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THE
SABBATH

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THE SABBATH.

DISCOURSES
ON
THE SABBATH.

BY
GEORGE DUFFIELD AND ALBERT BARNES.



PHILADELPHIA:
GEORGE W. DONOHUE,
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1836.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourses were preached by the authors, on the same day, in accordance with an arrangement with several of their ministering brethren. The arrangement originated in a deep and growing conviction that the Lord's day was increasingly disregarded in the city where they dwell, and throughout the land; and that the violation of the day was threatening destruction to all that is valuable to us as citizens and as Christians. Believing that an appeal to the people of their respective charges, on this subject, would not be in vain; believing, especially, that Christians might be excited to a deeper reverence for the Christian Sabbath, and that, through them, an extensive influence might be excited in others, the dis-

courses were delivered. With the humble hope that the same sentiments may be useful to those to whom the discourses were delivered, and to others also, they are now submitted to the Christian public through the press. But one object has been aimed at in these discourses; but one is desired by their authors in their publication—that those who are now Christians, and all others, may be led to the observance of the divine command, “REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.”

Philadelphia, Sept. 16, 1836.

THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE
CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

BY GEORGE DUFFIELD.

PART I.

PART I.

CONTAINING THE ARGUMENT FROM THE NATURE OF
MAN.

The Sabbath was made for man.—*Mark*, ii. 27.

“In those days,” said Nehemiah, “saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles

of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?"

Nehemiah was a patriot. His patriotism was not that morbid selfishness, which seeks the public good because it conduces to its own interest. He attempted a thorough reformation among his fellow citizens, and risked every thing in the attempt. The influence of his government, and the jealousies of neighbouring nations, were opposed to his efforts. Every device was used to defeat his design. At one time he was fawned upon and flattered, and at another, frowned upon and menaced. Plots were laid against his life. Detraction was employed to injure his reputation, and to crush his influence. Attempts were made to deceive him by hypocritical appearances and professions of piety. But all failed. Nothing could divert him from his efforts to correct the evils and abuses prevailing in his country.

The evil of main consequence, and which threatened the very existence of his nation, was Sabbath-breaking. It had become exceedingly alarming, and almost universal. By multitudes it was made a day of business; and a regular market was established, as well for the merchant as the victualler. The nobility and the court encouraged secular transactions on that day; but Nehemiah contended with them on the subject. In so doing he urged the claims of God, and reminded those who were guilty both of the evil and of the danger of the desecration of the Sabbath, as verified in the conduct of their ancestors, and the judgments with which they had been visited.

Few will deny that if God, the rightful moral governor of the universe, has set apart to himself every seventh day, and required it to be appropriated to his worship, it cannot but be as dangerous as it is daring for the rulers

of a nation, the men of station, property and influence, and the people generally, to refuse or neglect to consecrate it to him, and to suffer business, recreation or pleasure, to pervert it from the ends for which it has been reserved and designed. Whether it be the fact, that God does require the consecration of a seventh portion of our time, therefore, is a question of very serious import. That he actually did from the Jews, during the period of their theocracy, will be denied by none who admit the scriptures of the Old Testament to be valid evidence in the case. The most zealous anti-sabbatarians,—which, by the way, may be regarded as the distinctive appellation of the infidel portion in our country at the present time,—will generally admit, that if the Bible is evidence worthy of reliance, there is evidence enough that the character of the Jewish Sabbath, and the obligation of that people to observe it, were most sacred.

The idea has indeed been started, that the obligation of the Jewish Sabbath went no farther than to the observance of a seventh day of repose or animal rest, and that scenes of mirth and festive recreation were more appropriate to its use and design than the worship of Jehovah. A fallacious criticism has been summoned in support of this position, and it has received sanction and currency in the United States in an article published some years since in the American Quarterly Review. The falsity and absurdity of such an idea were satisfactorily and unanswerably exposed by the venerable Bishop White, of this city, in the second of three letters addressed by him to the editor of that periodical. Yet is there reason to apprehend that its pernicious influence has been extensively felt. Some mighty influence, unfavourable to the moral obligation of the Sabbath, has been at work of late. Of this, the rapid increase and growing extent of Sabbath desecration afford melancholy proof. It

is easy to see what the effect will be, if men's notions of the sanctity of the Jewish Sabbath can be impaired. The Christian Sabbath is confessedly a milder institution. Wherefore, it will be argued, if animal rest and festive recreation were the appropriate means of the sanctification of the Jewish Sabbath, any approximation to the pharisaic austerities by which its observance had been rendered onerous in the days of Christ, must be much more improper now, since the Jewish ritual and Jewish institutions have been supplanted by Christianity.

The sacredness and obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, under the Mosaic code, are not, however, to be successfully contested. It cannot for one moment be supposed, that a God of justice and benevolence would overwhelm a people as the Lord did Israel, with his desolating judgments, for appropriating to secular uses a day of mere pastime and festivity. But

if, on the other hand, as was the fact, he had reserved that day for his worship exclusively, and the observance of it in this way served great moral uses, and secured great social advantages, the desecration of it could not have occurred with impunity. This will not be denied by those who wish to secularize the Christian Sabbath. The argument just noticed is too refined and ingenious for them. They prefer to concede to the Jewish Sabbath all the sanctity claimed for it; but, at the same time, to affirm that its intention and uses were peculiar to the Jewish nation. The obligation to observe it, it is alleged, expired with Judaism, and forms no part of the Christian scheme. Hence they object to all civil enactments for the protection of the Sabbath, and refer whatever prejudice in its favour yet lingers in society, to the influence and authority of political constitutions or ecclesiastical decrees. This is the popular doctrine of this nation. On this ground American infidelity,—I use not the

term reproachfully, but with respect,—meets us; and when the Christian community urge the religious observance of their Sabbath, challenges us to produce the proof of its obligation.

It is designed in this discourse to show, that the obligation to observe a Sabbath did not originate in the special legislation of God for Israel, but grows out of the very exigencies of our nature: in doing which we shall have occasion to unfold **THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.**

It is proper, however, to premise, that the distinction between the Jewish and Christian Sabbath is freely admitted. There were some things characteristic of the former, which neither prior nor subsequent to its enactment formed any part of the moral obligation of the Sabbath. The promulgation of the law of the ten commandments on Mount Sinai, and the political legislation of the divine Being for the

Jewish nation, gave the Sabbath peculiar obligation and significancy among them. It became a sign and memorial of a special relation between God and that people, and of the deliverance he had wrought for them from Egyptian bondage and oppression.* The observance of it was required not only once in seven days, but limited to the seventh or last day of the week. The very strict abstinence from manual labour and social recreation which it required, and by which its character became assimilated to the entire and peculiar economy which God, as their political sovereign, had established with that people; the excessively severe and special penalties which were appointed for its neglect and desecration; and the engrafting on it of a whole series of acts of worship, adapted to the great uses and intentions of the Mosaic ritual, were merely incidental. Whatever obligations to observe the Sabbath originated either in the special

* Deut. v. 15.

political compact between God and that people, by virtue of which the theocratic form of government was established,—or in the peculiar and important uses which the observance of a Sabbath under such a constitution was designed to secure,—form no part of that which we contend, attaches to the Christian Sabbath.

It is proper still farther to premise, that the appropriation of the term Sabbath, to denote the Christian's day of rest, by Congregationalists and Presbyterians generally in this country, after the example of the Puritans, the Dissenters in England, and the Church of Scotland, does not imply the entire identity of the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath. To avoid making such an impression, and to distinguish the Christian from the Jewish Sabbath, some, as the Friends, have preferred to designate it by its numerical appellation, the first day of the week; and others, as many of the Baptists,

by its descriptive title, the Lord's day. The use of the term Sabbath, it is probable, has led some to suppose, that in so designating the Christian's day of rest, and in urging the obligation of Christians to cease from labour on the first day of the week, and to appropriate it to religious worship instead of social hilarity, the continuity and obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, with all its peculiarities and penalties, have been maintained.

Dr. Bound was the first person in England to awaken public attention to this subject, and to insist on the observance of the Sabbath with more care and exemplariness than were thought proper by the dignitaries and members of the established church. The governing clergy, with Archbishop Whitgift at their head, denounced Dr. Bound's book, gave orders for its being called in, prohibited it from being reprinted, and condemned it as advancing doctrines contrary to that of their church and the

laws of the kingdom—as disturbing the peace, and as tending to sedition. These proceedings, on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities, excited a prejudice against those who advocated the moral obligation of the Christian day of rest, and who used the term Sabbath by which to designate it. These prejudices have not wholly ceased, so that when in enforcing the moral obligation of the Christian day of rest it is called a Sabbath, objections are quickly made, that in so doing it is attempted to introduce the antiquated and obsolete Sabbath of the Jews. But assuredly no magnanimous mind will resort to such a mode of reasoning, whatever may be the prejudices against the term, or predilections for another. The term Sabbath is adopted in this discourse, to designate the Christian day of rest, because it was originally used by God himself, and has been sanctioned and approved by the divine Spirit speaking in the apostle Paul, when treating expressly of this day, notwithstanding he does

indeed rebuke the contentions prevailing in his day about the Jewish Sabbath. Let no one therefore suppose, because we use the term Sabbath in advocating the morality of the Christian day of rest, that we plead for the peculiarities of the Jewish Sabbath.

When addressing a Christian auditory, the Sacred Scriptures may be appealed to as of paramount authority. They are the testimony of Him who cannot lie. With those who reject their infallible authority and plenary inspiration, arguments thence deduced will not be deemed conclusive. They are only to be influenced by general moral and rational considerations, which make their appeal to men's judgment and natural sense of propriety. With the former, the question as to the moral obligation of the Christian Sabbath relates simply to a matter of fact, and to decide it, the record must be examined. It resolves itself into these two: Has God required the observance

of a Sabbath? and—Has there been made a record of this fact? With the latter we must adopt a different mode of procedure. The question with them relates to the reasonableness, importance, and necessity of observing such a day. Does it subserve the real interests of man, or are its claims an imposition? Are there, then, any considerations drawn from the nature of man, which will unfold the moral obligation of the Christian Sabbath, and show that it “WAS MADE FOR MAN,” and is demanded by the exigencies of our nature? In reply, I remark:

1. *That the observance of a Sabbath is demanded by our instinctive appetite for bliss.* Whoever acknowledges the existence of a supreme Being, on whom creation depends, will concede, that he might lawfully claim to be contemplated, by all his rational creatures, with appropriate reverence and regard. Indeed, the human mind cannot fail to form some exalted conceptions of the grandeur and glory of such

a being. The extent of his universe—the order and harmony of his creation—the richness and variety of nature's beauteous scenes—the endless series of living beings—the delicacy and aptitude, or the vastness and wisdom of their structure—the wise and benevolent designs for which they have been formed, and the admirable manner in which they have been fitted to meet them—the provision made for the healthful action and rational enjoyment of the higher orders of creation—the traces of wisdom and goodness, of power and design, which every where meet the wandering eye—and the universal subserviency of the creation to his plans and providence, cannot fail to inspire us with some lofty notions of the Deity, and to excite emotions which are in themselves fraught with bliss. Now it is the nature of man, that whatever views and feelings, tending to excite and elevate, take possession of the mind, do also seek and secure for themselves some appropriate method of expression. The language, the tone, the attitude, the countenance, all in-

dicating the emotions of the heart. Where the infinite and eternal Supreme, in the magnitude of his power, the majesty of his authority, the extent of his dominion, and the moral glory of his character, is contemplated, the attention is given to the sublimest object in the universe, and there must be excited, in some degree, the emotions which it is in the very nature of the sublime to inspire. These emotions, when excited, will express themselves. They cannot be restrained and held in absolute secrecy within the bosom where they are engendered, but will betray themselves in the hand uplifted—the eye kindling with devotion—the knees bowing to the earth—the cheek bedewed with tears—and the lips giving utterance to the mind's conceptions. Hence the original of divine worship. To deny to men the privilege of expressing their emotions, and of uttering the thoughts that excite them, is to make war upon their natural and inalienable rights. The very instincts of man's being lead him to

acts and expressions of adoration, where the feelings of reverence and regard for God are excited. He may, indeed, and alas ! often does most sadly err in the object of his worship, substituting the creature for the Creator ; but this affects not the strength of the argument.

Now man is no more certainly inclined, by the instinct of his being, to express the emotions which may be excited, than to seek the influence of social sympathy, in order to increase and prolong such as produce a pleasurable excitement. All our emotions are transient, and can only be sustained by resorting to some method to continue or repeat the first impressions that excited them. In all our pleasurable emotions we resort to society, that, by the interchange of sympathies, we may secure this result. Devotional feelings belong to the highest class of pleasurable emotions. Shall we be denied the bliss that springs from their social indulgence and expression ?

Does the votary of fashion or the stage claim the right of appropriating a time and a place in which to cherish his pleasurable emotions, and to prolong and repeat their excitement? And shall the religious sensibilities be extinguished by refusing to us the right of associating for their public indulgence and expression? By no means, is the reply of every candid and benevolent mind. But is not this denied in effect, where the general voice, the sanctions of law, and the demands and habits of the business community, prevent the repose and concurrence essentially necessary to secure them? It becomes, in the eye of the majority, a selfish matter altogether to keep a Sabbath, when in doing so, men run counter to the regulations, habits and sentiments of the country. The sanction of business or worldly recreation on the Sabbath is, in reality, and will be found in its ultimate results to be, the denial of a Sabbath to us, and consequently of the social enjoyments to be had in religious worship.

The existence of the feelings which prompt to social religious worship is part of our bliss, and consequently the indulgence, expression, and revival of them, becomes an object of care, as certainly as, by the very law of our nature, we seek our own happiness. Shall we be compelled to have them locked up in the secrecies of our own heart? But this result will be secured if there be not the appropriation of some time, by general concurrence, to be set apart particularly for that purpose, and that too a time statedly and regularly recurring, not to be invaded by the demands of business or the distraction of worldly care—that the indulgence and cultivation of one class of our blissful emotions shall not conflict with others, and the necessary duties of our relations. The appropriation and observance of such time, and for such purpose, is substantially the keeping of a Sabbath. The observance of a Sabbath, therefore, is not of arbitrary appointment, but a thing demanded by the instincts of our rational nature, capacitated as it is for the

attainment of bliss in the adoration of the Deity. Just as important and reasonable, as proper and necessary, as it is that we should seek and attain to true happiness—so proper, and reasonable, and necessary is it, that we should have a Sabbath; and just as important and necessary as it is that there should be time appropriated, by general concurrence, for the prosecution of business and the cultivation of social feeling—so important and necessary is it that there be a pause in the pursuits of industry, and a general cessation from business, to admit of the observance of a Sabbath. The infidel and others, therefore, who by secularizing the Sabbath would rob us of it altogether, do in reality wage war against our purest and noblest delights—upon the means and sources of human bliss, and upon the very instincts and sensibilities of our nature. This argument may be carried yet farther.

2. The observance of a Sabbath is required by *the demands of our intellectual nature.*—If men

neglect the cultivation of their minds, they proportionally sink into ignorance and barbarism. They not only limit the sphere of their enjoyment, but degrade themselves to the level of the brute creation, for it is the rational mind that makes them to differ. We have, indeed, powers and capacities for bliss, in common with the brute; but the bliss is that of mere animal enjoyment. Our intellectual powers qualify us for joys, as superior to those of sense, as is the immortal mind superior to the mortal body. But in order to the bliss incident to intellectual advancement, there must be time appropriated for the cultivation and exercise of the rational powers. The thousand cares which distract men's attention—the imperious demands for personal and laborious industry which are daily made on the great mass of men, in attempting to secure the means of animal subsistence—the enslaving and stupefying influence of a sordid cupidity, which urges hundreds and thousands impetuously for-

ward in the pursuit of wealth—and the numerous and consequent distractions that thence arise, all exert a powerful influence to prevent or to retard intellectual improvement. Unless there is *some* time which, by common consent, shall be appropriated for the purpose of thought and reflection on matters foreign from their pecuniary interests and occupations, and unless the general arrangements of society be favourable to the stated, and regular, and universal intermission of manual labour and personal industry, the great mass of mankind will not and cannot be enlightened. Nothing but a Sabbath will meet this exigence of our rational nature. There is a stillness and quietude peculiar to the day set apart for the worship of God, which are essential to the healthful employment of the minds of the great mass of human society. And by that division of labour which brings the benefit of six days' study in the ministry of reconciliation to bear on the minds of hundreds on the Sabbath simultane-

ously, a most invaluable stimulus to mental exertion, and materials for mental improvement are furnished. Substitute a day of recreation and festivity, of social hilarity and glee, for the Sabbath, and refuse to the ministry direct and free access to the minds of the community, and you change the form of excitement, distraction and labour, but do not furnish any facilities or incitements for the healthful exercise of the mind, or the improvement of its intellectual powers. Ignorance and superstition will pervade the mass of society, just in proportion as you withhold the means of intellectual improvement peculiar to the Sabbath, and substitute holy-days and days of social or national festivity. It cannot be otherwise; and the history of our race proves that it has always been the fact. Where no Sabbath obtains, or where the laws and usages of society, or the superstitious substitution or addition of holy-days of man's appointment, sanction its perversion into a day of recreation and mirth,

of idleness and dissipation; the ministry of reconciliation become secular and corrupt, and a taste for intellectual improvement disappears. In the mass of the community, a taste for the fine arts may indeed be cultivated, as a taste for moral and intellectual improvement disappears, provided wealth, and the fondness for luxurious living attendant on wealth, extensively exist; but the taste for the fine arts will soon, under such circumstances, betray a disrelish for manly, intellectual pursuits, and the pencil and the chisel become auxiliary to the indulgence and cultivation of a growing lasciviousness, polluting and poisoning the fountains of intellectual improvement. Proofs of this appear extensively in the heathen world, and in those nations of Europe where the Sabbath has lost its sanctity. Italy affords a striking illustration of this. Ignorance and superstition become leagued with licentiousness, wherever and whenever the desecration of the Sabbath becomes universal, however

that desecration is produced. A few individual cases may be excepted, but the mass desire not high intellectual improvement. The time and means appropriate to it are wanting. For, the taste for it has been destroyed by the influence of an effeminate refinement, of the dominion of fashion, and of a luxurious sensuality. Imagination takes the place of reason, and passionate excitement is substituted for the force of truth.

But where a Sabbath obtains, there a seventh portion of a man's life is or may be appropriated to those mental exercises, to which the worship of God and the gospel of Christ invite, and which discipline the mind, elicit thought, and elevate the intellectual character of man. No other means can be devised, so simple and so efficient, to enlighten and invigorate the mind of society, as the religious observance of a Sabbath. It is, in fact, "the great day of light to this benighted world. The earth would not

really be darker without the sun, than the intellectual hemisphere without the Sabbath." The argument may yet further be pursued, by the consideration,

3. *That the Sabbath is important and necessary, for the moral improvement of mankind.* Abstract the influence of religion from among a people and you at once impair their morals. Dr. Ward, the Baptist missionary in Hindostan, remarked, that during twenty years' residence in that country, he had never met one heathen that was a moral man. And Sir William Jones, after the same period of observation, testified that he never knew a Hindoo who would not perjure himself for money. Let a people once reject all religion, deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, set aside the Sabbath, substitute for it their days of social glee and dissipation, believe that death is an eternal sleep, and doubt the existence of God, and their infidelity and scepticism will bear away every moral bar-

rier, and pour in upon them floods of immorality and crime. The experiment was once tried in France, and such was the result. The restraints of religion, and the salutary influence of an evangelical ministry, cannot be permanently felt on the mass of society without a Sabbath. But in exact accordance with the influence of a Sabbath, in a community or nation, will be found its improvement in morality. Of this Scotland affords a striking example. Private morality, too, flourishes and prevails in the highest degree, where the sacredness of the Sabbath is most regarded. Do you ever find that villains and knaves, the licentious and gamblers, political intriguers and adventurers, corrupt and debauched legislators, or any of the great enemies of social order and moral purity, observe the Sabbath day? They are, in fact, its opposers and revilers; and well they may be, for its moral influence in preventing crime, or in exposing it to shame, imposes restraints more formidable and effectual

than any code of penal law enacted by man. The history of robbers, adulterers, murderers, assassins, and all the great desperadoes in crime, who have inflicted deep and bleeding wounds on society, and fallen sacrifices, themselves, to the incensed justice of their country, invariably proclaims, that with the neglect and desecration of the Sabbath commenced their career to ruin. Nothing can compensate for the want of a Sabbath, in attempts made to promote public virtue. While nothing, on the other hand, sheds such a salutary influence upon the minds of men, and facilitates their attempts at reformation and the practice of virtue as the Sabbath. The illumination of mind, the retirement into self, the converse with our own hearts, and the knowledge of man's deceitfulness and depravity, the cultivation of conscience, the purification of the passions, the restraint and government of the appetites, and the excitement of the generous affections, are greatly promoted by the ob-

servance of the Sabbath. These things are, in reality, secured by it; and give it incalculable importance in the preservation of moral and public virtue in the world. And, this being the fact, its influence on the public weal, and its conservative tendency among a people, are not to be questioned. It is the grand palladium of public morals, and, consequently, of national prosperity.

Whatever view, therefore, we take of man; whether we regard his *religious sensibilities*; his *intellectual powers*, or his *moral capacities*, the Sabbath is a most reasonable, important and necessary expedient to promote, alike, his highest and ennobling enjoyments, and his intellectual and moral improvement. What more, then, can be needed to convince every honest and reflecting mind of the moral obligation of the Sabbath? Who can, with impunity, resist the claims of that which is proper, and reasonable, important and necessary, not

only for his own best interests, but for those of society?

This argument might be pursued yet further, and the moral obligation of the Sabbath be proved from the influence which its observance necessarily exerts on social order, on domestic repose, on animal rest, on personal cleanliness, on the courtesies of life, on civil liberty, on the prevention of pauperism or the mitigation of its evils, on healthful ardour in the prosecution of business, on the wealth of nations, on political prosperity, and on the stability of governments. But the range is too extensive for the present discourse. The elements of the argument have been already given, and every reflecting hearer is capable of carrying them out, and applying them for himself.

The considerations already suggested relate only to the general moral obligation to observe a Sabbath.

In a subsequent discourse we shall notice the particular claims and obligation of the Christian Sabbath. In the mean time,

1. Let us learn what serious injury is done to the public weal by the desecration of the Sabbath. It is cutting the very ligaments that bind society together, and preserve it in healthful action. To co-operate with, to employ for that purpose, or to countenance those who desecrate it, is to connive at the destruction of public morals. What, then, shall be thought and said of their religion or patriotism who sacrifice its sanctity, and set aside its obligations for the purpose of pecuniary emolument? They cannot but be regarded as moral nuisances in the community:—as the incendiaries of public order, who seek to profit by the corruption and confusion they produce. Miserable is the plea of that man who alleges, that his worldly business requires he should travel on the Sabbath, or embark in companies and

schemes for enrichment, demanding their own, or the labour of others, on that day. The numerous companies which employ steam-boats, stages, packets and rail-road cars, and construct and own rail-roads, for the purpose of facilitating travelling on the Sabbath, are chargeable, in the sight of God, with the crimes of those whom they thus tempt, or enable, to pervert that day to business or to pleasure; and they should be held responsible by man for all the evils inflicted on the community by its profanation. By companies thus referred to, are not meant the boards in their collective character, but all and every one of their several stockholders. God will not deal with companies, but he will judge every one according to his deeds, whether they be good or evil. By holding a share in a stage, or car, or packet, or rail-road, owned by a company who use it on the Sabbath, the individual sanctions the profanation of that day, and seeks from the crimes of his fellow men to increase his worldly

gain. He, therefore, not only makes himself partaker of other men's sins, but renders them subservient to his advantage; and does, in fact, sacrifice, as far as his act and intention go, the interests of the community, the public morals, and the honour of God, for his own private and selfish ends. Can he be accounted innocent? To do so is to prove recreant to the interests of society, and to the honour of God. The principle involved in these remarks, applies to companies for the distribution of ice, and for the distilling of liquor, and to the victuallers and retailers, and all who engage in traffic or labour, manifestly not demanded by necessity or mercy.

2. Let us learn, also, how ruinous is the tendency of Sabbath desecration, on those who perpetrate it. The violation of the Sabbath is done in disrespect of moral obligations. It is an overt act of rebellion against God, who has a right to claim our expressions of

homage to himself on that day. It induces hardness of heart; for there can be no resistance of his claims without injuring our moral sensibilities. It exposes the perpetrator to endless temptations; leads him into dangerous and ruinous company; surprises him into sinful excesses; bears him away from the house of God and the restraining and sanctifying influence of a preached gospel; and squanders the time that might be profitably employed in mental and moral cultivation. How much knowledge might be gained by a man were he to begin in the season of youth, and devote the Sabbath to the study of the Bible, the perusal of moral and religious works, and to the quickening influence which the regular public preaching of the gospel will exert on the minds of those that take heed to the things which they hear. One-seventh part of a man's life cannot be thus spent without great and lasting improvement and benefit, as well in relation to this life as to the life to come. The cares and

labours of the week, and the fatigue and perplexity incident to worldly business, often prevent private attempts at intellectual improvement. How invaluable then is the Sabbath, which, once in seven days breaks in upon the bustle and business of life, secludes men from the interruption of company, throws a stillness around them, and invites them to think and meditate, to read and to reflect. If this sacred day be disregarded, and, instead of appropriating it with all the facilities it furnishes to the purposes of intellectual and moral improvement, it be made a day of pastime, sensuality will urge its demands, idleness will expose to powerful temptations, and, ere long, it shall be seen, that habits of sinful indulgence, the dominion of fleshly appetites, and a seared conscience have marked the wretched being as a candidate for everlasting wo.

THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE
CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

BY GEORGE DUFFIELD.

PART II.

PART II.

CONTAINING THE ARGUMENT FROM THE RECORD OF
ITS DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

The Sabbath was made for man.—*Mark*, ii. 27.

SOME suggestions have been made, designed to unfold our obligations to devote a portion of our time, regularly recurring, to the worship of God. How great or how small that portion should be, is a question of some interest. Experience proves, that the proportion of six days' labour, and one of rest, is best adapted to the physical constitution of man, and will enable him to effect, in a given period, the greatest amount of labour with the

least detriment to his muscular and intellectual energies. The argument for the moral obligation of the Sabbath, suggested by the exigencies of man's sensitive, intellectual and moral nature, might be yet farther strengthened by a reference to those of his physical constitution. The observance of a Sabbath can be shown to be the best provision for preserving the restorative power of the body, designed to compensate for the loss of muscular energy produced by continual labour and excitement. It is not said that thence may be inferred the moral obligation to devote the seventh part of our time to purposes of rest from labour and the worship of God. It ought to have its influence ; but that obligation is settled among Christians by the revealed will of God.

Yet here the argument is encumbered with difficulties. Although the Bible is the oldest book in the world, and claims to be a revela-

tion from God, having maintained its claims for thousands of years, in despite of all attempts to invalidate them; yet has it been limited in its circulation and influence. It was given originally to one nation, and for a long period confined almost exclusively to them. Such also, it is alleged, was the character of the Sabbath it enjoins.

In reply, it may be remarked, that, previously to the revelation of God's will becoming embodied in a volume, written by man at the suggestion of his Spirit, and being thus handed over to the Jewish nation as its special privilege and charge, the mind and will of God had been revealed, with sufficient distinctness, in separate but frequent communications to the whole human family. Divine revelations, and a divine intercourse with men, are assumed in all the mythological systems of the ancient nations;—which fact is proof conclusive, that however clearly they appear to be counter-

feits, there must have been a genuine original. If the revelations made to distinguished and holy persons, in all the early nations of antiquity, have been corrupted and lost, God is not chargeable with neglect or partiality; but the necessity of embodying his revelations in a *written* volume, under the infallible dictation of his Spirit, and of confiding them to the care of some one particular nation for their scrupulous preservation, and for transmission to future generations, is only rendered more apparent.

In examining, therefore, into the record, which the Bible contains with regard to the Sabbath, there are several questions which, it is obviously important, should be duly considered and answered, viz.

Was there a Sabbath observed in the world previously to the writings of Moses, with which confessedly commenced the system of written revelation?

If so, did the Sabbath, by divine appointment, sustain any change in its character and designs, which were limited and peculiar to the Jewish nation?

If such change was made by divine direction, has the law introducing it been abrogated?

If that law has been abrogated, has its abrogation rendered null the entire obligation with regard to the original Sabbath; or, in other words, does the obligation to keep a seventh part of our time as a Sabbath still exist, notwithstanding the Mosaic code has been superseded, or at least has expired by its own limitations?

And have we, on all these points, any documentary proof?

A reply to these inquiries will form the historical argument already referred to, and unfold more fully the MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

In reply to the inquiry, whether there was a Sabbath observed in the world prior to the writings of Moses, two things are essential to the establishment of the fact: FIRST, that there should be, in those writings, some recognition of the revelations previously made, or some allusions on the subject implying its existence: and, SECOND, that there should be some memorials of the same preserved in the usages of society, and in the profane history of high antiquity. On both points there is satisfactory evidence.

Moses states it as a fact, that the very first day after the work of creation had been completed, a Sabbath was divinely ordained to be kept. Moreover, his whole account of the process of creation, day after day, as being the work of six successive days of labour on the part of God, is given as the *rationale* of the Sabbath then instituted.* The objections of

* Gen. ii. 1—3.

some geologists against the Mosaic account of creation, who allege, that the creating process required, and the internal structure of the earth itself shows, that the six days of Moses are—if Moses is at all to be believed—indefinite periods of time, a thousand years at least, cannot invalidate the force of this remark; for the researches of others, and the principles of the Newtonian philosophy, rather confirm the account of Moses, than the speculations of the early geologists.* The plain and obvious import of the language of Moses and of Paul's reasoning, on this subject, is, that God prolonged the work of creation through a period of six days, instead of effecting it instantaneously, in order to furnish to his intelligent creatures a reason, in his own example, for the hebdomadal division of time, into six days of labour and one of rest.

* See Penn's Comparative Estimate of the Mosaic and Mineral Geologies.

Dr. Paley has indeed rejected the testimony of Moses in this case, as evidence of the fact, that a Sabbath was instituted at the close of the work of creation. What he says about Moses speaking proleptically, and the Sabbath having been first instituted after the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, needs no refutation here. Dr. Dwight, and others, who have written on this subject, have so satisfactorily exposed the falsity of Dr. Paley's reasoning, that even his warmest admirers must admit that Moses speaks historically, and not by anticipation;—that he states, as matter of fact, that the seventh day from the beginning of creation, or the *first entire* day of Adam's existence was set apart as a day of rest, to be appropriated to the worship of God.

As to the state of things in the antediluvian world, and whether a Sabbath was observed before the flood, we have no direct testimony. Yet have we information enough to prove,

that the hebdomadal cycle was well and familiarly known. Both Cain's and Lamech's punishment is estimated on the basis of it—sevenfold vengeance being denounced against the former, and Lamech apprehending seventy times seven. Several of Noah's movements, and his method of computing time, seemed to have been regulated by it. The doves were sent forth from the ark after the interval of a week between each. Subsequently to the deluge, and prior to the age of Moses, as early as in Abraham's and Jacob's days, the hebdomadal cycle was spoken of as a thing both common and well understood. Now it is impossible to account, satisfactorily, for such a division of time, or the computation of time, by *sevens*, in preference of *fives* or *tens*,—which is much more easy for arithmetical and business purposes—except upon the supposition that the septenary cycle was universally known and observed. For there is no reason in the facility of computation, nor in the natural ha-

bits of men of business, nor in the motions of the heavenly bodies to incline men to it. No other reason for its universal prevalence, than God's institution of a Sabbath, can be assigned. But, on the supposition of the divine institution, and the observance of a Sabbath, from the origin of our race, the division of time into weeks becomes perfectly intelligible.

It behooves the infidel opponents of the Sabbath to account, in a rational and satisfactory manner, for the universal prevalence of the practice of computing time by the septenary cycle.

We have, therefore, in the writings of Moses, and the usages of society, just that sort of incidental proof of the observance of a Sabbath, prior to his day, which the nature of the case requires; and which is better than any more direct. Moses states the reason of its original, and alludes to a prevalent method

of dividing time long prior to the Jewish Sabbath; which can be accounted for on no other supposition. Beside, when the law of the Sabbath was made a subject of inquiry by the people of Israel, the time Dr. Paley dates its origin, the whole account of the transaction, as given by Moses,* shows plainly, that it had previously existed. And, when God pronounced his commands on Mount Sinai, and enjoined the observance of a Sabbath, he alluded to it as a thing already known and understood. “*Remember,*” said he, “the Sabbath-day.”

This evidence, from the writings of Moses, is corroborated by the testimony of profane antiquity. It is a well known fact, that there were many superstitions in the heathen world, connected with the number seven. The Pythagorean and Platonic philosophers esteemed

* Exod. xvi. 22—31.

it a sacred number; and, although, in the writings of the ancients, there are many notions and speculations about the pleiades, and triones, two constellations in which are seven stars—about the number of the planets which, according to their reckoning, were seven—of the seven musical notes, and the change of the moon every seven days, and critical days in bodily distempers, which it was thought occurred every seven days; and other things of like nature, all of which seem to have given importance to the number seven; yet are they totally insufficient to account for the sacred character attached to it. The old tradition of the creation of the world, in six days, and the Sabbath that followed, on the seventh, by the ordination of God, is the true original of this numerous class of superstitions.

But it is not only in the ancient superstitions that we trace the memorials of a primeval Sabbath. There is proof extant in their writ-

ings. Any lad in college might quote Homer, who not only recognises an hebdomadal division of time, but pronounces the seventh day to be holy, and the day in which all things were finished. Dr. Dwight has collected testimonies from Hesiod, Homer, Linus, Callimachus, Suetonius, Lucian, Josephus, Philo and Tibullus, as did Dr. Owen before him, which it is unnecessary to cite. Josephus, whose credibility, in this particular, has not been assailed, says, "There is neither any city of the Greeks nor barbarians, nor any nation whatever, to whom our custom of resting on the Sabbath is not come." Grotius has shown that the Oriental nations, generally, and the Greeks, Italians, Celtæ, Sclavi, and even the Romans, were not ignorant of the custom. Our Saxon ancestors, before their conversion to Christianity, observed an hebdomadal division of time, and the vulgar names by which we designate the several days of the week, are derived from those appropriated by them

for that purpose, long before the Bible was known to them.

Whence came this universal custom? No other satisfactory answer can be given than that it is the memorial found embedded in the usages of society, of the primeval Sabbath ordained by God from the creation. Wherefore we have precisely, and in full, the very evidence of the existence of a Sabbath, prior to the writings of Moses, which the nature of the case admits of and demands.

As to the inquiry, whether the primeval Sabbath sustained any change in its character and uses, when the law, in relation to it, was re-enacted by God, and delivered to the Jews, as the people of his theocracy, it may suffice to remark, that neither the admission nor denial of such a change can have any bearing on our argument. We plead not for the Jews' Sabbath. If God had, for special purposes, ren-

dered their Sabbath more significant, and by special legislation, provided for the manner of its observance, in all minute details, it will not follow, that, in doing so for them, he has invalidated the obligation previously existing, and binding, from the beginning of creation, on all nations, to appropriate a seventh part of their time, from their necessary labour, to his worship.

It is very probable, according to the suggestion of Dr. Mede, and the arguments of Dr. Jennings, that God changed the day on which the Sabbath was to be observed by the Jews, and threw it back one day in the week, when he changed the time for the commencement of their year from the month Tisri, or September, to Abib, or March.

If, to put a marked distinction between the Jews and other nations, God changed the commencement of *their year*, and the day of the

week, for the observance of their Sabbath, this special legislation could not affect other nations. And when the whole Mosaic economy expired, by its own limitation, as it did with the resurrection of Christ, and, with it, all that was peculiar to the Jewish Sabbath, the original obligation of the primeval Sabbath could not, in the least degree, be impaired; but its observance by those who rejected the Mosaic rites, would naturally take place on the first day of the Jewish week, or the seventh day of the week, in regular succession, counting from the beginning of creation.

When the Jewish economy expired, things would naturally revert to the state in which they were from the beginning; and the obligation to observe a Sabbath, existing from the beginning, would be felt by all Christians, notwithstanding they no longer recognized the authority of the Jewish code; and notwithstanding the resurrection of Christ on the first

day of the Jews' week, which, on supposition of the change above referred to, synchronized with the day on which Adam's Sabbath, in regular series, would have occurred, enabled them to associate the remembrance of the wonders of redemption, with the remembrance of the work of creation. Such a change actually did take place on the expiration of the Jewish code; and, to our minds, is a strong argument in favour of the moral obligation of the primeval Sabbath. It was predicted, in the sacred Scriptures, that such a change should occur, when the day of the Messiah's resurrection was designated as the day, thenceforth, to be observed for religious worship.*

Unless it can be shown, that God did actually release the nations of the earth from the obligation to observe the primeval Sabbath, the particular arrangements which he made with the Jews, changing the character of their

* Ps. cxviii. 24.

Sabbath somewhat, and throwing the time for its observance a day forward, cannot affect the obligation devolving on all the world to keep a Sabbath. That obligation remains unimpaired and entire, notwithstanding God's special legislation for the Jewish nation.

Now, there are but two periods in the world's history, in which it can be pretended that any change was made in the divine enactments on this subject. The first was when God re-enacted the law of the Sabbath, with special strict provisions for the Jewish nation, and changed its character somewhat, making it a sign and commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, as well as of the work of creation.* The special legislation of God on this subject for them, we have just seen, did not and could not affect the general relation of other nations to him, as their moral governor, and their obligations to ob-

* Deut. v. 15, and Ex. xxxi. 12, 17.

serve the primeval Sabbath. A special law, passed by our legislature, regulating the market day in one county, and fixing it on another day of the week from the rest, does not affect the general law in relation to all the others. If it is claimed, that the nations of the earth have been released from the original obligation to keep the Sabbath, the record of the fact must be produced. It cannot be found in the special regulations for the Jewish people. But not only must the record be produced; it must also be shown, that a change has taken place in the constitution of man, and in the structure of society, which renders the observance of a Sabbath unnecessary: for we have already proved that the observance of a Sabbath is demanded by the very exigencies of man's sensitive, intellectual and moral, and, we might add, of his physical nature—and the demonstration might be pursued through his domestic, social, political, and grand national relations. This, however, cannot be done. No one has attempted to do it. The moral obli-

gation, therefore, devolving on all to observe a Sabbath, was not impaired by the special divine legislation for the Jews, when its character and design confessedly sustained some change.

Neither has it been affected by the abrogation of the Jewish code, which is the second period when it has been alleged the obligation did cease. For the enactment of a law for a term of years for a particular county, and to expire by its own limitation, cannot affect the relations and obligations of other counties in the state not contemplated in that law.

Will it, however, be alleged, that Christianity has proclaimed a release from obligation? This is in fact done by some. The remarks and conduct of the Saviour in relation to the Jewish Sabbath have been adduced by many of our infidel presses as arguments against the moral obligation of the Christian Sabbath. The censures of Christ, passed on the Pharisaic austerity of those who were

requiring what God did not require, even under the Mosaic code, can never be legitimately cited as proofs that Christ denied all obligation to keep a Sabbath. Whatever Christ said and did to show the wickedness of the Pharisees, who made such a bad use of, and perverted the Sabbath, peculiar to themselves, has no relevancy whatever to the obligation, in common with all mankind, to observe a Sabbath according to God's original intention.

Should it be objected that, when the Jewish Sabbath was set aside, there should have been the promulgation of a new sabbatic law, and that now no obligation to keep a Sabbath exists, because Christianity has not done this, but on the contrary, that the writings of the New Testament observe strict silence on this subject, it may be replied,—that the law of the primeval Sabbath existed in full force, having never been abrogated, and therefore there was no necessity for a new statute.

When God pronounced the moral law on Mount Sinai, he did not then originate its obligations, but only proclaimed those which had existed from the beginning: and he did this as their political lawgiver, that they might understand his civil and political statutes were based on the moral law. Accordingly, he commanded that the Sabbath should be remembered. Others indeed were superadded to this general obligation, but they related to that which was special, and of limited duration, in the Jewish Sabbath. Had Christianity proclaimed a new statute on the subject of the Sabbath, it would have impliedly impeached the validity of the original and œcumenical law. There could have been no necessity to enact a new statute on the subject. To have done so would have been, not only useless, but injurious; for this would have been to acknowledge that there was something defective in the original law, or at least that it had fallen into such desuetude, or become so obsolete, that he dared not enforce its sanctions.

The alleged silence of Christianity, and of the New Testament scriptures, therefore, on this subject, so far from being a confirmation of the objection, does actually give great force to the original, perpetual, and, we must say, immutable obligation of the primeval Sabbath.

If, again, it is objected, that although the apostolic epistles to the Gentile churches, contain very minute directions with regard to Christian conduct, yet they are silent in relation to a Christian Sabbath: we remark, that christianity never designed to require a Jewish Sabbath, nor to sanction the Pharisaic austerities practised in relation to a day made for the highest interest of man;—that there is proof abundant that the apostles did introduce and establish the observance of a seventh day of rest, to be appropriated to the purposes of divine worship;—that the first day of the week was religiously observed, from the resurrection of Christ, and took the denomination

of the Lord's Day. The silence spoken of is only apparent. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, has entered into an elaborate argument to show that there remains under the Christian dispensation the keeping of a Sabbath.* There is no proof whatever that Christians in the apostles' days neglected the worship of God, on the first day of the week, or appropriated it to purposes of business and recreation. There is proof to the contrary in the New Testament—incidental, it is true, but that is often the strongest and most satisfactory. The amount of it is, that predictions had long before given notice that the day of Christ's resurrection should become the day for public worship,—that in the days when the gospel should triumph the Sabbath would be religiously kept,—and that, although the use and intention of the Sabbath, and the day on which it should be kept, should vary somewhat from that of the Jewish Sabbath,—

* Heb. iv. 4—9.

yet a sabbath would be kept,—which things in due season occurred, of which allusions and incidents noticeable in the New Testament furnish satisfactory proof. The appearances of Christ to his apostles were on the *first day* of the week—the apostles observed this day religiously—the churches came together on that day—and the Spirit was poured out on that day.

But, passing from the New Testament to ecclesiastical history, the testimony is very explicit. Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Theophilus and others assert, it was religiously kept. For a season the primitive Christians kept both the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath; but being vexed with Jewish proselytists, who wished to retain the abrogated ritual of Moses, Paul sat himself in direct opposition to them, denying the soundness of their festival days called sabbaths. By degrees the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, and from a Jewish to a Christian Sabbath, was accomplished.

Jewish prejudices were for a season treated with respect, and contentions and strifes by this means suppressed. Christ and his apostles attacked not the prejudices of their nation, but they acted promptly and uniformly, so that without any confusion or dispute, by the time the Jewish commonwealth was overthrown, the Christian Sabbath obtained ascendancy throughout all the Gentile churches, till finally Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, passed laws for its protection and observance.

Christ had declared, in the strongest terms, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it—that whoever would favour and teach the violation of the least of these precepts would be repudiated by him,—and that till heaven and earth should pass away, one jot or one tittle should in no wise *pass from the law*, till all be fulfilled.* He did not destroy the least of the moral

* Matt. v. 18, 19.

obligations which bind mankind, nor should they ever be destroyed. It is for those who deny the moral obligation of the Christian Sabbath to reconcile their views with the word of God, especially with the assertions of Christ in this respect. We cannot. So far from Christ's having destroyed the obligations and motives for the observance of a Sabbath, he has rather increased them. Any changes made in the day, have not affected the general moral obligation to sanctify the seventh part of our time. There is, therefore, nothing to be found in the record, which disproves the obligation to keep the Sabbath, but enough to prove it. Nor is there any thing in the circumstances of society. The exigencies remain the same, and demand a Sabbath as imperiously as ever. There remaineth, therefore, says the apostle Paul, a rest for the people of God—his own language is the keeping of a Sabbath, whose perpetuity he was endeavour-

ing to establish. Wherefore, at every point the obligation of the Sabbath is defended.

The moral obligation to observe the day, and the design of its author in its consecration, being ascertained, it is easy to discover in what manner it should be observed. Being a day of rest from worldly care and animal labour, for the purpose of religious and social worship, whatever interferes with this must be sinful. All business, diversions, or animal and intellectual indulgences not consistent with and conducive to the worship of God, being contrary to God's design, and to the character of the Sabbath, render the perpetrator guilty of desecrating that holy day. He that will neglect to observe this day, as God ordained it, viz. by rendering to him the homage due to his excellence, or who perverts it to his own purposes of festivity or recreation, is at war with God. He is a robber in the sight of God, having defrauded him of time he claims as his own, and never granted to

man. He is an enemy of social order and the public weal, for he contributes, as far as his example goes, to withdraw the most powerful restraint and valuable expedient God has adopted, to prevent and counteract the crimes of men. And he that will consult his own profit by engaging in business which requires the labour of others on that day—who will countenance, and take part with, and hold stock in companies, such as rail-road cars and stages, steamboats, and the like, which derive profit to the owners from the profanation of the Sabbath, makes himself doubly guilty. He is not only warring, himself against God, but aiding all he can to enlist others, and afford facilities for them to corrupt themselves and profane the day of God. Doubtless in God's sight, much if not most of the crimes committed on the Sabbath in the vicinity of our large cities, and which are incident to the gathering together of promiscuous masses of the population on that day, in our villages, the intemperance, profanity, revelling, rioting, de-

bauchery, and hardening of the heart to which the desecration of the Sabbath leads, are rightly to be laid at the door of the men who create and form companies, or own and employ their stock in affording facilities for the profanation of that day. And they should be held guilty in the eyes of their country; for they sanction and promote indulgences and vices which endanger the safety of property, which neutralize moral and social restraints, and which strike directly against the well-being and existence of sound and necessary government. True patriotism, not to say Christianity, requires us to resist the influence of lofty and corrupting example. Unfortunately for the repose and permanent interest of our beloved country, the crime of Sabbath-breaking has received the sanction of men high in places of trust and power, and is becoming every year more and more prevalent. No people can long make war upon the institutions of God with impunity. In mercy to the community, he is now pleading with us, by

the voice of his providence, and seeking to arrest the growing desecration of the Sabbath. Alarming accidents, sudden and afflicting deaths, occurring on the Sabbath, among those that profane it, are the voice of God remonstrating with this people for their crimes. The prevalence of the vices which the profanation of the Sabbath fosters will lead to the ruin of any nation. At what instant God "shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in his sight, that it obey not his voice, then he will repent of the good wherewith he said he would benefit them."*

There is reason to fear, that this nation will afford an illustration of this great principle of God's moral government. There is evidently abroad in our land, the spirit of resistance against the authority of God. Not only is violence and oppression, lewdness and avarice,

becoming more and more prevalent, but a direct warfare has been waged against the Sabbath, the grand conservative of public morals, which God, with its appropriate accompaniments, has ordained for the interests of society. Our highest legislative authority has legalized its profanation, and set an example of utter disrespect for its sacred character and claims. Our country, through its public officers, and by its statutes on this subject, as well as by the dissipation and excess of thousands of its population, is placed in the attitude of direct and open rebellion against the God of Heaven, the great Governor among the nations.

This course cannot long be persisted in with impunity. The dispensations of Providence have already given indications that God has a controversy with us on this subject. When he remonstrated with Israel on this subject, he promised great public, political and religious

prosperity to them, on condition of their observance of the Sabbath.* “But,” added he, “if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” And he did so.

Whether destructive conflagrations are to be regarded as the appropriate visitation of heaven for the crime of Sabbath breaking *now*, we shall not delay to inquire. But it is worthy of observation, that there have been some facts, on this subject, developed in the history of this nation, which favour the idea, that God has not ceased to punish, in this way, the crime of Sabbath breaking. The conflagrations of the capitol, and the public buildings, at Washington, have been consequent on the desecration of the Sabbath, by the

* Jer. xvii. 24—27.

transportation of the mail. And some of the most destructive fires, in several of our cities, have occurred since this crime has become so prevalent. At all events, in other respects, there is proof that we need not congratulate ourselves as free from danger.

The elements of mischief are extensively at work among us. A few turns in the divine providence, may derange and disorganize the fair fabric of our republic. No great powers of foresight is necessary to perceive that, if a demoralizing influence spreads through the land, it cannot fail, more speedily than in any other country, to affect the vital functions of our government. The character of our public officers will correspond with that of the majority of our population. Let wicked men throng the polls, and wicked men will be the successful candidates for office. For, "when the wicked walk on every side, vile men are exalted."

A corrupt populace can be easily inflamed or flattered, and violent or obsequious men will make them, very readily, the instruments of their ambition. Patriotism, with such, ceases to form a part of their character. It has given place to the selfishness of aspiring demagogues, and to the desperation of dark conspirators, and of loud disunionists, who have every thing to hope for, while the friends of virtue, liberty and independence, have every thing to fear.

It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that our civil and political institutions can long survive our public morals. It is just as impossible that our public morals can flourish, or be preserved without religion. And it is, further, as impossible that religion can long exist without a Sabbath. To notice the truth of these statements, as unfolded in the history of nations, we need but advert to the examples and illustrations furnished on every hand,

in that of individuals. How rapid is the young sinner's course in vice, who begins without restraint or fear, to desecrate the Sabbath! How numerous are the confessions made upon "the drop," by those who were adjudged to death by the laws of their country; who, with the crime of Sabbath breaking, began that deep and dreadful deterioration which led to those deserving the forfeiture of life, at the hands of the incensed justice of their country! How rapid has been the march of some of our cities in crime, where the restraints of the Sabbath have been thrown off! And how destitute of religion are those where the Sabbath has been forgotten, or is unknown! Let the Sabbath, and its accompanying, and appropriate means of moral influence be universally rejected, and half a century shall not have passed away till heathenism and idolatry, with all their loathsome sensuality and crimes, shall have become naturalized among us. The gospel alone is the great reformer of mankind;

but without a Sabbath the gospel can exert but little permanent or extensive influence. In proportion as men are unenlightened by its truths, uninfluenced by its motives, unapproachable by its ministers, and unembarrassed by the standard of character, and by the restraints which it creates in a community, will they be immoral. Who are the dissipated, the debauched, the drunken, the lewd, the gamblers, the profane, the harpies that prey upon society, the advocates and promoters of races and duels, of theatres and brothels—but irreligious men? On the other hand, who are prompt and zealous to discourage vice, promote intelligence and virtue, and diffuse true happiness! Are they the friends or the enemies of a Sabbath? Let observation answer.

Yet are religion and manly zeal for the Sabbath, that great bulwark of national morality, denounced as intolerance and treason! Our illustrious Washington has denied the tri-

bute of patriotism to the man that labours to subvert religion and morality, which he calls "the great pillars of human happiness; the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens." Later politicians, devoid of the patriotism and philanthropy, and of the morality and religion of Washington, prefer to decry these things, and studiously shun what many are willing to regard as "puritanical severity and vulgar fanaticism." Has it then been discovered that the Sabbath, and all its moral influences are unfriendly to human happiness and national prosperity? Or has its frown upon the wicked been felt, and the vain attempt been made to convert our legislative halls into a refuge and defence against its scowl and menaces? A few years will demonstrate which, and prove in this, as in other countries, that no people ever yet trampled on the Sabbath with impunity.

In the mean time, let the Christian commu-

nity assert the claims of a prostrate Sabbath, and cultivate that true and only patriotism which, by the practice of morality and religion, and by their extensive diffusion, may serve to avert the wrath impending. What confidence can be reposed in the patriotism and professions of those who will violate their obligations to God, and prostitute to secular uses the day that he holds sacred?

The Christian's confidence should be in God; and should be sustained by a consistent, unspotted and intrepid life of holiness. He should be aware that he has nothing to expect from men who disrespect his God. But while he pities the rebellious, and deprecates their influence, let him make his strong appeal to God, and follow up that appeal by active and untiring efforts to enlighten and correct the public mind, by means of his example, of personal converse, and of the beneficent operation of Infant and Sunday schools, of Bible, Tract,

and Missionary societies, and of the patronage of science and the arts, by the rejection of an immoral, licentious and unsafe literature, and by the diffusion of the blessings of a sound and salutary education, and of evangelical religion.

As he loves his country, and fears his God; and as he would be faithful to Jesus Christ his Saviour, and put honour on his name, let him beware how he cherishes the spirit of sectarianism, which is the very spirit of faction, and contributes by his exclusive devotion to the interests of his own religious sect, to secure the triumphs of infidelity. The church of Jesus Christ, which he has purchased with his blood, is not this or the other sect, whatever may be the boastful pretensions of any; but all, of every name and of every nation, who truly love, and confide in, Jesus Christ, and obey his commands. He forgets alike his duty to his country, and to the church of God, who

confines his influence and benevolent efforts, exclusively to his own ecclesiastical denomination. Wide as the world is the Christian's sphere of labour, and diffusive as the light should be his moral influence.

Our main and only security, under God, is the diffusion of sound and virtuous principles in the community. Much in this way is doing, though violently and malignantly assailed. Appeals to God for his Spirit, and the use of all appropriate means for his abundant and universal effusion, sustained by humble, holy, and consistent examples, may yet save the Sabbath, and save our country. But, alas ! there is precisely here a deep and dreadful defect. The cause of piety languishes, the influence of the Spirit of God is withheld, and iniquity abounds because the love of many has waxed cold. The church, the professed friends of the Sabbath, have given occasion to its enemies to blaspheme. Many that once "ho-

noured her, despise her, because they have seen her nakedness." There has not been that consistent and conscientious observance of the Sabbath, on the part of many professors of religion, which there ought to have been. Nor has there been that united and undaunted testimony in its favour, from the different religious sects. Even on this, as on other subjects, there have been untenderness and unfaithfulness; and sectarian jealousies and animosities have been evinced, which have contributed greatly to its growing desecration.

In the midst of prevalent infidelity, the Bible will not be consulted. Its influence will not, therefore, be directly felt. Christian men and women must act out the spirit and principles of the Bible before an unbelieving world, exhibit the example it inculcates, and show that they feel the authority of God and Jesus Christ to be superior to that of any and every ecclesiastical sect, if they would exert an efficient

and salutary influence. There is yet a moral power in the church, sufficient, if rightly directed, to recover a captive and a prostrate Sabbath, from the hands of its enemies. There is yet an energy in the arm of the Christian's God, that can put to flight all his foes. And with him is "the residue of the Spirit," without whose influence all our testimony, and appeals, and efforts will be in vain. To be the medium of this influence and energy should be the aim of every Christian; but for this he must keep himself unspotted from the world.

The inconsistent conduct and example, the mawkish indifference, and the sectarian jealousies of Christian professors, aid the anti-Sabbath cause more than a volume of arguments. Whoso professes religion, and yet will violate the Sabbath day, by travelling or pursuing his worldly business, or by seeking his recreation and pleasure on it, or by allowing his children and family to trample it under

their feet; who will countenance and co-operate with those that make its profanation subserve their profit; who will pour contempt on those Christians, and suspect and impeach their motives who seek to promote its observance; or who will appropriate it to purposes of festivity and idleness, or any thing foreign from its design, will, probably, by one act, do more mischief than his subsequent life may be able to counteract. The unbelieving world must be enlightened by means of the church, and that chiefly through the consistent and uniform deportment, and the beneficent and Christ-like spirit, of its members. There must be the meek, but firm, asserting of the Sabbath's claims; the calm, humble, forgiving, but intrepid resistance of every attempt to desecrate it; and the benevolent and prayerful effort to convince those that err.

The Christian's God is his host: and while he marches under his banner, he need not be

dismayed. The God of Israel has fought a thousand battles, and always triumphed. Infidelity may vaunt itself, and, with the aid of petty sectaries, pour contempt and obloquy on the Christian and the Christian name; yea, and the maddened, unbelieving world, the enraged and violent mob, may draw the persecuting sword, and bathe it in the blood of its slaughtered victims, but our Redeemer is almighty, and will prevail. Let the Christian trust him with every interest: roll all his cares on him, and follow whithersoever he leads. It is *his* cause he has espoused, and it shall prevail. The word of God stands pledged for it. "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. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Is. lviii. 13, 14, & lix. 1.

AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS, ON THE
OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

BY ALBERT BARNES.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
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Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.—*Ex.* xx. 8.

I wish to address some remarks particularly to Christians, on the subject referred to in this text. There are some special reasons why it should be brought particularly before their minds; and why it demands their attention.

There is one thing which is perfectly plain, and which should always be assumed in all discussions on this subject. It is, that every

true Christian will delight in the sacred rest which is furnished by the Christian Sabbath. On this day, he will rejoice that he is permitted to retire from the world, and that the cares and anxieties of life, the perplexing scenes of business, and the purposes of gain and ambition are made, by common consent, to pause in obedience to the divine commandment, and to give him leisure for personal communion with God. Its sacred rest is dear to his heart. On this day, more than on any other day of the week, he is permitted to rise above the world, to hold fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and to ripen for the rest which remaineth for the people of God. On this day, he rejoices in the privilege of more prolonged and sweet secret devotion; in the perusal of the word of God; in the opportunity for reflection and self-examination; in the services of the sanctuary; in the blessings which result to his own soul from breaking away from the agitating and conflicting cares

of life, and in the privilege of guiding his family in the ways of virtue and salvation. Whatever may be thought respecting the divine origin and authority of this institution, this one thing, I think, is clear beyond the possibility of doubt, that a true Christian will esteem it not a burden, but an invaluable privilege to close up his worldly affairs one day in seven, and to seek to elevate his feelings above this world, and prepare for the skies. So obvious is this, that it cannot be made the subject of a moment's debate, that if a man finds no pleasure in the sacred duties of this day; and the day is to him wearisome and a burden, it amounts to the fullest proof that he has no well-founded claim to the name of a Christian.

Thus far all is clear. Into the *reasons* why the Christian supposes this to be a divine institution, and that its observance is required

by divine authority, I do not propose now to enter. I speak only of the views and feelings which, I suppose, all Christians must have on this subject, and which we are to assume they are prepared to act on, and to defend. I should as soon deem it necessary to prove to a Christian that he was bound to love God, to honour a father, to abstain from theft and murder, to be a man of truth and chastity, as to labour to prove to him that he ought to regard and keep holy the Sabbath day. Nay, I should suppose that this command would be one that would least of all need the aid of reasoning to lead Christians to its observance. There is in this sacred rest so much of privilege; there is so much that accords with the elevated feelings of a new nature; there is so much that represents the peace of heaven; there is so much that gives consolation to the mind, and that furnishes strength against temptation; so much that is fitted to meet the obvious and constant bad influences of the

world on the heart, that we are to suppose its return will be hailed with delight, not that its observance is to be urged by cold and abstract argumentation. Wherever I meet a Christian I assume it as a matter of course that he delights in the Sabbath, and feels the obligation to keep it holy, just as much as I assume that he feels the obligation to be a man of integrity and veracity in his dealings. And wherever true religion prevails, it is to be assumed that it will lead to the observance of this day, just as it will lead to a life of purity and of prayer. And it is to be assumed, also, that all attempts by arguments among professing Christians, to weaken the authority for the observance of this day, are evidence *prima facie* of a low state of religion in the soul, if not of a total ignorance in regard to its true nature and power. Such professed Christians are to be met, not with argument to prove that the fourth commandment is of binding obligation, but with entreaties to examine the foundation

of their hope for eternity, and to inquire whether they have ever known any thing of the power of religion on the heart.

No man can look over this land without seeing that the Sabbath is in more danger than all the other institutions of Christianity. It is in danger of becoming swallowed up in the vortex of business, and the whirl of amusement. And the question is submitted to this generation, to be settled for ever, whether this day is to be observed, or is to be universally desecrated; and, in connexion with that, whether the Christian religion is to be perpetuated or abolished.

Since these things are so, it becomes our duty to address Christians with great earnestness and frequency on the subject. There are special reasons why it is brought before you now; and to some of those reasons I invite your particular attention. Those reasons it

shall be the design of this discourse to state. I address Christians on the subject, because they are particularly concerned. I address them because many of them have been guilty of laxness and of sin in regard to it. I address them because it would be useless to attempt to address the disregards of this day. They are this day amidst scenes of amusement, riot, revelry, profaneness, and intemperance; and the voice of the ministry cannot reach them. The reasons why I now address you on this subject, I will proceed to specify, and illustrate.

I. The first is, that if the institution of the Sabbath is abolished the Christian religion will be abolished with it. The question whether this day is to be observed or desecrated is just a question of life and death in regard to Christianity. This is so obvious that it scarcely needs any attempt to prove it. Without a Sabbath, our public institutions, on the subject

of religion would cease; our Sabbath-schools be disbanded; our sanctuaries closed, and all the means of grace arrested. If the Sabbath be abolished, what hold can Christianity have on man? What way of access to the hearts and consciences? How shall the arguments for its truth be presented? How shall its moral precepts be brought before the mind? How shall its high hopes, its solemn appeals and sanctions be urged? And how shall its stern rebukes of guilt be made to fall on the ears and the hearts of men? If you close your churches, and your Sabbath-schools, there is no other effectual way. Nothing is plainer than this. The whole history of the world shows that where the Sabbath is observed religion flourishes; where it is not, religion dies away, and is extinguished. We might appeal, here, to every man's observation, and ask him to recall the memory of a place where there is no Sabbath, and the scenes which he witnessed there. Was the voice of prayer heard

there? Was God feared and honoured? Did meekness, and temperance, and chastity, and justice, and honesty abound? Or was the place distinguished for crime, and sensuality, and profaneness, and disorder? And, on the other hand, has there ever been an instance where this day has been observed, that it has not been followed by the virtues that Christianity produces, and the blessings which industry, and temperance, and piety carry in their train? This appeal is made with the utmost confidence; and the friends and the enemies of the gospel are invited to examine this point at leisure.

Well do the enemies of Christianity, in these times, know what they are about. Attempts were made, in former generations, to destroy the gospel by the sword and the faggot, and all such attempts were foiled. Imperial power attempted to crush it; but imperial force found its arm too weak to contend with God. Ar-

gument and sophism were employed, ridicule lent its aid, and malice frowned, and contempt pointed the finger of scorn, but all was in vain. Christianity has survived all these, and would survive them to the end of time. But there is one weapon which the enemy of religion has employed to obliterate Christianity, and which has never been employed but with signal success. It is the attempt to corrupt the Christian Sabbath; to make it a day of festivity; to convince Christians that its obligation has ceased; to induce them to mingle in the gay scenes of pleasure, or the exciting plans of gain and ambition; and this has done what no argument, no sophistry, no imperial power has been able to accomplish. The "Book of Sports" did more to destroy Christianity than all the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors; and the views of the second Charles and his court, about the Lord's day, tended more to banish religion from the British nation than all the persecutions of Mary. And the great

enemy of God and of liberty, in this western empire, understands how to meet Christianity here. He knows that it will not be easy to kindle here the flames of persecution, and to destroy religion by the fires of martyrdom. And well, too, he knows that it is too late to attempt to annihilate it by sophistry, and ridicule, and argument. It has passed through too many such trials, and come out of them all unscathed. But what could be done? Was there no new form of opposition in which religion might be met in the new world; no *vital* part of Christianity that could be reached; no blow that could be struck that would wither its rising power, and lay it prostrate in the dust? There was one experiment that could be made. Over these broad and ample states and territories men might be sent in search of gain, regardless of the Sabbath. These majestic streams, presenting long and laborious voyages, might be ascended regardless of the sacredness of the day. Men might be urged

away, by the hope of wealth, from the peaceful scenes where a Sabbath shed repose on a village, or the Sabbath bell summoned an entire population to worship. The nation might be roused by the love of gold; and enterprise, and facilities for intercourse, and the love of travel unsettle almost a whole population, and transform them into wandering families or tribes, and lead them to trample down the barriers of virtue, and the institutions of religion. The experiment is a vast one, and as fearful as it is vast. It involves the whole interest of this nation. And it will settle the fate of Christianity in this land, and perhaps throughout the world.

Not few hands are engaged in this, but many. It is not the mere work of thoughtlessness and recklessness, but it has all the marks of purpose and of plan. It has evidence of being under the direction of that master mind that is the author of all evil, and

the father of all embarrassments that Christianity has ever met with. And the attempt to blot out the Sabbath from this land evinces more knowledge of human nature, and more art, and cunning than the persecutions of the Roman emperors, or of Mary; than the sophisms of Gibbon or Hume; than the sneers of Voltaire or Volney; than the arguments of Hobbes or of Bolingbroke. For who is engaged in this land in the work of blotting out the Sabbath? Every atheist is engaged in it, and here places his main hope of success. Every sceptic is engaged in it, and anticipates more from this than from all his arguments. Every profane man, and every intemperate man, and every licentious man is engaged in it, for in this way they hope that all restraints will be removed from unlimited indulgence in vice. And a multitude of men who are not willing to be called atheists or infidels, or profane persons, but whose heart is with them all in their leading purposes, unite heartily with

them all in opposing the sacredness of this day. In one word, the mass of busy, active, infidel, unprincipled mind in this nation; in high life and in low; in office and out of office; in city and in country, that, for various reasons, would desire Christianity to be extinguished, has made war on the Sabbath, and is prosecuting that war by all the means that have been put within their reach, and with very augmenting prospects of success.

The question now is just this. Is Christianity worth preserving, or can we afford to see it driven from our land? Are we so secure without it, that we can part with it without regret; or is it worth an effort to save it? Is it so connected with our municipal, our literary and our national institutions as to constitute their vitality, or have these institutions the power of self-existence, and can they as well be perpetuated without religion? Has Christianity such a connexion with pure and

wholesome morals as to make it desirable to retain it in the commonwealth, or will our morals be equally pure without it? Can this great nation be governed and guarded without a God, or will it be best to yield obedience to his laws, and retain the religion of "peace on earth and good will to men" among us, and transmit it to posterity? These are questions that are connected with the Sabbath; and the course which is pursued in regard to this day, will settle them *all*. And they are questions of far more importance than this thoughtless generation seems to suppose.

II. The second reason why this subject demands, now, the special attention of Christians is, that if this day is not observed as holy time, it will be regarded as pastime; if not a day sacred to devotion, it will be a day of recreation, of pleasure, of licentiousness. The Christian Sabbath is not essentially an arbitrary appointment, for it is required in the very

nature of mind and of the animal economy, that there should be periodical seasons of relaxation. Nature is no where made to be always taxed to incessant effort. There is not a muscle in the animal economy that does not demand *rest* after effort, and that will not have it. If *rest* is not granted voluntarily, it will be taken. If the powers of nature are overworked, and taxed without relaxation, they will *take* relaxation by disease, and perhaps when too late to repair their exhausted energies. This great law of nature must and will be obeyed. And if the frame is worn and exhausted *without* this relaxation, the consequence must be sickness, or rest in the grave. The late Mr. Wilberforce declared that at one period of his parliamentary career, his duties were so multiplied and exhausting, that his health must have been utterly prostrated, but for the seasonable relief which the Sabbath afforded him. There is not an *animal* that will endure unceasing exertion without repose;

and God, in requiring that the *cattle* should be allowed to rest on the Sabbath, has spoken simply according to the laws which he originally impressed on the brute creation. If rest is not allowed them according to the commandment, their powers are exhausted, and they too expire. The universe is fitted up for purposes of alternate action and rest, from the first beating of the heart of infancy to the mightiest efforts of the giant; from the insect that flutters and dies, through all the grades of the animal economy, to the monarch that sits on the throne.

In demanding, therefore, that the animal and mental economy shall be allowed a day of periodical repose, God has acted in accordance with the great law of nature. There is nothing arbitrary in this except in designating the exact day which shall be observed. And all that is arbitrary in *this* is a consultation of convenience, that one may not disturb another

by toil and action while the other seeks repose—just as he has, by his own arrangement, ordained the animal functions so that all are disposed to sleep at night.

Further, all nations and people have had, and will have, a periodical season of relaxation from the severity of toil. This was the case among the Jews in their weekly Sabbath; among the Greeks and Romans in their numerous festivals in honour of the gods; among the heathen, every where, in the honour of their idols; and among Mussulmen, in the observance of their weekly day of devotion. And so deep felt is the necessity of this, that even the actors in the French revolution were compelled to appoint one day in ten as a day of relaxation from toil. Whatever may be the *time* selected; whether one day in seven, or one in ten; whether a day in honour of the Saviour, or in honour of an idol; or whether it be a *mere* day of idleness, *without* any rea-

son, yet such days *will* be observed by all people. In our country it is settled that that day is to be the first day of the week. This is settled by the force of ancient custom; by the statutes of the land; by the prevalence of the fear of God; and by the lingerings of conscience among those who have not wholly cast off all the restraints of religion. It is to be settled and established in this land, as a general custom, that on this day toil is to cease, and men will give themselves to other pursuits than the ordinary employments of life. As a general habit, all over the land, our stores and counting-houses will be shut; our schools will be disbanded; our courts and public offices will be closed; our banks and insurance-offices will cease to do business; our mechanics will arrest their plans; the student will lay aside his books, and the farmer leave his plough in the furrow, and the woodman lay down his axe, and the apprentice will be at liberty from toil, and even the servant, and the slave, to

'some extent, be free. The day is to be one, not of toil, but of relaxation and of rest. It is either to be devoted to religion or to such pursuits and pastimes as the general public sentiment shall direct and demand.

Since this is to be so, the question is, what is to be the effect on this nation if the day ceases to be a day of religious observance? What will be the effect of releasing our entire population of many millions one-seventh part of the time from toil, and from any settled business of life? What will be the result if they are brought under no religious instruction and restraint, and if the day is not observed to worship God, and to advance in piety and the knowledge of salvation? What will be the effect on morals? What on religion? What on sober habits of industry? What on public virtue, happiness, and patriotism? Can we safely close all our places of business; annihilate all the restraints that meet us during the

six days; turn out a vast population of the young with nothing to do; and abide the consequences of such a universal exposure to vice? These are grave questions. But there are questions that are graver still. Can we safely dismiss our young men, all over the land, with sentiments unfixed, and habits of virtue unformed, and throw them one day in seven upon the world, with nothing to do *but to be tempted and led to ruin*? Can we safely release our sons, and our apprentices, and our clerks from our employ, and from our notice, and send them forth under the ragings of tumultuous youthful passion, without restraint? And, most of all, can we safely open fountains of poison at every corner of our streets, and in every village, and can our young men wander there on this day with impunity? And can the house of her whose “steps take hold on hell,” stand in the way of our young men on such a day, and they be pure in virtue?

One would suppose that the experiment which has already been made in this city, and in other cities of this land, would be sufficient to remove all doubt from any reasonable mind on this subject. For we are making the experiment on a large scale every Sabbath. Comparatively few of our young men are in the sanctuary to-day. Few are pursuing any employment that shall contribute to their virtue or salvation. The simple matter of fact is, that in this city, and in its vicinity, this is extensively a day of gambling, and dissipation, and riot, and licentiousness, and revelry. It is an incontrovertible truth, that more vice is committed on this day than on all other days of the week; that more is done to unsettle the habits of virtue, and soberness, and industry than in all the week beside; that more is done to propagate infidelity, and to spread licentiousness, and to lay the foundation for future ignominy or repentance than in all the week besides; that more is done to retard the progress

of the temperance reformation, and to prepare candidates for the penitentiary, and the gallows, than through the whole six days beside. The institution of the Sabbath is an institution of tremendous power for good or for evil. If for good, it is laid at the foundation of our peace, our intelligence, our minds, our religion. If for evil, it strikes at all these; nor is there *any* possible power in laws, or in education, or in penalty, that can, during the six days, meet and counteract the evils of a Sabbath given to licentiousness and sin. And the question before this nation now is, not whether this day is to be a day of labour, and sober industry, for that is settled; but whether it is to be a day of religion, or of licentiousness; a day of virtue or of sin; and whether, if it is *not* regarded as a day of devotion, the nation can bear to have one day in seven a day of riot and disorder; a *Saturnalia*, occurring more than fifty times in the year, when Rome,

in the most vigorous days of her virtue, could scarcely survive the effects of one.

III. A third reason why this subject demands the special attention of Christians is, that if this day is abolished as a day of religious observance, pure morals will be obliterated with it, and the floodgates of vice will be opened on the land. The Sabbath is favourable to the spread of pure morality, and the most pure and elevated principle is to be found in those places that keep holy the Sabbath day. This assertion is made with the utmost confidence, and without the fear of successful contradiction, and you are invited to test the truth of it as often as you please. Go through the country, and examine the cities, the towns, and the villages; mingle with the inhabitants of every grade, and converse with them freely; learn what are their opinions and their habits; examine their prisons and their almshouses; and then tell me, can-

didly, where you find most industry, most sober habits, most contentment, most sobriety, most purity, most intelligence, and most freedom from low and debasing vices. Tell me, candidly, in what place you would prefer to place a son—or to make the question more striking—a *daughter*, to be trained up. Is there a parent here who would hesitate a moment in regard to this? The virtues of domestic life, the virtues which go to adorn human intercourse, and to cement society; the mild and gentle charities of life, connected with the fireside, with the intercourse of parents, and children, and neighbours, with the sick room and with the bed of death, flourish only under the genial influences of the Sabbath, and with those who love the sound of the Sabbath bell. The virtues of industry, and temperance, and love; of honesty, and truth, and kindness flourish there, and there alone. Can you point me to one idle and dissolute family; to one single disturber of the peace; to one vicious neighbourhood; to one community in which licentious-

ness reigns, where the Lord's day is habitually regarded? Sir Matthew Hale says, "that of all the persons convicted of capital crimes, while he was on the bench, there were a few only who were not ready to confess that they had begun their career of wickedness by a neglect of the duties of the Sabbath." The same testimony would be, probably, borne, without hesitation, by those of your own judges, who have ever made it a subject of attention to inquire into the origin of crime.

Now, if the Sabbath is obliterated, it will become a day, not of morals, but of immorality. In particular, I wish to say, that this subject appeals to young men. I do believe that if I could collect around me all the young men of this congregation, and of this city, I could convince the mass of them that the only security for their correct moral character and future usefulness, success and happiness, is connected with the proper observance of this

day. I could show them that the temptations which are spread out to beguile the unwary, are designed by cunning, unprincipled, and avaricious men for them. I could convince them that they go forth from their fathers' dwellings on this day, or from the sacred home, or sanctuary, under the influence of strong, and raging desires; exposed to temptations where no young man is safe, and which would not, assuredly, meet him here; that they go beyond the eye of a father and a counsellor; that they may be hurried on to expenses and to vices which they would have been shocked to have anticipated; and that they will do more to pain a mother's heart, and mar their own future peace, on such a day, than on all other days beside. For be it remembered, that no young man thus leaves his father's dwelling, and devotes this day to amusement and revelry, without flying in the face of an explicit command of the Most High. And be it remembered that the ways which

God has ordained are those which tend to promote human virtue and happiness. If any young man is sceptical on this subject, let me ask you to go with me to the penitentiary, and walk with me from cell to cell, and inquire of the inmates, *when* their career of guilt commenced. Or go and converse, in his sober moments, with the drunkard, and ask him when he first trod that downward way, and the answer would be, in a large majority of cases, on the Sabbath day. I venture here one suggestion, which I do with deep feeling, though not with entire certainty of its correctness. Of that you can better judge. It is, that it is rare to see a young man belonging to this city intoxicated in public, *except on the Sabbath*; but that it is by no means uncommon on this day. I admit, indeed, that this is not common *in* our city; but how is it in our neighbouring villages? O how many a mother may there be who would bathe her cheeks with tears; and how many a sister, whose

heart would burst with grief, were they witnesses of what may be the condition of a son or a brother this day!

IV. A fourth reason why this subject demands the attention of Christians now, is, that there is a state of things in the land that is tending to obliterate the Sabbath altogether.

The events to which I refer are too well known to make it necessary particularly to dwell upon them. I may just refer to them. The mail is carried in every direction; and the example of the violation is thus set by national authority; and that high example continually presents to the people the impression that the Sabbath is not to be regarded as sacred time. Every post-office is opened, and a public invitation is thus given to obtain the political and commercial intelligence, and to carry the ordinary plans and feelings of the week into the sacred rest of this day. Some

years since the voice of respectful entreaty and petition was addressed to the national legislature by thousands of the best citizens in the land; and the sacred right of petition was met with contempt and sarcasm. In every part of our land the facilities for communication have been augmented with a rapidity that excites the surprise of the world. By canals and rail-roads distant portions of our country have been brought together, and the earth trembles every day under the movements of commerce and of gain. Against these national improvements, assuredly, the language of complaint and regret is not to be raised. They should be rather sources of gratitude to the God who has thus blessed our country. But can any one be ignorant that each canal, and each rail-road furnishes increased facility for Sabbath-violation; and that they are fast tending to blot the Sabbath from the land? Where, in these public conveyances, is the Sabbath regarded? Where is the rail-road

car that is arrested by the return of this sacred day? Where is the public vehicle that is stopped in obedience to the divine commandment? Is it not known that these vehicles are crowded with a denser throng on this day than on any other one of the seven? Had it been the purpose of the people of this land to abolish the Sabbath altogether, and to furnish the most rapid and extended means of its entire obliteration, it would have been impossible to have devised a more certain and effectual way than that which is now employed.

In the mean time there is an augmented desire for *motion* among the people of this land. The population is becoming migratory; and few pause to rest on the Sabbath. The merchant hastens on his way to the commercial emporium; and the legislator pursues his journey to the capital; and the party of pleasure urge on their way to the watering place; and he who goes to visit a distant friend is

regardless of the day that his fathers loved; and our sons in the distant west are travelling at the same time, beyond the sound of the Sabbath bell, and the memory of the sanctuary to which it once called them; and the idle, and the dissipated, and the profane, and the atheist, and even the Christian, in these public vehicles pursue the business of gain, of pleasure, of ambition.

There are more persons in steamboats and cars on the Sabbath than on any other day in the week. For one man who will conscientiously stop in his journey, to keep holy the Sabbath day, there are, probably, *ten* who will be at special pains to violate it, either by commencing a journey on that day, or by making it the occasion of an excursion of pleasure. In the mean time, also, there is every where an increased laxness of moral sentiment among the people on that subject. Our fathers would have been shocked to see the dregs of one of

our great cities poured from a steamboat to disturb the serenity and corrupt the morals of a country village. But it is now a constant occurrence, and no man is alarmed. During the times that tried men's souls, when the independence of this country was at stake, our fathers would have been alarmed had the congress of the Union pursued the ordinary business of legislation on the Sabbath, and the voice of remonstrance would have been heard throughout the land. Yet twice, at least, during the session of congress which has just closed, has the sacred rest of this day been violated by the representatives of this nation; and on *both* occasions scenes of disorder have occurred that would have disgraced the nation's representatives at any time, and that were not exhibited during any other part of their deliberations. The Sabbath was violated, not because there was not time for the ordinary purposes of legislation, not because of any extraordinary emergency in public af-

fairs—and the nation has felt no shock, no alarm. And I may repeat a remark already made. The warfare which Christianity is to wage is here. The opposition to religion is here. The Sabbath has more enemies in this land than the Lord's supper; than baptism; than the Bible; than all the other institutions of religion put together. The conflict is to rage here. The attempt of the atheist, and the infidel, and the man of vice, is to blot out the Sabbath. The attempt is not to be made here to destroy Christianity by persecution, for that has been tried and has failed. It is to see whether the Sabbath of the Lord can be obliterated from the memory of man; and if it *can* be done, infidelity well knows that its cause is secure. If this day, with its sacred institutions, can be blotted out, the victory will be won. Infidelity will achieve what the faggot and the stake, what the force of argument, and the caustic severity of sarcasm and ridicule have never yet been able to accomplish.

And it is just now a question for the people of this land to determine for themselves, whether they shall abandon the day or make an effort to save it; whether the virtuous and the good shall yield the victory without a struggle, or whether they shall combine their efforts, and address the reason and conscience of their fellow citizens, and speak to them of our hallowed institutions, and of the rapid corruption of the public morals; whether they shall remind them of what the Sabbath has done for us in better times, and attempt to bring back the nation to the observance of an institution that would diffuse intelligence, and soberness, and industry, and a proper estimate of this world and of the world to come, over the land.

V. A fifth reason why this subject demands the attention of Christians now, is, that there is an increasing laxness of principle in regard to it among themselves. The proof of this

might be drawn out in the statement of a variety of facts. There is less concern that the *conversation* should be such as becomes this day. There is less reluctance to engage in conversation on the ordinary topics of commerce, of stocks, of politics, of agriculture, of literature. There is more readiness to mingle with the gay in *their* favourite topics of conversation, and even in their amusements. And, in particular, there is more disposition to violate the day by travelling. There is less and less firmness in saying that there is a conscientious belief that the Sabbath should be kept holy. There is a greater readiness to fall in with the views of fellow-travellers, and to make the sternness of Christian principle bend to pleasure or to convenience. Now, it is plead by the Christian traveller, on the Sabbath, that he can enjoy religion in a canal boat, or a steamboat as well as at home. And he, doubtless, speaks the truth, for he who could make an excuse like this, is probably a

stranger to the enjoyment of religion altogether. Now, it is plead that he is in the company of fellow-travellers who are indisposed to rest, and that he is unwilling to lose their society; and it will be well if, by this kind of compliance with their disposition to violate the law of God, he does not accompany them in all their journey down to hell. Now, it is plead that time urges, and that a delay cannot be made, when all the haste is to reach a watering place, and all the purpose pleasure, and all the business of life to invent some modes to kill time; and when, the next hour after the arrival, time will hang heavy on their hands, and haste will be made to visit other scenes of pleasure, and to violate other Sabbaths. And now it is plead that *business* calls the professed Christian, and urges him homeward or onward, when he already rolls in wealth, and when his accumulations only tend to ruin his family and to send a blighting into his own soul. I add, with deep regret, and to

the everlasting shame of the ministry, in this land, that many ministers are found with this class of pleasure-seeking Christians, and lending their countenance to the violation of this day. Travelling Christians rejoice if they have the countenance of one such minister of the gospel. And every atheist, and scoffer, and drunkard that is a fellow-traveller, and a fellow-violator of the law of God, will rejoice also. Their consciences and the consciences of their fellow-travellers are often quieted by the fact that they preach, and that the voice of prayer and praise ascends from these violators of God's holy day. They preach! O that they would take my text, and in each steamboat and canal boat, press on their own consciences, and the consciences of their fellow-travellers the command, "REMEMBER to keep holy the Sabbath day." O that to them all the rest of the Bible might be closed, and the words of the fourth commandment, in living

light, gleam all around them, and be their text, "their only text," till lungs and voice shall fail. The mockery of a sermon from a minister of the gospel, may do more evil than they can compensate by the ministry of a life. No. If ministers *will* travel; if they will be the companions of infidels, and profligates, and atheists; if they will be found desecrating this day with the gay, and the neglecters of God, let them not prostitute their high office by making public proclamation of their guilt. Let their mouths be sealed in silence, and their heads hang with shame, but let them not stand forth to the world as the public violators of the sacred law of God.

VI. A sixth reason why this subject claims our attention is, that it is in the power of Christians, under the divine blessing, to save the Sabbath yet. It is an institution whose value can be commended to the sober judg-

ment of all men. Our countrymen *can* be convinced that it will be unwise to abolish it altogether. We do not look to legislation on this subject, but to a candid public sentiment. And that sentiment *may* be formed. A very large portion of the intelligence and moral worth of this nation is connected with the various religious denominations. A very large amount of the talent and learning of this people is in the ministry. The ministry, in this nation, has not lost its power over the public mind, and the public ear will listen to their voice, urging to the formation of a correct moral sentiment, and to healthful moral action. Infidel leaders can never command the influence which God and the Christian churches have confided to the ministry of reconciliation. There are, moreover, in our national and state legislatures, a few—alas! that it should be so few—pious men and friends of the Sabbath. There are men that love the Sabbath in the public directorship of our col-

leges, academies, and schools. There are pious men largely concerned in the ownership of steamboats, and canal lines, and stages, and rail-roads. There are a very large portion of the mercantile community—I should think, larger, in proportion, than in any other class of our citizens—who are men fearing God, and loving the Sabbath. There are many pious men on the bench, and at the bar, and in the medical profession. A large portion of our respectable farmers and mechanics are men, too, professing to fear God. Almost all the teachers in our colleges and schools are professors of religion, and friends of the Sabbath. A large portion of those who are parents and guardians, are numbered among the friends of the Sabbath. And last, not least, there is a portion of the public press that will advocate the observance of the day, and rebuke its violation; and there would be a larger portion still, if Christians were firm and would do their duty. To the honour of our country it

may still be said, that the mass of men of real worth and power in all the professions and callings of life are still the friends of religion and of the Christian Sabbath.

Now, just what is needed, under God, is *concentration* and *combination of effort*. It is needed that these scattered influences should be brought to bear on this subject. It is needed that every man, in his own proper sphere, should be willing to do his duty, and to be known as the friend of the Sabbath. There is no reason why the Sabbath should be obliterated. The enemy of this day makes advances by concentration. The different divisions of his army are combined for this onset. He has ranged under his broad banner all classes of the enemies of God, and his object is to make war on the Sabbath, and, *through* that, on the religion that we love. Let the power of example be felt in opposition to those efforts; let the press speak; let the pulpit urge

its pleadings; let the father do his duty; let every man who has influence exert that influence, and our countrymen will hear us, and the day yet be rescued from universal profanation, and we be saved from the evils of universal profligacy and sin.

These are some of the *general* reasons why this subject claims the attention of Christians. There are two others, of a more local and special character, with an allusion to which I shall close.

The first is drawn from the state of *this* city. Where is the mass of our population to-day? Where are our young men? What are their engagements? What is the influence which the occurrences of this day will be likely to have on their future morals, and on the morals and piety of this city? Are they in the sanctuary? Or are they crowding our steamboats and public and private vehicles,

and spreading riot, and profaneness, and dissoluteness through surrounding villages, and around the places of worship and dwelling places of our neighbours? *We* in this city, are comparatively peaceful. But let the surrounding villages speak. Now there are two questions that press themselves on our attention. One is, what RIGHT have we, as a city, to pour forth the dregs of our population on surrounding villages, and fields, and towns? What RIGHT have we to send forth our apprentices and sons to disturb the quiet, and interrupt the worship of our neighbours, and to spread riot and intemperance there? The other inquiry is, What is to be the result of this state of things, unless this course is changed? Vice and crime begin to-day. Many a young man commences a career of dissipation to-day that shall end in poverty, idleness, disgrace, the penitentiary or the gallows. Many a son may commence a course to-day that shall yet bring down a father's

gray hairs to the grave ; or break a mother's heart over a fallen and beloved child. If this state of things is continued, our future character, as a people, cannot be a matter of doubt. Our city, the ornament of our land, boasting, perhaps prematurely, of its morals, and thick set with institutions of philanthropy and charity, may become the dwelling-place of vice, and be as much distinguished for disorder, as it has been for soberness of manners. Your splendid palace on the Schuylkill may be filled with paupers as the result of intemperance, commenced on the Sabbath ; your prisons with convicts, as the effect of crimes that had their origin there also ; your orphan asylums, with weeping children, whose fathers commenced the career of intemperance that brought them to the grave on this holy day. This is not the language of needless alarm, nor does it proceed from the disturbed vision of fancy. The cities of the old world have been corrupted in this same way, and the same

doom is before us, unless there is moral courage and virtue enough in this city to stay the march of ruin.

The other special reason why this subject is of importance to us is, that the season of the year has again arrived when we are accustomed to leave our homes, and to visit the different places of amusement, relaxation and health in the land. I believe that every Christian is injured in his piety by this; but we cannot say that it is wrong. We all feel that it is needful for ourselves and for our families. Our prayers shall go up to heaven on this day, and through the week, for your safety by land and by water; among friends and strangers, that the everlasting arms may keep you; and restore you, with augmented strength and piety, to the much loved endearments of home and privileges of this sanctuary. Will you allow the word of exhortation? The chief danger to your piety, when abroad, results

from the violation of this sacred day. Your main, not your only temptation, will be there. Perhaps, in former days you have erred in this. Our fervent wish, our earnest prayer to the God of grace is, that he will keep your lives, and return you again to your homes. But our more fervent wish, our deeper desire is, that you may remember your high calling *as a Christian*. In all places, in all company, in all employments, the doctrine of God the Saviour is to be adorned always. Not for one moment are you to forget that you are a Christian. Neither when surrounded by the fashionable and the gay; the pleasure-seeking and the abandoned; neither in public conveyances nor where you may abide, are you to forget that you are solemnly self-dedicated to God; and that those hands have handled the bread of life, and those lips tasted the cup of salvation. Pure be those hands, and pure the words that shall proceed from those lips. Holy be the heart that has oft commemorated the

Saviour's love; pure the glances of that eye that looks forward to an eternal heaven; and well-ordered the steps that go in the way up to the throne of God.

Whatever, ye friends of the Redeemer, be the direction of your earthly journey, you travel toward heaven. Wherever you wander when separate, you meet there at last; and, perhaps, before you meet again in the sanctuary. Wherever you go, carry with you the sacred remembrance of the command of God in my text. Let it shine, as if written in letters of living light, all round about you. At home or abroad, among kindred or strangers, with the friends or the foes of God, let me entreat you, by the love you bear your country, your character, your peace, your church, your pastor; by your love to your God and Saviour, "REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY."

THE END.

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