

ous observance of it? Is worldly engagement more calculated to promote the divine life in the soul, than the dedication of the day to the exercises of devotion, and means of spiritual mindedness? Is a spiritual dispensation a dispensation of release from spiritual exercises? Or is there one divine institution more eminently fitted for the advancement of spirituality of mind than the day of God, when duly observed? Is there a child of God who could feel it a privilege to have the whole, or any part of the day, taken from him, for the purpose of unholy pursuits?—a privilege to be released from consecrating so large a portion of his time, as one day in the seven, to the concerns of his soul, and communion with his Saviour? Is this indeed a part of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free? Is it spirituality of mind that exults in such freedom? That a Christian should be anxious to add as much more of his time for the cultivation of the principles and affections of godliness, as he can redeem from the necessary engagements of the world, is easily understood; but that a man under the full influence of evangelical piety, can listen with complacency to reasons that would deprive him of a portion of his spiritual enjoyments, and abridge the means of his advancement in grace, demands a doubt."

I have to be thankful that such a course of argument was suggested to my mind: it made me stop and think again under the rising conviction that I might possibly be wrong. It also called to my mind the remarks of a poor plain little red-cloaked woman, whom, because I thought highly of her piety, I had endeavoured to convince that the Sabbath was a human institution. "Then 'tis a very blessed one," she said, "'tis the best blessing man ever afforded me." "But do you not see it is not of divine appointment? where in the Bible are the texts to prove we must observe it sacredly?" "I have never yet thought of asking if we *must* keep it; I have always thought we *may*, and that is enough for me. I think my Heavenly Father will not be angry with me, for seeking the happiness of worshipping Him and meeting with his people and hearing his dear Ministers, which I find on Sundays; and if He

will not be angry, I cannot give up the best privilege I have on earth." "But the Bible does not require it." "Well, I thought it did; but does it forbid it?" "Not directly." "Then, Master William, I do think you ought not to be so warm in trying to take away from us poor souls our richest earthly comfort. If it were sinful to keep the Sabbath holy, I would give it up; but I cannot think how sin can yield me so much holy pleasure: that is too deep for me." The conversation made only a passing impression on my mind, when it occurred, save that it excited my pity for the poor woman's "pious ignorance;" but at the time alluded to above, it flashed with most convincing and abasing evidence upon me.

Still, as my anti-sabbath prejudices had taken deep root within me, (alas! how soon and powerfully does error thrive, when its seeds are suffered to germinate in our corrupted nature!) they were not easily eradicated. It was not till after many painful struggles, that I could admit that there was any positive scriptural authority for the sanctity of the first day in seven. The chief means of ultimately leading me to this admission, was a conversation with an intelligent Christian to the following effect.—I asked him for evidence in favour of the universal obligation of the decalogue. "Why," said he, "I thought you were satisfied that there exists no such evidence, and why wish for information when already satisfied upon a question?" "I begin to see that my positivity was not wise." "Indeed! Then I shall be much gratified to state my reasons for deeming the decalogue binding on all men. I think the great and manifest difference in the manner of giving the ten commandments, and that of giving the ceremonial and political laws of Judaism, was intended to denote the fact. Not only were these precepts written by the finger of God, whilst others were given only orally, but other circumstances of special solemnity, also marked the difference, as you may see in the 20th of Exodus. Nor is it an unimportant fact that conscience, on hearing the decalogue, at once recognizes its commands as binding universally; which it fails to do on reading the Jewish laws which follow.