

thing *holy, sacred, reverential*; and are, in some degree, made involuntarily to stand in awe, lest they incur the displeasure of the Lawgiver.

Hence, 3. The *disuse* of it, and the substitution of any other term by which to designate the day, tends to do away the sacredness, awe, and reverence attached to the term. It will be "as when one letteth out water": it will wear a deeper channel. Infidelity and irreligion make advances by little and little; and no doubt the disuse of that sacred term has contributed something towards such unfavorable results. Why do Papists prefix *saint*, i. e. *holy*, to almost every thing peculiar to their system? Do they not know that terms of such significance will induce respect, awe, and reverence, in the minds of the people, and that *without* such sacred terms much of that reverence and awe would be done away, and that words of different and especially opposite import would render them ridiculous? And why do they affix the most *opprobrious* terms to Protestants, if not to bring a scandal upon their character? I know that *words* are *little things*; but often mean a *great deal*, and as often have *great effects*.

Let the *sacred*, the *significant* term *Sabbath*, which God has given to his day, be brought back, be spoken and written always, with all its sacred associations, as in past ages, and it will result only in good.

THE MORALITY OF THE SABBATH.

It has been frequently observed as matter of surprise, that our opponents, while they denounce our interference in this matter as unreasonable and intolerant, uniformly decline entering into the controversy with us. Now, if we may be permitted to account for this unwillingness, we should say that it arises from their regarding this as a purely religious or theological question. This is a mistake which may be easily accounted for. In the first place, they find that it is chiefly the religious portion of the community that are interested in this agitation. Then they see that it is the ministers of religion that take a leading part in carrying it forward. And again, they find that the chief arguments, by which Sabbath observance is enforced, are taken from the Bible. All this may be granted, however, and still the question may be shown to be not a religious one merely, but a point of morality. No doubt Christian men are mainly interested in this question; for true religion and morals are closely and inseparably allied.—"If ye love me," says Christ, "keep my commandments." And need we wonder that Christians, who love the Saviour, should be of all others most anxious to see His commands fulfilled? True, also, the ministers of Christ may be the most prominent advocates of the Sabbath; but who should be the front-rank champions of morality, if not the stewards of that Gospel which teaches all men to live soberly, and righteously, and godly? It is true, moreover, that the Sabbath is re-

vealed in the Bible. But does that exclude it from the catalogue of moral duties? It is a great mistake to suppose that, because a thing happens to be revealed in Scripture, it is therefore purely a matter of religious faith and practice. Revelation has more fully developed the principles of morality, and added new sanctions and motives to morality; but it has neither enlarged its sphere, nor altered its nature. But it is not enough to say that the Sabbath is revealed in the Bible. The Bible contains many ceremonial precepts and local institutions which were of temporary obligation. We maintain that the Sabbath is a moral statute, because it is embodied in the moral law of the decalogue, which is of perpetual and unchanging obligation. This, we are aware, has been denied; but that denial goes to unsettle the very foundations of morality. If the decalogue is discharged as a moral code, we are left without any definite standard of moral practice; we have no rule by which we can determine what is moral and what ceremonial in other parts of Scripture—what was of temporary, and what is of eternal obligation. But is this the case? Is it not, on the contrary, apparent that the law of the decalogue stands out apart from all the prescriptions of the Levitical economy? Is not this apparent from the very form in which it was given—uttered out of the midst of the fire, and the cloud, and thick darkness, by the voice of the great Lawgiver himself, inscribed by His own fingers on tables of stone, and ordered to be kept enshrined in the ark of the covenant? Is it not said that He "gave the law of the ten commandments, and He added no more?" He added a great many more ceremonial, but no more moral precepts than these ten, for it is a perfect standard, comprehending all moral duty; and he gave no less than these ten, for it is an unalterable and inviolable standard, and no man dare diminish the number. And is not the same apparent from the very nature of the commandments? So different from the ceremonial and civil enactments of the ancient law, which are founded on the good will and pleasure of the legislator, this law contains the very sum and substance of morality—love to God, and love to man; and its precepts are based, not on the positive will, but the pure nature of God himself—unchanging and immortal as his own holiness, of which it is the transcript. And what proof have we that any part of this decalogue was ever altered or abolished? Is it not, on the contrary, the very law which the apostle declares is holy, and just, and good; the law which man had broken, and which the Saviour of man obeyed—which He "came not to destroy, but to fulfil;"—that law which was written on his own heart, and which is written on the hearts

of all his renewed ones—that law which faith does not make void, but establishes—the same law, in short, by which men shall be judged at the last day, and of which it is said, that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all?" In this eternal code of duty is the precept of the Sabbath embodied—we might say imbedded, and that so firmly that it cannot be wrenched out without destroying the unity and endangering the stability of the whole fabric. There is something positive or arbitrary, we grant, in the fourth precept—even the precise portion of time appointed—the seventh; but the foundation of the precept lies deep in the moral nature of God, that a certain portion of our time must be devoted to his service; and even the selection of the seventh portion, being the dictate of infinite wisdom, and not left to human caprice, must be regarded as having a moral bearing towards us, founded on the very constitution of man, and the very nature of things. But not only does the law of the Sabbath form part of the decalogue, it occupies a place in its very centre, and may be said to be the connecting link between the duties of the first and second tables. It partakes of the piety of the one, and the benevolence of the other.—While it enjoins us to take rest ourselves, it commands us to give rest to all that belongs to us.—"On it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. Thus it corresponds with the sum of the second table,—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If this precept were to be dropped from the decalogue, we then would have laws against robbing people of their money, of their lives and good name, but none against robbing them of their time. The working man would be entirely at the mercy of his master, who might, without infringing on any law, exact from him a life of unremitting toil.

If the preceding remarks are founded in truth, it must follow that whatever interpretation may be put on some passages in the New Testament usually quoted on the opposite side, they cannot be interpreted to mean the abrogation of the Sabbath. Our Lord and his apostles did not and could not, abrogate what was moral. On the contrary, the great object of our blessed Saviour was to show that neither he nor his disciples had been guilty of any breach of the holy commandment. "If ye had known what this meaneth," said he to his accusers, "ye would not have condemned the guiltless." And he deals with the Sabbath exactly as he did with the ordinance of marriage—appealing from Judaical perversions to the original institution in Paradise, and showing that "from the beginning it was not so," as