unrestrained by the presence of witnesses, we gave an unlimited indulgence to all our affectionate and devotional feelings. We conversed together as parts of the same family ; we congratulated each other as members of the Christian church ; we rejoiced over one another as heirs of the same most glorious promises. Some interesting passage of scripture, or some choice piece of divinity, generally furnished the matter of our discourse ; and while we endeavoured to obtain a clear and comprehensive view of the subject under consideration, a divine light would some-

times break in upon us, satisfying our doubts, exalting our conceptions, and cheering our hearts. We have then, with one consent, laid aside our book, that we might uninterruptedly admire the beauties, and enjoy the sweets, of the prospect opening before us. And still, as the scene has become more luminous, we have proceeded from wonder to wonder, with a degree of delight far surpassing that which experimental philosophers ever felt, on discovering some grand secret in the operations of nature. Through these flowery paths we have continued to allure each other onward, (first one of us taking the lead and then another,) refreshing our spirits and feeding our immortal hopes, amid a thousand glorious appearances, till the New Jerusalem itself has burst upon our eyes, even that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ; whose inhabitants are the spirits of just men made perfect, and from whose holy walls we heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. Here we have stayed our happy progress, and while standing to solace ourselves with a view of the goodly object before us, the scene of our future enjoyments, and the place of our future destination,

we have solemnly renewed our vows, resolving, for the joy that was set before us, to endure the cross, despising the shame, in humble imitation of our adorable Master. In such a frame of mind, we found it possible to speak of probable sufferings, and painful separations, with the utmost composure. And with such a termination of our course in sight, we could cheerfully leave all the casualties of that course to the Divine disposal; fully persuaded, that, whatever evil might befall us by the way, an abundant compensation would be made for all, on our arrival at home.—Many a joyful Sabbath have we thus spent together, especially during the latter years of our Joshua's continuance with us.\* And now, when his mother and I are disposed, on the return of these sacred seasons, to look with regret towards his vacant place, we endeavour to animate each other with the hope of shortly following our dearest son to the celebration of that eternal Sabbath above, of which we have enjoyed so many sweet antici-

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\* Referring to their only son, a young man of great learning and piety, who had died a short time before.

pations here below.”——*Gilpin's Monument of Parental Affection.*

“ Whilst he thus walked with God in private, in his family and closet, he was solicitous, above every thing, to sanctify the Sabbath to the Lord. Though he was of elevated rank, and frequently attended the court, he did not allow these things to lessen his reverence for Divine institutions. His situation often occasioned his being far from the places where the gospel was preached ; but he overcame these difficulties, by travelling every Lord's day several miles to enjoy it. Every Saturday night he called himself to account how he had spent the preceding week, humbled himself for sin, and exercised those graces which make the return of the Sabbath a blessing to a devout mind. He rose early out of bed on the morning of the Lord's day, and having finished the business of the closet, repeated to his servant those sermons which they had heard the Sabbath before. Though he had a domestic chaplain, he constantly attended the public assemblies twice every day. He was a most attentive hearer of the word ; as well knowing that he was in the presence of God, who was no re-

specter of persons; that he heard not the word of man, but of God, and that he willingly laid his honour at Christ's feet. Immediately after sermon, he retired from the company of his best friends, for a half hour, to meditate on what he had heard, and to apply the truth to his own soul. Two of his servants generally wrote the sermons in church; these were repeated or read to the whole family on the evening of the Sabbath. Such was the interest his Lordship took in the truths he heard in public, and such was the strength of his memory, that he could repeat more than they had written. These truths were then inserted in a book, and the whole impressed upon their mind by a devout prayer. To avoid ostentation, or the appearance of it, in his domestic duties, he never admitted to repetition of sermons or prayers with his family but one friend, who could not betray him, nor expose his piety 'to ridicule.'—*Life of Lord Harrington, who died 1613, aged 22,—modernized from the Old Life.*

It may not perhaps be improper to insert here the following testimony in honour of the Sabbath, from the pen of the celebrated Cow-

per. "With respect," says he, in a letter to the Rev. Mr Unwin, "to the advice you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly instructed in the manner of keeping the Sabbath, I just subjoin a few hints which have occurred to me upon the occasion ; not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The Sabbath, then, I think, may be considered, *first*, as a commandment, no less binding upon modern Christians than upon ancient Jews ; because the spiritual people amongst them did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations on that day, but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls ; which ever was, and ever will be, a duty incumbent upon all who ever heard of a Sabbath, and is of perpetual obligation both upon Jews and Christians : (the commandment therefore enjoins it ; the prophets have also enforced it ; and, in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with a providential and judicial severity, that may make bystanders tremble) : *secondly*, As a privilege

which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you ; *thirdly*, As a sign of that covenant, by which believers are entitled to a rest which yet remaineth ; *fourthly*, As the *sine qua non*, or necessary part of the Christian character ; and, on this head, I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form complied with by thousands, who never kept a Sabbath in their lives. Consistence is necessary to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the Sabbath at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all ! After all, I could ask my catechumen one short question ; ‘ Do you love the day, or do you not ? ’ If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you do not love it, and you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then you wish it was over, because it is a weariness to you. The ideas of labour and rest are not more opposite to each other, than the idea of a Sabbath, and that dislike and disgust with which it fills

the minds of thousands, to be obliged to keep it. It is worse than bodily labour.”—*Comper's Letters.*

The reader will no doubt be highly gratified with the following extract from the elegant pen of Mrs Hannah More.—“The Christian in the world,” says she, “anxious to improve his scanty leisure, will rescue from mere diversion those hours which cannot prudently be subtracted from business. To a man thus circumstanced, the Sunday is felt to be indeed a blessing; to him it is emphatically ‘a delight.’ Instead of appropriating it as a day of premeditated conviviality, he converts it into a stated season of enjoyment of another kind. He hardly needs the injunction, to ‘remember’ to keep it holy, though he is not unmindful, that of the ten commandments, it is the only one prefaced with that admonition. He considers the observance as almost more his privilege than his duty. The expectation of its return cheers him under the perplexities of the week. He anticipates it as a rest here, and as a foretaste of eternal rest. He enlarges his pious exercises with the more satisfaction, as he is clearly assured that he is not on this day in

danger of trenching on his professional duties ; and, from this reflection, his heart more warmly expands in gratitude to him whose day it more immediately is. He feels that, if it were barely a season ordained by some public act, a royal proclamation enjoining it, as a necessary interval between the labours which close one week and those which begin another, a contrivance of ease, a measure of political prudence, or personal tenderness, to prevent the bodily machine and the over-laboured mind from wearing out, he would be grateful for its institution ; but to him the day comes fraught with benefits and blessings of a still higher kind. It is an appointment of God ; *that* entitles it to his reverence ; it is an institution of spiritual mercy ; it is the stated season for recruiting his mental vigour ; for inspecting his accounts with his Maker ; for taking a more exact survey of the state of his heart ; for examining into his faults ; for enumerating his mercies ; for laying in, by prayer, fresh stores of faith and holiness ; for repairing what both have lost in the turmoil of the week. His heated passions have leisure to cool ; his hurried mind to regain its tranquil tone ; his whole internal state to be

regulated ; his mistakes to be reviewed ; his temper to be new-set ; his piety to be braced up to the pitch from which it may have sunk in the atmosphere he had been breathing. The pious man of business relishes his family-society and fire-side enjoyments with a keenness not always felt by others. If ‘the harp, and the tabret, and the viol,’ are not always heard in his feasts, he does what those who listen to them do not always remember to do, for ‘he considers the works of the Lord, and regards the operations of his hand.’ It is not enough for the devoted Christian, that his life is dedicated to him who gave it ; his spirit is, as it were, exhaled in his service.”—*Mrs More’s Morals*, p. 229—231. Vol. II.

“ON the due observance of the Sabbath,” said the excellent Bishop Porteus, “and the appropriation of a large portion of it to sacred purposes, depends, I am convinced, the very existence of religion in this country. Scarce one symptom of it ever appears among us, except on the Lord’s day ; and when the sanctity of that is gone, every thing is gone with it. We cannot therefore bestow too much time and pains,

in keeping up to the utmost, the spirit of that Divine institution ; we cannot rescue too much of it from the growing encroachments of worldly business and worldly pleasure."—*Bishop Porteus' Primary Charge to the Diocese of London.*

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### A WELL-SPENT SABBATH DAY.

IN addition to those excellent sentiments presented to the reader in the above extracts, we may be permitted to bring into one view the various branches of Sabbath-sanctification, by the description of a character drawn from life and observation, and by no means a creature of the fancy. The person to whom it applies is, more than any of his friends, sensible of his defects, knowing that in every thing he sins and comes short of the glory of God, and that his endeavours to walk with God on Sabbath, or any other day, fall infinitely short of the spirit of that law which is exceeding broad. As Fidelio is engaged in a concern of considerable extent, and is, moreover, of a nervous habit, he

is not a stranger to those anxieties of mind which the fluctuations of business frequently occasion even in a person of the steadiest principles ; neither is he unacquainted with those temptations to conformity to the world, in violating the holy Sabbath, in neglecting family-worship, and in deviating from the strict principles of justice between man and man, which are so common in every place. By the grace of God, he hath hitherto escaped all these snares. While many of his neighbours, eager to lose no opportunity of sales, have their shops constantly open on week-days, Fidelio's is regularly shut at nine o'clock every morning, that he may worship God with all his household, and " hold communion with the skies." Such is the estimation in which his character is held by his neighbours, that no man dares to violate his privacy, or even almost to knock at his shop-door, while he and his family are in their little sanctuary. While his mercantile friends are gaping for news on the Lord's day, and visiting the post-office, he permits the affairs of the world to recede from his eyes, being occupied with objects to which all other things are but as the small dust in the

balance. On other days he talks on politics and trade, with an interest and intelligence almost peculiar to himself. But on the Sabbath, he is taught by God to mind the one thing needful, to raise his mind to things above, and to bring his family, if possible, to participate of his spirit. The bustle in his shop on Saturday evenings is very great; but his foresight and prudence prevent any confusion from taking place; and even the glance of his eye seems to say to his customers, that it is time for them to retire to their homes, and prepare for the Lord's day.

Fidelio, having a strong mind in a weak body, cannot rise so early on Sabbath as many others; but he is far from being a loiterer on that day. In much weakness of body, he creeps from his bed to his closet, and his spirits are re-animated with the ascending sun. His Bible lies before him on the table, and from it he gathers matter of supplication for his closet and family. At a set hour, his children meet him at the breakfast-table, having previously been also in their closets, and by their looks seem to hail the return of the Sabbath as the happiest of their days. He sits

among them as a patriarch, and as the centre of all their delightful intercourse. After inquiring about their health, and some general hints, the conversation naturally glides into something interesting and spiritual. His enlarged acquaintance with the scriptures, his fund of religious anecdote, his wise observations, and his frank manner, all beget and arrest their attention. Here is no affectation, no bye-ends to serve, no laboured discourse, but enlightened, free, and delightful intercourse, which animates while it instructs, and engages without any restraint. The worship of God in the family is then devoutly performed; the servants enter the chamber as if Fidelio was their father, and the devotion proceeds, in all its parts, with decorum and singular interest. How sweetly they sing! how seriously he reads, and they listen! and how powerfully he pleads with God for himself, for his family, and for the church! He seems to feel all their necessities, and to express all their thoughts with his ardent lips. Preparation for serving God in public, follows the devotions of the family. The business of dressing is soon dispatched. Religious books are read, or some miscellaneous

conversation takes place, till the hour arrives which calls them to the house of God.

Fidelio, with his family, unless when necessarily detained, is always early in the church. The minister, when he enters the assembly, never fails to see Fidelio, and his family seated, as if eager to join in the praises of God—the most delightful part of divine worship. Their posture is decent, their attention during the service is such as edifies the church, gratifies the pastor, and indicates the interest they take in the truths delivered, and in the worship of God, their Friend and Father. God alone is Judge of the workings of the mind, of the exercise of faith, of gracious desires after communion with himself, of the conflicts with sin and temptation in a renewed heart, of the entrance and operations of spiritual light, of the delightful influence of the gospel in subduing the will to the obedience of faith, and of the real progress of sanctification in the soul ; but if an absorbed attention be an index of these gracious principles, Fidelio possesses them in a high degree. He hears God speaking by his servants ; he receives the truth in the love of it ; the truth exerts its energy upon his heart and life ; and he sits, not at ease, like a cold-

blooded critic, weighing words and measuring sentences, but as a humble disciple of Jesus, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and dealing with God about the life of his soul ! In the interval, a slight repast satisfies the body, and the mind is refreshed by conversation about divine things. Fidelio bends before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, imploring his blessing upon the truths which they heard, and craving a blessing upon what is preparing for them in the afternoon. He knows, that without God he can do nothing, and enjoy nothing, and is therefore dependent upon him for his blessing upon his servants, his people, his ordinances, and upon himself.

But the evenings of the Lord's day are to Fidelio the seasons of the greatest delight. He is then in his element ; his heart being warmed, and his mind being enlarged, by the truths he heard, and the devotional exercises of the day, his face shines in the midst of his family, and he seems to say to them, Be ye also warmed, instructed, and enlarged ! The family catches his spirit ; devotion recommences ; the scriptures and other good books are read ; a conversation, generally animated, always relating to the proper business of the day,

and growing out of sermons they heard, or books they read, succeeds, and gives a zest to the labours of love in which they are engaged. As religion is diffusive, Fidelio is anxious to diffuse his knowledge and spirit to all his family. His servants and children are carefully instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God. He gives them line upon line, here a little and there a little, and thus lays a foundation for their present and future advantage.

Such is Fidelio in his family on the Lord's day, and such should all the professed friends of Christ be. Here is nothing imaginary, nothing overcharged, and nothing gloomy or repulsive. Here is an engaging commentary upon, and exemplification of, the spirit and letter of the fourth commandment. The worldly prosperity of Fidelio suffers no detriment by the strictness of his religion; on the contrary, his name is respectable, his wealth is increasing, his influence is widening, his usefulness is extending, his word is credited, his opinions venerated, and he is generally reckoned to be a blessing to the city where he lives.—Go ye and do likewise!

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SERIOUS ADDRESS IN RELATION TO  
THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S  
DAY.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, friends and countrymen! allow us to speak a word in God's behalf, and in behalf of his holy day. We are utterly unworthy to speak in his name, or to plead for the honour of his Sabbaths; but, as he employs weak instruments in his magnificent operations, we shall humbly attempt to call your attention to this important subject; and if any thing we write shall be useful to you, let him have all the glory!—It requires but little attention to observe, that this holy day is greatly profaned over all the Christian world; and the evil is increasing so fast, that it is becoming every day more alarming to serious minds. How far this evil shall extend, it is impossible for beings like us, who are but of yesterday, and who may not be to-morrow, to predict. By the progress of this evil, God is infinitely dishonoured, the credit of Christianity is depreciated, the souls of men are injured, and national afflictions are hastening on apace. The

Supreme Governor of the world, who is also the Lord of the Sabbath, incessantly inspects the affairs of men, is still jealous of his holy law, and will not allow his Sabbaths to be profaned with impunity. Custom may familiarize sin to us, and the fashions of the times may tend to hide its deformity; but it is still that abominable thing which he hateth. God, who is infinite in patience, may long defer his anger; he may frequently turn away his wrath from a sinful people; in his providence, awfully mysterious, he may smile upon them during the increase of their crimes; but, notwithstanding all these, things are hastening to an issue with nations, and with individuals. In that issue it shall be distinctly seen, how holy God is, how great are the privileges which men have abused, and that to whom much has been given, of them much shall be required. In a land like ours, blessed with the light of the gospel and with political liberty, a land more highly favoured than any ever was since man was on the earth, the contempt of his Sabbaths becomes singularly wicked and inexcuseable. In a time like this of universal depravity, when sin marches through our land with awful strides and unblushing face, it becomes good men of

every name to *stand in the gap*, to be zealous for the Lord of hosts, and for his institutions, and to be eminently holy in an evil time. "They should sigh and cry for all the abominations done in the land. Their righteous souls should be vexed with the unlawful deeds of the wicked, in seeing and hearing them from day to day." This temper of mind, and these exertions for the honour of the Lord's day, will discover supreme love to God and his law, a truly noble and patriotic spirit, a generous concern for their country and the souls of men. If they use every means appointed by God for resisting the torrent of profaneness that threatens to deluge their native land; if, in their lives and profession, they enter a solemn protest against the evils of the time, and boldly oppose iniquity, though it were decreed by a law; a mark shall be set upon them in the time of danger, a mark which distinguishes the righteous from the wicked, a token of peculiar favour and of providential interposition. "If the saints keep God's Sabbath, and choose the things that please him, and take hold of his covenant, he will give them an everlasting name, never to be cut off, and bring them to his holy mountain, and make them joyful in

his house of prayer," Mal. iii. 16—18. Isa. lvi. 4—8. Through infinite mercy, flowing in the blood of atonement, those men who now please God in honouring his institutions, shall have boldness in the day of judgment, and at that tribunal where courage dares not shew its face, nor eloquence open its mouth; where majesty has no respect, and greatness no favour! Let us, my brethren, consider farther, that the welfare or the ruin of our country is intimately connected with our regard to the Sabbath, or the profanation of it; see Jer. xvii. 22—27. These affecting words extend their influence through all time, and are an admonition to churches and individuals to the end of the world. If we sanctify the Sabbath, we promote the essential welfare of the land where we dwell; but if we be conformed to the world in violating that holy day, we must perish with the world; if we partake of national sins, how can we escape national plagues? If we, who profess to do more than others, encourage the profane to dishonour the Lord's day by our loose and disorderly behaviour, there is every reason to fear, that in the wreck of nations, or when divine judgments are abroad in the earth, we shall be the first victims of their fury, and

fall undistinguished and forgotten. See Amos vi. 7—9.

Consider also, my friends, that the Sabbath is a peculiar blessing to the world, a day of rest to the bodies and souls of men, and to the brute creation employed in your service; the day which, by way of eminence, the great Lord of heaven and earth hath *made, blessed and hallowed*, for the most beneficent purposes; a day on which the glory of Jehovah shineth in the churches, in all the means of grace, and in the face of our Immanuel by the power of the Holy Ghost. On the Lord's day, how many gracious visits hath God paid to the souls of men! Heaven descended to earth on that day, and earth was elevated to heaven. Trophies to the praise of divine love and power have been erected on the Sabbath-day, and that without number. This is the day God made for the bestowment of his precious benefits: on that day especially, the sweetest fellowship hath obtained between him and his saints, and the liveliest anticipation of heaven been communicated and enjoyed. How many minds have been enlightened, wills subdued, and hearts comforted, on that blessed day! The Redeemer girds his sword on his thigh, he goes forth con-

quering and to conquer,—his word runs and is glorified on the day he hath made. The gospel is then eminently the power of God unto salvation; Satan and his auxiliaries are overcome and put to silence. Are not these high privileges which are conferred upon the church? Is it not a divine pleasure to sanctify that day on which they are conferred? Is it not a festival to the children of God, when his table is covered, his fat things, his wines on the lees exhibited, his maidens sent forth, his kind heart opened, his liberal hand stretched forth with all the blessings of salvation, and his enemies and friends invited to receive freely? Then he sits at his own table, and the spikenard of his church giveth the smell thereof; the gospel trumpet is blown, the still small voice of the gospel is heard, the high praises of our Saviour are sounded at once from thousands of assemblies of saints, and earth becomes on that day a lively emblem of the sanctuary above. These and other things innumerable conspire to recommend the keeping of this day holy to the Lord. This is indeed a spiritual view of the subject, and cannot be supposed to engage the attention of carnal men; but when their eyes are opened by the grace of God, when their sentiments

are changed by the power of the Spirit, they will acknowledge that every other view of the Sabbath is jejune and uninteresting. Surely, my brethren, they are ungrateful to God for the hopes of the gospel,—for what alleviates affliction, sweetens the cares of life, ennobles its relations,—for what diffuses a blessing through the labours of the week, and renders the thoughts of death and eternity comfortable,—who refuse to devote the Sabbath to the Lord. Consecrate, therefore, my countrymen, the first day of the week to God, and his blessing shall really, though secretly, follow you through the remainder of it, in all the works of your hands. Common enjoyments shall become precious, bitter things sweet, disappointments only slight inconveniences, bereavements and losses shall be converted into blessings, and every thing you meet with shall work for your good. Do not, O do not, defraud our gracious God of his due, nor grudge to give the Sabbath to him who giveth you all things richly to enjoy! Do not thrust your religion into a corner of the day, or of the week, but be consistently and universally holy. Be in the fear of the Lord every day, and thus your Sabbaths shall be pleasant in their return, and delightfully inter-

esting as they pass. Every ordinary day shall be an emblem of the Sabbath, and every Sabbath an emblem of the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Remember also, brethren, that the welfare of the next generation shall be a result of your endeavours to sanctify the Sabbath. We are fearfully and wonderfully situated in this world. The consequences of our actions have a great influence upon posterity, in forming their character, and in promoting their good or evil. If we sport with the Lord's day, our offspring and contemporaries are encouraged to do so likewise ; thus the evil is propagated from age to age, till society be polluted and destroyed. How wicked is that person who entails such mischief upon future generations ! These generations shall rise up and call us cursed, for being the authors of such ruin and calamity. All good men sedulously endeavour to prevent the transmission of sin, and to propagate good. How grateful shall it be to us of the present age, if we are instrumental in doing good to men yet unborn, if we honour God in our generation, call his Sabbaths a delight while we live on earth, and honour him after our death, by having done worthily in our stations,

lived a holy life, instructed our families in the knowledge of God, taught them his testimony and law, venerated his ordinances, and adorned the doctrine of God in all things. By these things, though dead, we shall speak to other ages, and, as it were, enjoy a posthumous fame. Thus, also, you will contribute your endeavours to perpetuate the name of Jesus, and the spirit of Christianity, in the world, while it continues. “ His name shall endure for ever, his name shall be continued as long as the sun.” It is truly an unspeakable honour to be employed by God to support the credit of such an illustrious name in the world. To drive a pin or to fasten a cord, in the sanctuary of God; to hold the lowest office, and to do the meanest work, in the church, is more honourable employment than to erect pyramids, command armies, or to circumnavigate the globe. The names of the great and honourable in the world, whose fame was borrowed from the breath of men, shall soon be written in the earth, and the splendour of their actions be eclipsed or forgotten; but the cause of religion is in a state of continual progress towards perfection, and the instruments of its progress are truly blessed. In the future and more glorious

days of the church, which the scriptures warrant us to expect, the Christian Sabbath shall be highly venerated and respected all over the church; and should not you now endeavour to introduce that glorious æra, and pave a way for our God? If religion shall ever be revived, if the honour of the Sabbath shall ever be retrieved, it shall be by the divine blessing upon the use of means. These means you may now improve, and who knows but that, in your own days, you may witness a revival of the work of God? The flame kindled by you may be spread to another, till a little one become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. The earth may bring forth in one day, and a nation be born at once! Thus you may contribute remotely, by your prayers and your example, towards these astonishing events. The Lord hasten them in his time, and the Lord bless you in the use of means to bring them to pass!

In conclusion, we may be allowed to address ourselves to various classes of men, in relation to their duty on the Lord's day. Our address shall not be long; and, if possible, we will frame it in the spirit of our holy religion. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteous-

ness of God." The cause we are pleading is the cause of God; our design in pleading it, we trust, is to promote the honour of the Lord of the Sabbath, and the best interests of men. In being advocates for the holiness of the Sabbath, we may be allowed to speak boldly, firmly, and warmly. The subject requires to be supported by argument, to be recommended by motives, and to be brought home by serious expostulation. If those who violate the Sabbath would listen to considerations founded on their relation to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, or founded on their connections with the church, with their families, or with society, or those which grow out of their present state and future hopes, it might not be difficult to shew them their error, and recall them to their duty; but the most of them are not only thoughtless, but obstinate in their determination not to honour the Sabbath. Let such persons, when they are alienating the Sabbath from its original design, consider who appointed it. Was it not instituted by the great God who made them and all things? Was it not appointed to be a standing memorial of his having created the world in six days, and rested on that day as an example to us? Is it not to

be celebrated by all rational beings in this world for that end? When you take idle walks on the Sabbath, wherein do you resemble your Creator? He rested from his work on that day, and commanded man and beast to rest also: But you will not rest yourself, nor will you permit your beasts to be refreshed on the Sabbath-day! If ye loiter on your beds; if ye spend your time in an ale-house; if ye arrange your temporal concerns; if ye go to convivial entertainments; if you undertake a journey of business or pleasure on the Sabbath; we ask, Where is your obedience, your homage, your gratitude, to the Creator of the world, and the Author of your comforts? Again, on the score of justice, we ask, Is it just, or reasonable, or becoming, in you to refuse the tribute of but one day in seven to the service of God? Will a man rob God? Yea, you rob him of his due every Sabbath you exist. How dare you look upon any of his works in the world around you on Sabbath? They serve, they praise God, they keep the order appointed them in the beginning; but you dishonour him, you have transgressed his law, you do not rest according to the commandment!—What do you think of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you not acknow-

ledge by your profession, that you are under infinite obligations to him for giving his life a ransom for you, and for what he is still doing for you in heaven? You bear his name, you profess subjection to his will, you occasionally worship with his people, and you add his name to your prayers. You profess your belief in his resurrection, and how can you consistently violate that day which commemorates that glorious event? The very name it bears is venerable, and frowns upon you for your irreverent words, frivolous thoughts, and unworthy actions upon it! It commemorates a work infinitely interesting to the sons of men; and as an evidence you despise his atonement, which was declared to be perfect on the Lord's day, you despise that sacred season. Is it not an easy, a reasonable requisition made by our great Benefactor, that we should only keep one day in seven as a memorial of his astonishing love, his victorious death, and triumphant resurrection! O the ingratitude, the baseness, the perverseness of men, of professed Christians!—We might argue with sabbath-breakers, from the despite they do to the Spirit of all grace, who dwells in the church and in believers, who was given on the first day of the

week, and who eminently glorifies Christ on that day. If there be any fellowship of the Spirit, any comfort from the Holy Ghost, ought not men to honour that season when he especially bestows these comforts, and those ordinances by which he works on the souls of men? We might remind such persons, that in breaking the Sabbath, they sin against their own souls, and reject that benefit which it was designed to confer upon communities and individuals. The Sabbath was made for man, that is, for his real advantage; and it is mentioned as one of the special favours God shewed to his ancient people, that he made known to them his holy Sabbath, Neh. ix. 19. If the ancient Sabbath was such a blessing, what must the one we enjoy be, when we live under the ministration of the Spirit, which is glorious! Can any institution be more calculated than the Sabbath, to bring near the things of eternity; to reconcile the saints to leave this vain world; to enable them to form a sober estimate of their connections with time; and to solemnize the mind while meditating on the great and notable day of the Lord? In one word, let us enquire, whither these violations of the Sabbath tend? It is impossible to con-

ceive that they tend to the advantage of nations or of individuals. But that they tend to the essential injury of the church and the world, is clearer than the unclouded sun. They do infinite disservice to the cause of Christianity; they stain its beauty; they tend to obstruct its progress in the world, and to remove that sacred pale which stands around the church. Hereby a gap is opened to bring in an inundation of wickedness upon churches and societies; for they who habitually confound the Sabbath with the other days of the week, will soon lose a veneration for the Bible, which commands men to sanctify the Sabbath, and soon learn to trifle with every divine institution. Pause, therefore, O Sabbath breakers! before you proceed further, consider your ways and be wise.

Ye magistrates and men of influence, hear the word of exhortation. God, the Governor among the nations, hath given you power, and raised you in his providence to your exalted stations. "He standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods." The offices you hold, the sceptres you wield, are to be employed in his service, and to promote his honour. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son of God,

reverence his Sabbaths, and his sanctuary. His work is honourable and glorious: them that honour him he will honour; but they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed. Ye must one day die like other men, and fall as one of the princes." The authority with which you are invested, shall be devolved upon others. The sceptre must fall from your hands, and the worms of destruction shall pronounce you to be on a level with the most abject of mankind. In the prospect of such scenes, venerate divine institutions, call into energy salutary laws, and prefer the honour of God to your own interest, or ease, or reputation. The Sabbath is the day of God, and ought not to be alienated by any man to any purpose besides its original design. The elevation of your station, the gravity of your office, and the holiness of your conduct on the Lord's day, shall tend to promote the credit of that consecrated season, as well as to deter your inferiors from profaning it as they generally do. While you officially attend the ordinances of God, you ought also to display the spirit of Christianity in all your intercourse with your families, and with society. If this small tract shall ever reach any of those great men who violate the Sabbath, by visiting,

travelling, feasting, playing at cards, and conversing about politics ; we earnestly pray that it may transfix an arrow into their hearts which no human means can remove. If you who are magistrates wink at profanations of the Sabbath, or be yourselves foremost in committing this sin, this neglect of your duty and abuse of your power shall, when your spirits are placed under the glorious eye of the Judge of all, bite as a serpent and sting as an adder.—The ministers of religion should be of all men the most exemplary and circumspect on the Sabbath-day. The eyes of the church and of the world are directed to them in order to contemplate in them, as far as is compatible with the imperfections of our present state, a living exposition of the divine law ; and if they behold them act unworthily of their office and character, how great disgrace is reflected upon the doctrines they teach ! Their respectability in other respects, their learning, or their eloquence in the pulpit, cannot screen them from merited contempt, if they have a loose and unhallowed conversation on the Lord's day. They cannot consistently exhort and rebuke with all authority, if they *are* not what they wish other men *to be*. If they join in the chit-chat of the

country, if they visit, and gossip, and feast on the Sabbath, what can their exhortations to the contrary avail? The proverb originally delivered by our Lord himself, applies with dreadful effect to ministers of this class,—“Physician, heal thyself.” They should preach in honour of the Sabbath,—should make their own lives an epitome of their doctrines; their families ought to be models to all around them of the beauties of Sabbath-sanctification. The censures of the church should be executed upon Sabbath-breakers, and they should co-operate with the civil magistrate in removing public nuisances, and in preventing public outrages upon the sanctity of the Sabbath. It becomes them, in one word, to hasten from their pulpits to their closets on the Lord's day, and to resist with that fortitude which faith in God inspires, and with that modesty which is identified with the christian character, every invitation to spend the Sabbath otherwise than the law of God allows; to enter no house on that day, but where they can display the spirit of their office, communicate instruction, or be spectators of the devotions of a pious family. A visit of this kind by a minister is like the entrance of a messenger from heaven, who fills

the house with the fragrance of eternity, and with the splendours of holiness !

Allow us, dear brethren, to finish our essay, with a few words addressed to parents and children, to all who have authority over youth, and to those who should be in habits of subjection to well-directed influence. The force of example upon young and ductile minds is so powerful, that it generally retains the subjects of it through life. As we are naturally prone to evil, and averse to good, an evil example has a greater force than a good one. Experience proves the truth of this assertion, and puts it beyond dispute. But as men are, their regard for their offspring has no relation to their own moral character ; for though they be wicked themselves, they cannot endure to see their own vices transcribed into the lives of their children. Parents, therefore, should watch over their conduct with unceasing solicitude on every day, but especially on Sabbath, that their children may not be encouraged, by their indifference to religion, their indolence or their profaneness, to trifle with the day devoted to God. It is not in the power of any man to mould the temper of his children according to the spirit of the gospel, for this is the pro-

vince of divine grace alone ; but it is in his power, as the head of a family, and a christian parent, to restrain his offspring from taking unwarrantable liberties on the Lord's day. He can command them to remain in the house, to return from the streets and fields whither they have wandered ; he can take them to the church with him, bring them home with him in the intervals and evenings of the Sabbath, can prevent their wandering at large or joining in bad company ; he can bring them into habits of subjection, and he can exhibit an undeviating attention to the exercises of religion before their eyes. If he begin early to form them in his own likeness, if he persevere in his endeavours, and if he confirm his precepts by his own example ; he generally prevails over their reluctance, and overcomes their prejudices. Difficulties on his part become less and less formidable ; order and subjection are established in the family, and the good man beholds his exertions generally crowned with success. He sees himself honoured in forming a race for filling the church with useful members, and society with virtuous citizens. Those principles which by the grace of God he instilled into their minds, ripen into integrity of conduct, propriety of

behaviour, a due sense of honour, a conscientious discharge of duty, a true patriotism, an abhorrence of vice, and a profound veneration for the institutions of heaven. Parents, with such prospects before you, and animated by love to God and his Sabbath, and your children, persevere in your exertions, and you shall find that in keeping of his commandments there is a great reward. But if ye profane the Sabbath yourselves, if ye suffer your children to follow their own inclinations, or to go whither they please on the Lord's day; if they make themselves vile, and ye restrain them not: nay, if ye indulge them to their destruction, and are prepared to apologize for their conduct when they violate the Sabbath; there is no term in the languages of men sufficiently energetic to stigmatize your wickedness. Ye are cruel, unnatural, perfidious, and irreligious persons. The ostrich of Lybia is kind compared to you. The wrath of God hangs over your habitations, and will light, if ye repent not, with awful vengeance upon you and your families.

Our Youth may be exhorted to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Whether you have religious parents or not, whether you are at home or abroad, the commandment is to you.

Youth is the best season of human life. If you *then* fear God, your future life shall likely be uniformly holy ; but if then you learn to follow a multitude to do evil, a train of miseries is in reserve for you through life. Whether you are in the country or in great cities, in a high or low station, remember that the eye of God, and the authority of his holy law, are there. Cultivate reverence for God, read his word, acknowledge him in all your ways. Reckon secret devotion a privilege of a high kind ; wait on the worship of God in the families where you are ; be conscientious in attending on the ordinances of God in public ; listen not to the voice of those who would seduce you to a tavern, or to a walk of pleasure, on the Lord's day ; bless God for the restraints which pious parents, faithful masters, holy ministers and vigilant rulers, impose upon you. These are salutary in the mean time, and may extend their advantage through life. If you are preparing to act a part in the army, or navy, or learned professions, or in the mercantile world ; if you are to follow the plough, or to be menial servants ; the observance of the Sabbath will shed a lustre upon your paths in all these departments. If you intend leaving your na-

tive land, and becoming sojourners in our colonies or foreign settlements ; remember that the God of Britain is the God of Jamaica and of Calcutta ; that no distance of place, no change of climate, nor fashions hostile to the sanctity of the Sabbath, can alter or annul its obligation. The Romans, while sojourning abroad in their colonies, are said to have remembered the gods of Rome. How strong a contrast does the conduct of many of our British travellers present to this ! They forget the God of Britain, they despise those holy days, when they heard the praises of Jehovah in their native land ; they laugh at the sanctification of the Lord's day, they plunge into the vices of the places to which they go ; and many of them, on crossing the equator, sell themselves to do wickedly !

The attachments formed between teachers and their pupils are often very strong. The ascendancy which intelligent and wise instructors have over the minds of youth, is perhaps greater than that of any other superior over his inferiors. While knowledge is power, the person who enlightens the mind, generally carries the key to the heart and the affections. If the knowledge communicated be important to men as immortal beings, and if the interest

of the teacher in the doctrines he delivers be equal to their importance, the affections excited are permanent and sublime. Society is deeply indebted to those preceptors who have trained up its youth in every age to that which is honest, grave, virtuous, and of good report. The obligation is increased when those persons train them up for God and eternity. Our seminaries are Christian seminaries, our schools are Christian schools; the teachers of these schools, while they should be men of learning and talents, should also be persons of piety. In all the sciences, God is recognized; in all the literature of our public institutions, there should be a reference to him who animates all nature, and presides in all the affairs of men. If our learned professors would employ that influence which they possess over youth, in directing their attention to objects of infinite importance, and exemplify religion before their eyes in all its attractions, their influence should increase in a tenfold proportion; a hint from them should be equal to a precept from the pulpit, a reference to a divine subject should be more profitable than a lecture in divinity.—The Sabbath is a blessing to all men, to the wise and the unwise, to the scholar and the peasant.

On it, the one rests only from his bodily labours, and the other should suspend his scientific and literary inquiries. It is equally a blessing in both cases ; its sacred obligations extend to both. If these benefactors to mankind would exhort their scholars to sanctify the Lord's day, and give energy to their advices by their practice, it might be a benefit to them never to be appreciated. If teachers in our smaller schools would act in a similar manner, the consequences might be most beneficial. While these persons last mentioned are bound to pray with their scholars, and to take an interest in their spiritual welfare, they should also warn them against profaning the holy Sabbath, as a branch of the duty they owe them. Thus the children, from fear, or from some other principle, might be restrained from strolling in the fields or walking through the streets, might be induced to attend public ordinances, or to read good books at home, on the Lord's day. This may be thought by some to be a trifling circumstance, and may be lawfully omitted ; but to a serious mind nothing can be trifling that bears upon the present and future welfare of society, and of the church ; and he ill deserves the confidence of the public, who does not en-

deavour by every means in his power to form the minds of youth for the parts they have to act in the world. If persons were delivered by the grace of God from their selfishness, their indolence, and their indifference, to the best interests of men, they would never henceforth omit any thing which is a link in the great chain of providence, and which may extend its influence to the remotest eternity.

Profane men, infidels, and scoffers of religion may be admonished to consider their ways. The providence of the Most High may shine upon your path, and bring into your hands abundantly, (Job xii. 6—9.) Your houses may be free from fear, and the rod of God not be upon them; your prosperity may be continued through life, nay, it may increase with your years. But if from this you infer the peculiar favour of God, or the certainty of eternal felicity, you argue most illogically, and hope without a reasonable foundation for hope. You are set upon slippery places, are building upon quicksands; your root is rottenness, and your blossom shall go up as dust; you hazard your eternal all for a few short-lived gratifications; you sport with that which nothing can remove or purge away, but the blood of God's

eternal Son, and of which yourselves confess you must repent if ever you be saved. Your consciences must frequently tell you, that to profane the Lord's day shall be bitterness in the latter end, and bring, as its native consequences, lamentation, mourning, and woe. "But hear and your souls shall live; wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." The Lord of the Sabbath is rich in mercy, and ready to forgive; he waiteth to be gracious, and is exalted to shew mercy. O taste and see that our God is good! Whenever you taste of his goodness to your souls, you will henceforth call the Sabbath a delight, holy to the Lord, and honourable. Your progress through life shall be marked by growing conformity to God, and at your death you shall go to that blessed place, where enjoyments are unabating, joys without end, and the Sabbath eternal!

## APPENDIX.

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A COLLECTION OF SCRIPTURES BEARING UPON THE  
SUBJECT OF THE PRECEDING ESSAY.

“KEEP the Sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; *that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.* And remember thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm: Therefore the Lord God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.”  
—Deut. v. 12—16.

“Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord.”—Levit. xix. 30.

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.”—Levit. xxiii. 3.

“Six days shalt thou do thy work; and on the seventh day thou shalt rest, that thine ox and thine ass may rest,

and the son of thine hand-maid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."—Exodus xxii. 12.

“ Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily, my Sabbath ye shall keep ; for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations ; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep my Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto the Lord. Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death ; for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from his people. Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord ; whosoever doth any work on the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever ; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”—Exod. xxxi 13—18.

“ And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath-day ; and they that found him gathering sticks, brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation, and they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death ; and all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died ; as the Lord commanded Moses.”—Numb. xv. 32—36.

“ If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a

delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”—Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

“ Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness ; they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live them ; and my Sabbath they greatly polluted : then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them.”—Ezek. xx. 12, 13.

“ Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant : even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer : Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar ; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”—Isa. lvi. 6, 8.

“ Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat ? making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances of deceit ; that ye may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a

pair of shoes ; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat."—  
Amos viii. 4, 6.

“ Then said the Lord unto me, Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem ; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem that enter in by these gates : Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem : Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers,” &c.—Jer. xvii. 19—27.

“ And on the Sabbath, he went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made.”—Acts xvi. 13.

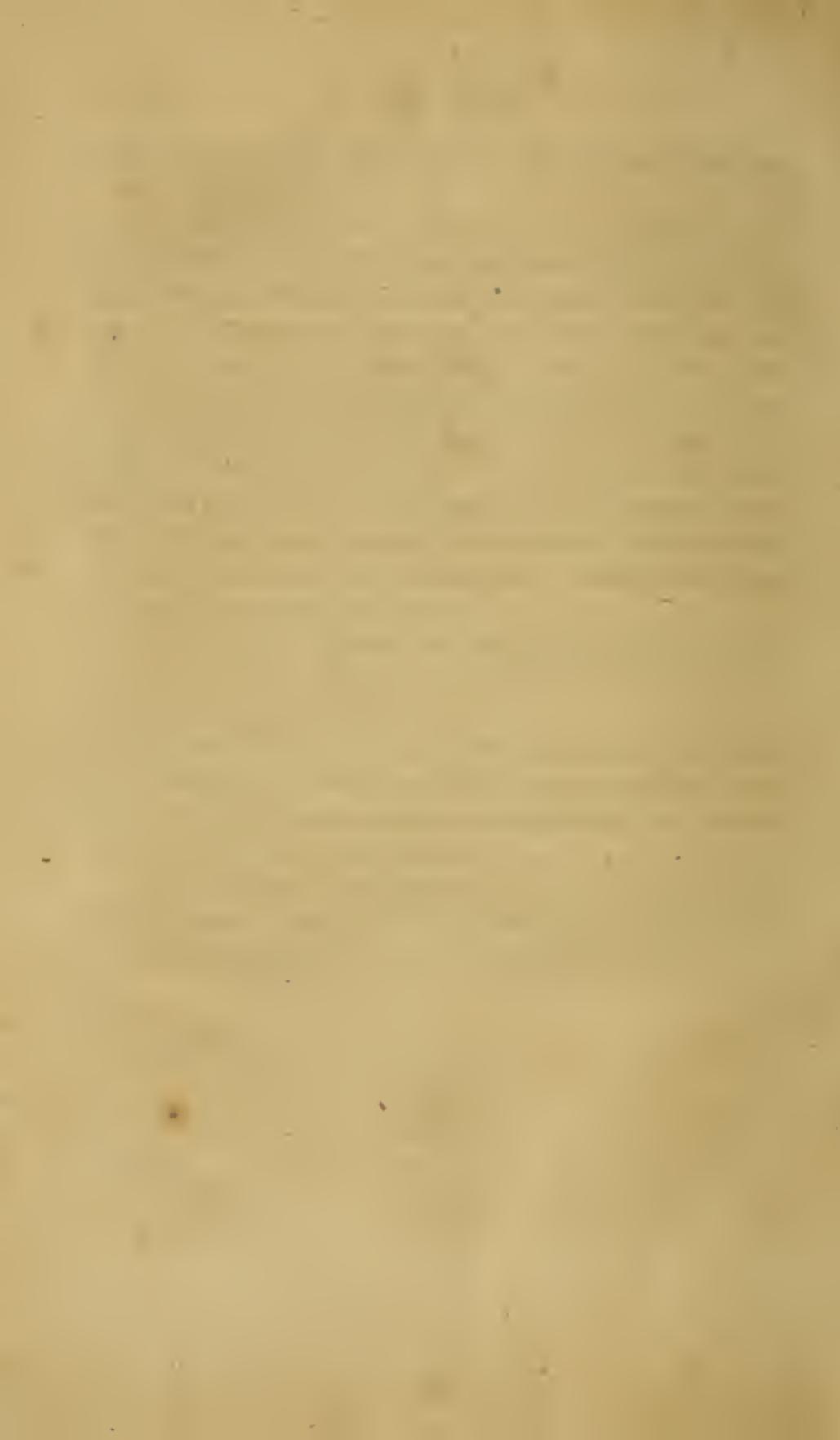
“ And on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.”—Acts xx. 7.

“ For he that is entering into his rest, also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—Heb. iv. 10.

“ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”—Rev. i. 10.

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