

THE
LORD'S DAY,

AND

The Labourer's Right to its Rest.

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LABOURER'S RIGHT TO ITS REST.

THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH. MARK II. 27.

IF THIS COUNSEL OR THIS WORK BE OF MEN, IT WILL COME TO NOUGHT; BUT IF IT BE OF GOD, YE CANNOT OVERTHROW IT; LEST HAPLY YE BE FOUND EVEN TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD. ACTS V. 38, 39.

Yes, child of suffering, thou may'st well be sure,
He who ordained the Sabbath, loves the poor.—HOLMES.

In the city of the Great King, "the council and all the senate of the children of Israel" were once assembled. Before them were arraigned a few humble Christians, for having preached redemption in the streets. Their defence was, "We ought to obey God rather than men." They explained their work, and illustrated their commission, by preaching Christ crucified in the very face of their accusers

and judges. The spirit of slaughter was in their enemies. They were likely to be judged worthy of death, with as little justice as their Lord had been.

To the honour of human wisdom, (if, indeed, it was not an inspiration,) one of their most influential counsellors rose and uttered one of the profoundest arguments ever proposed for the defence of Christianity, and one of the most solemn cautions ever given to its enemies: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

In the words of those disciples, which are as plain and self-evident as any maxim can be, is our authority for observing every truly religious institution. In the words of that wise counsellor, at whose feet once sat a youth whom God called to be Paul, an apostle, is our argument for all such religious institutions. How little is any counsel or work of men! How vast and glorious the counsel and work of God! Who will contend against the Almighty and succeed? The argument came from one who was not a Christian. He was an opposer of Christianity. It was admitted by his associates to be a good argument. It ought to have great force with all who take counsel against the ordinan-

ces of religion. His caution was modestly proposed, "lest haply," lest peradventure. It pointed out the possibility of an extreme course—"even to fight!"

Instead of reform, it might be rage. He showed the direction of that rage "even against God!" It is possible to go too far against men, and oppose too extremely what human law and common consent have established, but it is surely a reckless endeavour to carry the war against the ordinances of God. "Even to fight against God!" What a caution to all ultra agitators of the public mind!

In our day, old institutions are attacked with new art. The human must fall, the Divine cannot be overthrown. The cry is to reform, to modify, to reconstruct. No one doubts that certain reforms are needed. Evils, which arise from human enactments, need reforming. No evils can arise from the right observance of Divine enactments. Many have here fallen into an error. In trying to reform certain human evils, they have rashly laid the fault upon Divine institutions, and imagined they could reform, or modify, or repeal them. The Church is not ours to modify; the errors, if there are any foisted into it, are ours to reform. So we may say of all ordinances, all doctrines, all laws, which come from God. The

Sabbath is not ours to modify or repeal for any class of men ; if there are any errors thrown about its observance, let us reform them. It is not the Sabbath, but human conduct that needs reforming.

The effort is, to make us think there is nothing settled, nothing established—that all is afloat, and that the institutions, which have been precious to our fathers and to the Church through all generations, now need a reconstruction. This is a shallow device. God saw these to be “very good,” and we shall find it the wisest for us, to still believe that God is wiser than men, and yield to his infinitely higher authority.

The Sabbath question belongs to the whole country as well as to the larger cities, to the Church even more than to the State. The late agitation should call our attention to our Christian rights. The cry of “rights” may lead us to see what is truth and right. We shall best advocate the “poor man’s rights” when we all pay due respect to the just and merciful claims of God. Every city, every village, every neighbourhood, every church, every family, every man, woman, and child, has a mighty interest in the question, Shall we have a Sabbath inviolate? Do away with the Sabbath in one quarter, and you set it aside in another. Let

one man do business on that holy day, and you allow a hundred men to do wickedness which no day should allow. Let a corporation run their machinery on the Sabbath, and you are licensing a thousand machinations of evil in the community. Let one class of men turn the Sabbath into a day of amusement, and you tempt all classes to immorality. Let us look at this question as the times demand.

I. None will deny that the Sabbath has long been regarded by State and by Church as a fixed institution. It is no new thing. It is no party scheme. It is not, like the "Maine law," an experiment, which we are to test, and prove either inexpedient or beneficial. It is not an ordinary common consent observance, like the custom of making Friday a fast day. It is not merely a traditional observance like that of a "saint's day," Easter, or Christmas, or New Year, or the Fourth of July. It is not merely a convenient appointment, like that of Monday for the opening of courts, or of congress. Ask why these days are observed, and no very substantial reason can be assigned. But for the Sabbath there is a reason. On the highest authority of Church and State it has long since been established.

II. On what is the observance of the Sabbath founded? May we not say on natural laws? There is a law of labour and a law of rest. Our human nature demands a regard to each of them. The rest of the night is not enough; working animals require also the proportion of one day in seven. The human body requires a seventh of days, as well as the seven nights. In manufactories and on farms this has been tested. The human mind demands this seventh of our days. In our schools, colleges, counting rooms, and business offices the test has been sufficiently made to prove it; and mark you, there is another rest required than mere sleep; a rest in our wakefulness, a relief from work and trade given to us when awake, by shutting the doors of the store and the shop, and the gates of the field. It should be a wakeful, noiseless, undisturbed rest.

May we not say it is founded on social necessities? Social order and cleanliness are promoted by a well kept Sabbath. Business ceases. The smoke is blown away. The dust finds not the sweat of the brow, by which to fasten on the face of the toiler. Temptations are lessened, vices are checked, and dissipation shrinks away. Men give their minds to better thoughts and nobler pur-

poses. There is a respite from the school of mammon, and higher, holier instruction is imparted.

May we not say on moral necessities? There are no high morals where there are no Sabbaths. Go to a village to test the morals of its people, and how naturally you wait till the Sabbath comes! The silent streets tell you. The ringing bells tell you. The voices of praise from family and congregation tell you. This was one of God's tests of a nation's morality. As a specimen of national sins and degradation, the Lord said, "The adversaries did mock her Sabbaths." "My Sabbaths they greatly polluted." No political or social test is so good as this, for this is Biblical, moral, and religious. If you would know the moral character of a man, or a community, ask how the Sabbath is observed; and surely none will doubt that high morals are necessary to our well-being.

On religious necessities too. We need more than a Sunday religion, a Sunday conscience, a Sunday worship, but if we would have an every day—an all-the-week religion, we need a Sabbath to give it strength and new life. With this great help, we shall still come too far short. Private worship is held by the Christian every day. The morning prayer, the song in the shop or field,

the heavenward thought and affection by the way, the evening song of gratitude in the house, the remembrance of God in the night watches, are for every day in the week. But private devotion soon dies if the Sabbath worship be not observed; and that Sabbath worship will not be faithfully observed, if there be no public worship, and how maintain it without an express day? When would all people agree to give up their pursuits and have a Sabbath? When too, would many of the poor be instructed, the outcast be sought, the children, untaught at home, be gathered in groups for receiving the lessons of the gospel, if there were no Sabbath? If health, happy life, order, purity, social quiet, morals, and religion are worth promoting on the earth, then a Sabbath is most imperatively demanded. It is with many busy people, the Bible-day, the moral day, the religious day, and how wisely does it usher in their week of work!

This is not all, nor the half. The Sabbath has more solid foundation than natural laws, and social, moral, and religious necessities. It is not man's Sabbath. It is the "Sabbath of the Lord your God."

The Sabbath is either a human, or a Divine institution. Even if it be human in its origin and

authority, its overthrow might prove a sad curse on society. The innovation upon long established usages might work extensive and incurable injury. If human, it will, of itself, come to nought, when it ceases to be a blessing to the families of the earth.

All who hold, however vaguely, to the Divine authority of the moral law, admit the Sabbath was once a Divine institution. We shall not now enter on this discussion. If it was once Divine, it is a Divine institution now. The Lord of the Sabbath changed the day, when he changed the dispensation. But did this repeal the Sabbath? Did a change of dispensation repeal the principles of morals and religion? The place of worship was changed, (John iv. 21-24,) but did this annul the first commandment? The promise annexed to the fifth commandment is somewhat modified in its application to us, but does that repeal the law, "Honour thy father and thy mother?" Places and times may change, but principles of morality are eternal.*

We know that our Lord sanctioned the first day of the week as a Sabbath, that one half of his recorded appearances after the Resurrection were on that day, that the Holy Ghost descended on that day with the

* See Appendix A.

“promise of the Father,” that the disciples celebrated it regularly as the day of worship, and that all their teaching directs us to follow their example.* It received a new name, “the Lord’s day.”

Consider, too, that the Sabbath is established independently of the moral law. Two incomparable events form its support: God’s resting from the work of Creation, and Christ’s rising from the dead. It is founded on miracles, as well as on morals.

We must not, however, undervalue its establishment on morals. The law of Sabbath keeping is a moral law, “Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.”

If it be not a sin to break the Sabbath, then it is not a sin to steal. Can any body of men repeal the law against theft, the law against murder, the law against falsehood? How then repeal the Sabbath? If you allow some to disregard one moral law, why not grant a license to violate the entire code? If a company of men, associated, may run their cars on the Sabbath, why not grant them full license to run over every man that stands heedless on the track? Suppose a corporation ask a license to crush all morals, violate all social happiness, and destroy religion, could a city grant

* See Appendix B.

that? Could a legislature? Could any human power? Every anti-Sabbath movement tends to this. No wonder, then, that the intentionally opprobrious charge against our religious body is true, yes, honourable in the highest degree. We believe it is true of other denominations also.

“They had and still have all the rigidity of KNOX and CALVIN relative to the Sabbath. They are not likely at this day to yield it. The observance of the Sabbath constitutes the corner stone of their religion. By it, and with it, they will stand. No reasoning, political or theological, could induce them to yield an iota of their belief, no matter how forcibly urged or strongly presented.” Of course not! “We will obey God rather than men.” Of whom, alone, is a repeal of the Sabbath to be asked? Of God alone. Yes, you must have the face to ask God to repeal his moral law, and when we petition men, especially corporations, to observe the Sabbath, let us do it wisely. It may appear prudence to ask it of them as a favour to us—ask that we may be undisturbed in our worship. Is it not wise to ask it respectfully on moral grounds, as our right and as God's requirement? They will respect us for principles, where they might not hear us for policy.

III. What was the design of the Sabbath? Was it, alone, that the Lord God might take delight in its observance? Pleasing indeed, to Him, must it have been to rest as he did, after the first six days, and behold how harmoniously the natural laws of Creation produced their effects, and manifested his glory. Pleasing, indeed, to Him, to behold how the moral laws produced their effects on this day of human rest, as men laid aside the garments of labour, refreshed their minds with thanksgivings, entered his courts with praise, gave their thoughts to higher, holier themes than worldly gains and studies, and let their hearts express their love to the Father of life, for his unspeakable gift; more pleasing than for us to look on the landscape after the storm, which caused every tree to groan, has passed by, and the calm and sunshine are resting there in freshest beauty.

But this alone was not the design. "The Sabbath was made for man." It helps make him holier and happier. It gives him a rest for the promotion of righteousness. It helps elevate him individually, socially, mentally, and morally. It leads him heavenward, to that rest which remains for the people of God. It makes his Saturday-

night a time for happier review of the six toilsome days. It makes him, on Monday morning, feel his strength renewed for honest labour. It gives him a more cheerful face to his neighbour's greeting along the way; a clearer mind for honest calculations; a warmer heart for benevolence; a more skilful hand for the plough of the field, or the pen of the study or counting house, or the plane of the shop; a purer conscience, and a firmer courage to resist temptation and fulfil the noblest resolutions of his holier hours. Yes, the Sabbath was made for man; made for the rich man to keep holy; made for the poor man so that he may say, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." Every man is the better for keeping it holy. No one is so poor that he may violate it. No classes of men are so confined to toils, that they may turn the day to mirth and noisy glee. "It is an institution of mercy. In perfect harmony with the gospel it heightens good-will and kindness to men. It brings, as Coleridge well expressed it, fifty-two spring days every year to this toilsome world; and may justly be regarded as a sweet remnant of Paradise, mitigating the now inevitable burdens of life, and connecting

the region of bliss that has been lost with the still brighter glory that is to come."*

IV. It is a day when we should lay aside as many social distinctions as possible. The rich and the poor meet together before Him, who is the Maker of them all. Lofty and lowly should bow in praise before Him. Let not any class so dress for the house of God, that another shall feel excluded. Let the ornaments of glittering, fickle fashion, be laid aside by the wealthy; and those of plainest garb, often of the most fervent piety, will not be ashamed to sit beside them in the house of prayer and praise. How many a little jewel becomes a huge stumbling block, when out of place! So too of tastes, literary cultivation, and artistic refinement. Shall all the services, especially the preaching and singing, be arranged to benefit only the few, while the many would be denied a hearty enjoyment therein? Is there not a fault here? Is there not a reason here, why many feel reluctant to go to the house of God? Should the poorest feel that their best and neatest garb is in painful contrast with the costly decorations upon those for whom they nobly toiled during the six long days?

* Fairbairn's Typology. Vol. ii. p. 113.

Let plainness and neatness (for in some respects " cleanliness is next to godliness") take the precedence of showy fashion ; let the humblest and most illiterate feel that they have a part in both sermon and song, and then many vacant seats in the churches will be filled, many of the labouring classes will be saved from the degradation which attends Sabbath-breaking, and many of those who stroll through lanes or streets upon God's holy day will become keepers at home, searching the Scriptures to find the truth of the things declared in the sanctuary. The movement, in Paris, and in some other cities, tending toward greater simplicity of dress for the Sabbath day, should not be a mere novel fashion. There is sound principle for the support of such a custom. It is well for church-going people to consider whether their modes of dress do not keep many of the labouring classes out of the house of God. The remedy is easy. 1 Pet. iii. ; James ii.

V. There are those who would pervert the Sabbath. " When will the Sabbath be gone ?" When will its strictness be done away ? They complain of the stringency of human laws, and the strong force of religious opinion. They are not asking that men shall be allowed to labour on the Sabbath.

They claim it as a day of rest. They admit its necessity as a resting day; the only day, say they, "that man is not the slave of man, that the smoking factory, the hissing engine, does not claim him as a slave; that grasping Commerce can relax her hold; that the teeming, overtaxed brain can sink into contemplation and repose, and think, not for the public and the world, but for itself."

Yes, they plead for a Sabbath. But how would they have it kept? In God's way, as a day of worship, of religious instruction, of holy culture, of mercy? Do they call upon the Church to help the poor man to the house of God, to put garments on the beggar and show his feet the way to the altar, to gather the idlers of the streets and teach them the law of God, the gospel of Christ, and do something to promote brotherhood between the rich and the poor? No! They would separate the poor from the rich, and fire the labourer's soul with sophistical complaints. They would send the classes, for whom they pretend to plead in guardianship, away from the altar, away from the cross, away from their Bibles, away from their God. They would pervert the day of worship into a day of amusement, although the amusements

would prove so many steps to dissipation. They point the labourer away from the sanctuary, to the grove, the seaside, and the pleasure-ground. "Let him see God's works," they say, after shutting God's words from his eyes. And what must be done to secure all this? The car and the carriage must run and rattle through the streets. To drivers and conductors the order must go, "You must labour on the Sabbath or give up your place; work on Sunday or sacrifice your family!" Hotels by the seaside must be filled. Crowds must disturb the worship of those who are assembled in churches near the park and the grove. Bands of music must be enlisted for the day. Perhaps a "show" would be soon demanded, or a "regatta," or a "race," or "prize-fight," and perhaps an introduction of more exciting Spanish Sunday amusements would be soon demanded. If you undertake to amuse people, where will you stop? No one amusement lasts long; more exciting games must follow those which become tedious, and where will the people stop? Not with merriment. They are impelled to dissipation. There is no telling the consequences of the perversion of the Sabbath. The poor man's face would show it. His family, his home, his shop, would declare it. He would lose em-

ployment, lose character, lose his soul. Said Daniel Webster: "I once defended a man charged with the awful crime of murder. At the conclusion of the trial, I asked him what could induce him to stain his hands with the blood of a fellow being. Turning his blood-shot eyes full upon me, he replied, in a voice of despair, 'Mr. Webster, in my youth I spent the holy Sabbath in evil amusements, instead of frequenting the house of prayer and praise.' Could we go back to the early years of all hardened criminals, I believe, firmly believe, that their first departure from the path of morality, was when they abandoned the Sabbath-school, and their subsequent crimes might thus be traced back to the neglect of youthful religious instruction."

Lord Castlereagh, an Irish statesman who possessed excellent natural endowments, took his own life, and when one of his earliest and best friends heard of the suicide, he exclaimed, "Poor Castlereagh! he had no Sabbath!"

VI. Notice the plea for this Sabbath desecration; a professed sympathy for the labouring classes. They work hard all the week. They go alternately from heated homes to heated shops. When can they linger in the parks? When sit down in the

cool shade of the grove and feel at rest? When stand by the sea-shore and watch the playing of the waves? When wander by the shaded stream, and feel their pulses beat with fresher energy? When look about on that creation on which God's eye fell when he "rested from all his work?" When bare the forehead to the pure breeze and feel that half of liberty is to breathe fresh air? When do their lungs freely play and shake consumption off? Truly this calls for sympathy. And hence some, who assume to have the only sympathies felt for the labourer, plead, that the Sabbath is the day for all this recreation; that it is the only day the poor man has for it, and therefore let every facility be furnished to promote this desecration!

Another class, the most clamorous on this subject, is composed of those who make money by Sabbath violation: editors of Sunday papers* and the venders of them; keepers of shops and saloons to which many prefer to resort rather than stroll in the country; musicians employed to play, as an enticement to bring patronage to the drinking and gambling shops; men who make drunkards and rioters, whose support will fall to hospitals

* We know that most of the office-work of those papers is not done on the Sabbath.

and asylums, if not to penitentiaries ; companies whose machinery is productive, or whose livery is for hire by those who make drives and excursions on the Sabbath ; sport-seekers, who indulge in angling, or hunting, or racing ; and large numbers whose bent is to gratify vicious propensities, for which labour or law would allow no other time.

Of these Sabbath-breakers we have only to say that they deserve no such sympathy as that demanded. Let them turn to honesty, temperance, good order, and cease to be corrupters of all with whom they associate, and then, if they are not able to live by six days of honest effort, the Christian world should render them assistance. Sympathy *for* them, and sympathy *with* them are two very different things. The one we cherish, the other would ruin us. God's sympathy *for* them declares, The Sabbath was made for them to keep holy. To keep it holy, they should keep themselves holy.

Another class is composed of those who labour on the Sabbath. Many of them are compelled to labour on that day or lose employment during the week, for "tighter and tighter the grip of toil groweth." They would prefer to rest. Six days of toil would support their families. Conscience and interest are in conflict. They do not clearly see that conscience

would pave a better road to prosperity and happiness, and that they should obey God rather than men. The picture is drawn in their imaginations of an ejection from their situations, of unsuccessful appeals for employment; beggared families, driven from a neat cottage to a dingy hovel, their furniture pawned for a pittance of daily supplies; and their falling tears pervert conscience till it says, "Keep your place and break the day!" Their minds and bodies are work-worn, care-worn, never rested, never happy. The church to which they once resorted, is visited no more. The Sabbath-school is not attended by the children. The Bible lies with the dust gathering upon it. Perhaps that poor man's name is upon some church roll. To his pastor he must say, "I cannot find time for religion. My business! My business! This, or worse!"

Where are the advocates of the rights and liberties of those poor men? Many of them work on Sabbath to give others the amusement for which the sympathetic plea is made! These pleaders do not take up their cause. Oh no! give them a Sabbath, and these other classes could have no means of moving away from the churches to places where indulgence in mirth or wickedness

could be taken. Surely we may plead, without resort to sophistries, for those who are compelled to labour on the day which they choose to keep holy. The Sabbath was made for them; shall they not have its benefits?

VII. Is there any real force in this plea for the hard labourers of the week? They are overworked. Their faces are ground. They need rest. They need holidays. They should have their visits to groves and seashores. They should see the yellow harvests, the green cornfields, the flowers on the lawns, the oaks of the vales, the rocks of the mountain. Their children should see the works of God, and be told they are specimens of his creation, among which there are innumerable evidences that his "tender mercies are over all his works," and from which come a thousand songs to show his glory and cheer their hearts. They should have their play by the brooks and their romps upon the green grass. They should see and gather some illustrations of the rich imagery of the Bible, and with grateful emotion combine the harmonies between God's works and his holy word. Let them see how "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills;" how "the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,

which sing among the branches ;” how “ He watereth the hills from his chambers ; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man ; that he may bring forth food out of the earth ;” how “ the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof ; the world and they that dwell therein.”

But we ask candidly ; Is this any reason why they should violate the Sabbath of the Lord their God ? The violation is not in beholding God’s works. It is in the Sabbath travel, and the amusement for which the excursion is made.

Consider, that the more honest, upright, and Christian labourers do not make this plea. They would not desecrate the Sabbath, if the law allowed it. Some of the best essays upon this subject have come from labouring men ; one of these says, “ Let us, who are working men, and who profess to know something of our rights *in*, and our duties *on*, the Sabbath, inform the patriots of our day that our condition is not to be improved by any innovation of its sacred injunctions. We are not to sell our sacred birthright for a mess of pottage.”*

* Torch of Time, (Presbyterian Board of Publication,) p. 7.

Consider too that the Sabbath law is God's law. If you repeal the Sabbath for the poor man's benefit, why not repeal the law against theft, and let him help himself from his neighbour's granary? If you allow one his amusements, why not allow another his gain, by selling goods, or tilling the soil?

Do you think the Sabbath law comes hard upon him? Does not the law of the seasons come harder, according to such reasoning—winter's cold when thousands beg—summer's heat when thousands faint away and contract diseases? Can you repeal the law of the seasons? Neither can you repeal the law of the Sabbath. You have no power over the one, and no right over the other. But we deny that the Sabbath makes the poor man's lot the harder to bear. It was made for him. It is his day of days, whose "rest hath wings to fold o'er hearts a-weary." You rob him of his "rights" when you take away his Sabbath. You deny his children their pleasure in his fatherly affections, their instruction in his lessons of love. Never can I think that this plea comes from the Christian cottager, to whom a Sabbath at home is a feeble type of his Father's house. He can say,

Oh day, most calm, most bright!
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend, and with his blood;
The couch of time; care's balm and bay;
The week were dark but for thy light;
Thy torch doth show the way.—HERBERT.

Consider too, that those classes of labourers who have violated the Sabbath have made themselves worse and worse, and made their condition the harder to bear. In England the experiment was prolific of evil.* The Sunday entertainments proved demoralizing. In America, where "young independence" grows even more reckless, there can be no good results. Troops that go out in the Sunday cars do not keep the day in refreshing and innocent amusements. They do not return, rested in body and purer in heart. Wicked men will not let them alone. They follow them, like harpies, to privily catch the poor for a reward. The worst enemy of the labouring classes is the man, who for selfish ends would have the Sabbath desecrated.

VIII. There is a "more excellent way" to give the labourers the recreation asked for them. The

* See Appendix C.

poorest man gains nothing by a disregard of the Sabbath. The poorest family should have the liberty of the grand woods, and the merry brooks. But how? Not by taking God's time. Take time from the six days. Let the employer give him time. He is bound to do this by all the laws of humanity. It would not conflict with his own interests; an overworked man will double his service after such recreations. Give him higher wages for less time, and there will be no loss. The employer will get all that is his right. The labourer will be hardier, happier, live longer, and make his Sabbath a type of that rest, when there shall be no sweat on the brow, and God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes. God has never said to the poor man, "Six days shalt thou labour for a hard master upon the lowest wages, that the seventh may be spent in trying to regain strength and courage for the leisureless toils of another week." No, never! There is no such doom upon the poor man, unless the rich employers put it there by compulsion. We do not believe that this is mere theory. We do not think that employers would lose by giving proper week-day recreation to their labourers; not if they expect to keep the same labourers, whose experience can always shorten time from year to year in their

establishments. A fair, honest test would not prove a fruitless experiment. If you and I were such labourers, we feel sure, that honour, self-respect, and gratitude, would allow nothing to be lost by such extensions of favour. Nor is this our argument mere expediency! No, we plead principle. Whether the employer gain or not, by such a plan, in a worldly sense, still he is bound to have no such labour done for him on the Sabbath. He is bound to let his labourers have the Sabbath for religious observance. If they need other daily rest, he has no right to deny it. He does not grant them the Sabbath. It is not from his good-will that they may rest on that day. That grant and that right come from God—much of the hardest work in the world is done in the cities by poor men, and that for the merest pittance of hire, and when the cry comes up for rest to these labourers, the response is, “Turn the Sabbath into a merry-day and let them have it.” Oh, what will not Mammon and Bacchus dare to do? What a plea can be made by the sophistries of professed sympathy! Let Mammon give a play time to this toiling crowd! Nay, rather, let Mammon allow them God's own grant of proper leisure during the six days of toil. Let them have God's holy

day for worship. Let them be welcomed to the house of God, and given a place, where they may know what there is in Christian brotherhood. Let not fashion drive them away from the altars on which they may dedicate themselves to the Lord, a living offering, well pleasing and acceptable. Let them live and die with this one glad thought : a Sabbath, inviolate, unperverted, unbroken !

IX. The Sabbath was made for man,—made a Sabbath for man's keeping, and benefit—and not man for the Sabbath.* Man is worth more than the day. Better sacrifice the day for the man, than man for the day. This applies to works of necessity and of mercy. Better labour all that day to save a man, than to let him perish, for need of a merciful service. You indeed thus honour the day, the man, and the Lord God.

It does not apply to the case of allowing the labourer to break God's law for the sake of amusement. If you sacrifice the day for the man in such a way, you sacrifice day and man together. You dishonour the day, the man, and the Lord God.

* Matthew Henry says—" Man was not made for the Sabbath ; for he was made a day before the Sabbath was instituted. Man was made for God, and for his honour and service, and he must rather die than deny him."

You commit two offences: one against the moral law, the other against humanity. You desecrate morals, you degrade men. The poor man's last state would, thus, be worse than the first. This text has often been perverted, "as if the Lord had been there bringing in something new, instead of explaining what was old;" as if he had intended "to relax the existing law, and bring in some new modification of it." He was not modifying the law. He was correcting the false notions of those who quibbled at his works of necessity and mercy on that day. His own example illustrates the words, "The Sabbath was made for man." For man, as man; not for an Israelite alone. So long as man exists as a species, so long is the Sabbath to exist for his benefit and observance. There is a formula here, in which the design of every blessing may be expressed. Gold was made for man, and not man for gold. Grain is "for the service of man," and not man for grain. You do not annul the appointment of gold or of grain by this expression. You do not say that they may be perverted: the one to be a means of covetousness, the other to be a means of producing alcohol. You declare that they are simply means of procuring a benefit for man. So is the Sabbath a means of

securing the highest, holiest interest of man. It was not made for man to employ as he pleases. When abused, it is not a Sabbath to the abuser. He makes it a day of sin. By abusing it he scorns a thousand other blessings involved in its observance. It does not stand alone. All Christianity stands with it. The good John Owen said, "For my part, I must not only say, but plead, whilst I live in this world, and leave this testimony to the present and future ages, that if ever I have seen anything of the ways and worship of God, wherein the power of religion or godliness hath been expressed; anything that hath represented the holiness of the gospel and the Author of it; anything that looked like a prelude to the everlasting Sabbath and rest with God,—it hath been with them . . . among whom the Lord's day hath been held in highest esteem, and a strict observation of it attended to, as an ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have no right to make the Sabbath bend to any purposes of mammon or amusement. Merely to rest from the overworking of Saturday, or for gaining the more on Monday, is serving mammon rather than God. If we need a ride, a visit to the woods, a rest by the cheering streams, a

stroll among the trees which shade the graves of our beloved dead, there are six days from which to choose an hour for this recreation. We are not to crowd all bodily rest into this one day. We should not become too weary for a holy Sabbath keeping. Our Sabbath begins at as early an hour as other days. The sun rises as soon, and so should we. Well would it be for us to enter upon this wakeful, meditative, undisturbed, Sabbatic rest as early as Mary went to the Saviour's tomb.

It is called, by one of the Jewish writers, "a notable error to imagine the Sabbath to have been instituted for idleness; for as idleness is the mother of all vice, it would then have been the occasion of more evil than good." Sabbath idleness will lead to every day sin.

It is a mercy that God instituted a Sabbath for man, for he would never have made one for himself. Men would not even make a night for themselves, had not God so arranged the curtains which shut out the day, that man has nothing to do in drawing them. God draws them at his own hour, and man must enter within the veil. God brings the Sabbath on, whether we will have it or not, and as it comes in mercy, let us keep it in holiness, and as the week is ending, and Saturday night

seems to be tempering itself with the sweetness of the Lord's day morning, shall we not gladly sing:

When the worn spirit wants repose
And sighs her God to seek,
How sweet to hail the evening's close
That ends the weary week?

Brethren, do we appreciate this gift of God? Do we rest from toils and thoughts of toils, from amusements, wit, mirth, levity, and all that mars this Sabbath keeping? Christian parent, do you teach your children? The Sabbath-school cannot do this for you. Your pastor cannot. Is there a little group about you listening to that "sweet story of old?" I love the description of the "Cottar's Saturday Night." But what I love more is the memory of a real Sabbath scene at the old home. A father sat by the "stand," and the family Bible lay open upon it; a mother sat with her little one, teaching him becoming reverence; a group of children made the fire side circle complete. We were catechized, and the Sabbath-school lessons and perhaps the sermon were reviewed; every word of the chapter was heard, for a question was often asked upon the sentence just fallen from a father's lips; some stirring hymn for the march to heaven was sung; and then, as we all

knelt before Jehovah's throne, we felt that there was nothing worth living for but God, and Christ, and eternity. The strongest emotions of love for home I ever knew, were felt when, after long absence, I returned, to make the family circle complete, and heard a kneeling father thank God that all his children were gathered there again, except the little ones whom Jesus had taken in his arms and borne away to a land not very far off. Never to me was the service of church or temple such a type of that worship in a heavenly Father's house, where the song is that of Moses and the Lamb, and the praise is, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." It is home's great attraction.

Fellow labourer in the church, is this a day of usefulness? With many it must be a day of Christian activity. If David could take the "shew bread" to satisfy his necessities, we may break the bread of eternal life unto others. There is one harvest in which we may reap upon the Sabbath. It is that on which our Lord looked when he said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." There are places round about the holy hill which must be

made a blessing. Teach and exhort. Plead and pray. Work the works of God on this day. If the labourers are few, we must bear more of the heat and burden.

Friends and companions, who are not professedly of this fold, how do you keep your Sabbaths? Perhaps your best impressions are received this day. It is a "day of good tidings." "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, [from trampling on, or encroaching upon 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."

There are many who do appreciate this holy day, and appropriate its blessings. It were impossible to tell their delight and devotion as they hail its welcome dawn. How they sing,

"Lord, in the morning thou shall hear
My voice ascending high!"

How gladly their feet go up to the worship

of God! How gratefully they think, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul!"

The Sabbath was made for them, and they were made to glorify God, to show forth his loving-kindness in the morning and his faithfulness every night; to illustrate the love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and show the glories of an everlasting redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord. And among the blessings, which they would deliver untarnished to their children, is the Sabbath inviolate, unbroken,—a Sabbath hallowed by a cessation from human toils; by all the tribute of worship which grateful hearts can render; by the deeds of love and mercy which benevolence demands; and by the blessing of God to crown every holy effort, and to engage all hearts in Jehovah's everlasting praise. Thanks be unto the Lord that the Sabbath was made for man. "Blessed is the man . . . that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." Will the Lord hasten the fulfilling of that lovely and rich promise, when "it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one

Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Evermore, Lord of the Sabbath, may we be "in the spirit on the Lord's day."

A few more Sabbaths here
Shall cheer us on our way ;
And we shall reach the endless rest,
The eternal Sabbath day.
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that sweet day ;
Oh, wash me in thy precious blood,
And take my sins away.—BONAR.

A P P E N D I X .

APPENDIX A.

“POINT out to us a single religious observance of the Hebrews that is now done away, and we are able to say of it, and of all others which have experienced a similar termination, that they, every one of them, lie without the compass of the ten commandments. They have no place whatever in that great record of duty, which was graven on tables of stone, and placed within the holy of holies, under the mercy-seat. Now how does the law of the Sabbath stand in this particular? We perceive it occupying its own conspicuous place in that register of duties, all of which have the substance and the irrevocable permanency of moral principle. On reading over the other articles of this memorable code we see all of them stamped with such enduring characters of obligation, as no

time can wear away; and the law of the Sabbath taking its station in the midst of them, and enshrined on each side of it, among the immutabilities of truth, and justice, and piety."—*Chalmers's Sermon on the Christian Sabbath.*

APPENDIX B.

THE change from the last to the first day, was the same as from the seventh to the eighth. Some writers have sought for a foreshadowing of this, in the prominence given to the eighth day in the Old Testament; on the eighth day circumcision was performed; the first born of cattle offered; animals accepted in sacrifice; priests consecrated; certain cleansings performed; the temple dedicated, and in the time of Hezekiah sanctified; the Feast of Tabernacles terminated; a solemn assembly was held in Ezra's time; the first fruits accepted—a type of Him who was the "first fruits of them that slept." The *fifteenth* day was an eighth day (after twice seven). The *fiftieth* would be the first day after seven times seven days, *i. e.*, an eighth day.

In fulfilling these types,—Jesus was *revived*

as the first born from the dead, his sacrifice *accepted*, and as the great High Priest, he was "*consecrated* for evermore" on the eighth day, or our first day of the week. It is well to note this. It shows that the change was not an abrupt one, and perhaps it was fully provided for in the ceremonial law.—*See Haldane on Romans, pp. 708–713.* We do not need a new precept for the Sabbath. "A re enactment in the New Testament, it has been properly observed, would be a denial, by implication, of its previous institution and authority. Nothing is re-enacted in the gospel." All we need is, a proof of the change, and authority for it. That we have in the examples of our Lord and his apostles.—*Haldane, p. 714.*

APPENDIX C.

HUGH MILLER wrote thus of his observations on Sabbath amusements in London. "I lodged within a stone cast of the Great Manchester and Birmingham Railway. I could hear the roaring of the trains along the line, from morning till midday,

and during the whole afternoon ; and just as the evening was setting in, I sauntered down to the gate by which a return train was discharging its hundreds of passengers, fresh from the Sabbath amusements of the country, that I might see how they looked. There did not seem much of enjoyment about the wearied and somewhat dragged groups ; they wore, on the contrary, rather an unhappy physiognomy, as if they had missed spending the day quite to their minds, and were now returning, sad and disappointed, to the round of toil, from which it ought to have proved a sweet interval of relief. A congregation just dismissed from hearing a vigorous evening discourse would have borne, to a certainty, a more cheerful air. There was not much actual drunkenness among the crowd. . . not a tithe of what I would have witnessed, on a similar occasion, in my own country ; a few there were, however, evidently muddled ; and I saw one positive scene." He also says,

"Among the existing varieties of the genus philanthropist—benevolent men bent on bettering the condition of the masses—there is a variety who would fain send out our working people to the country on Sabbaths, to become happy and innocent in smelling primroses, and stringing daisies on grass

stalks; an excellent scheme theirs, if they but knew it, for sinking a people into ignorance and brutality,—for filling a country with gloomy work-houses, and the work-houses with unhappy paupers. 'Tis pity that the institution of the Sabbath, in its economic bearings, should not be better understood by the utilitarian." "In order to degrade him (man) into a poor unintellectual slave, over whom tyranny, in its caprice, may trample rough shod, it is but necessary to tie him down, animal like, during his six working days, to hard engrossing labour, and to convert the seventh into a day of frivolous, unthinking relaxation. History speaks with much emphasis on the point. The old despotic Stuarts were tolerable adepts in the art of king-craft, and knew well what they were doing, when they backed with their authority the Book of Sports. The merry, unthinking serfs, who, early in the reign of Charles the First, danced on Sabbaths round the May pole, were afterwards the ready tools of despotism, and fought that England might be enslaved. The Ironsides, who, in the cause of religious freedom, bore them down, were staunch Sabbatarians." He then refers to the value of the Sabbath as illustrated by the Scotch in the 17th and 18th centuries, when "religion and the

Sabbath were their sole instructors." "There were no Societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in those days. But the Sabbath was kept holy; it was a day from which every dissipating frivolity was excluded by a stern sense of duty. The popular mind, with weight imparted to it by its religious earnestness, and direction by the pulpit addresses of the day, expatiated on matters of grave import, of which the tendency was to concentrate and strengthen, not scatter and weaken the faculties; and the secular cogitations of the week came to bear, in consequence, a Sabbath day stamp of depth and solidity. The one day in the seven struck the tone for the other six. Our modern apostles of popular instruction rear up no such men among the masses, as were developed under the Sabbatarian system in Scotland."*

* First Impressions of England and its People. pp. 67—71.

THE LORD'S DAY.

SWEET is the work, my God, my King,
To praise thy name, give thanks and sing ;
To show thy love by morning light,
And talk of all thy truth at night.

Sweet is the day of sacred rest ;
No mortal care shall seize my breast ;
Oh ! may my heart in tune be found,
Like David's harp of solemn sound !

My heart shall triumph in my Lord,
And bless his works and bless his word ;
Thy works of grace how bright they shine !
How deep thy counsels ! how divine !

Fools never raise their thoughts so high ;
Like brutes they live, like brutes they die ;
Like grass they flourish, till thy breath
Blast them in everlasting death.

But I shall share a glorious part,
When grace hath well refined my heart,
And fresh supplies of joy are shed,
Like holy oil to cheer my head.

Sin (my worst enemy before)
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more ;
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again.

Then shall I see, and hear, and know
All I desired or wished below ;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.