

Synod, are deeply important; and there will be the greater likelihood of their being acted on, if this first recommendation be attended to. It is always a favourable presage of Revival, when the people of God are brought to estimate and ponder their short-comings and wants, and to unite together in imploring the reviving influences of his Holy Spirit.

The third Thursday of October is the NINETEENTH day of the month. Let Sessions meet at least one week previously, and consider what public services should be attended to on that day.

It is, in general, more convenient for congregations in the country to meet in the course of the day, as, on the other hand, an evening hour may be more suitable for congregations in towns and cities.

This will no doubt be determined by Sessions themselves, according to the recommendation of the Synod. Let it be but a day of united prayer and supplication, and the whole church will receive a precious return from it.

When God has thoughts of peace, and not of evil, towards a people, he will incline them "to go and pray unto him, and he will hearken unto them; and they shall seek him, and find him, when they shall search for him with all their heart."

SABBATH PROFANATION.—THE SYNOD'S COMMITTEE.—TRACT, BY THE REV. ALEX. CAMPBELL, OF MELROSE.

The Saviour promised that the Holy Spirit, on his coming, would "reprove the world of sin." We may see a partial fulfilment of this promise wherever the followers of the Saviour take up their abode, and attend on his ordinances. Then it is found, that the ungodly around them become ashamed, as they feel themselves reprov'd for their grosser wickednesses.

For example, in many of the newly-settled portions of our country, youths are found strolling by the streams, with their fishing-rods, or roaming through the woods with fowling-pieces, on the Lord's-day; and other violations of the fourth commandment, equally glaring, may be seen. But, in course of time, some pious men in that settlement find each other out, and meet, on the Lord's-day, for prayer, and other spiritual exercises; they open a Sabbath school; they obtain visits from a Missionary; their prayers and exertions are blessed, even to the organizing a Church and obtaining a Pastor; and with this great change in their settlement, some careless men have been brought to attend to the things of salvation, and others have been put to shame, for their open ungodliness; so that if they do not hallow the Sabbath in their hearts, and their dwellings, they at least no longer openly treat it with contempt. We have, in witnessing such things, been led to remark that some violations of the law of the Sabbath are easily rebuked. It is not so, however, with all violations of that law. Some of these, alas, find some kind of countenance in the lax views, and laxer practice, of Christians themselves. Of this class is, the encouraging of public conveyances on the Lord's-day, for travelling, and the carrying of the mail. We have been astonished to hear some good men pleading for the running of railway trains on the Lord's-day, on the ground of not putting any restraint on those who may choose to travel on that day. But who does not see that the facility thus

afforded to some, to travel, in circumstances which might be justifiable, is obtained only through the labour of others, which may be, in some respects, compulsory, as it may be contrary to the dictates of their consciences; while such facility for travelling, at the same time opens up a wide door to Sabbath profanation.

Our readers have no doubt perused the Pastoral Address on the Desecration of the Sabbath, drawn up under the authority of the Synod, and published in the number of the *Record* for August; and we presume many more have heard it read by their ministers, according to the appointment of the Synod. We trust that good will result from this Address, and the appointment of a Committee to attend to the subject. We can expect sin to disappear in the community only through the prevalence of gospel truth. Yet in the case of any particular sin, such as profaneness, drunkenness, or lewdness, it is well to direct towards it a special attention, with the view of exposing and rebuking it. Hence the importance of the labours of such a Committee as that which the Synod has appointed.

These thoughts have been suggested by an admirable Tract, which an esteemed correspondent has sent us. It is written by an excellent minister of the Free Church of Scotland, the Rev. Alexander Campbell, of Melrose. Our readers will, we are sure, peruse it with pleasure, and, we trust, with profit also. It is as follows:—

THE MAIL: SHOULD IT BE CARRIED ON THE LORD'S DAY, OR NOT?

Addressed to the Inhabitants of a Country District.

Whatever reasons may be urged for carrying the Mail on Sabbath, stronger reasons may be urged for not carrying it.

The reasons that may be urged for carrying it, are as follows:—

1. *Why not carry it? It has been carried for a century.*—True. But that does not make it right. A wrong thing does not become right by being long continued.

2. *But it is not wrong. The Church has acquiesced in it—and many Christian men approve of it.*—The vast majority of Christian men condemn it. But the morality of the practice is not affected by the opinion of the one party or the other.

And as to the Church acquiescing in it, this is not the case, as the following history of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Mail will show:—

In 1709, a riding-post was appointed to carry the London Mail from Edinburgh to Glasgow. For a long time the hour of arrival in Glasgow was nine on Monday morning—the mail having lain in Edinburgh during the Sabbath. But about 1745, certain persons, said to be the conductors of the local newspapers, used their influence to get it brought in by three or four o'clock in the morning; and then they got it changed to eight o'clock on Sabbath evening. At first newspapers only were given out on Sabbath evening, the letters being shut up till Monday morning. In 1778, letters were allowed to be given out on payment of a penny in addition to the postage. But a year or two afterward, an attempt being made to bring in the Mail at nine o'clock on Sabbath morning, and despatch it in the afternoon, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland immediately took active measures for preventing this, and, aided by the well-disposed inhabitants of Glasgow, succeeded. But the attempt was resumed a year afterward, and although the most strenuous opposition was offered to it by the Church and private parties, all that could be effected was an arrangement that no bags should be made up after twelve on Saturday night, and that the Mails should not be carried during the daytime. After this, it does not appear what measures, if any, were adopted

by the Church, until a few years ago, when it renewed its protest against the Sabbath Mail. Thus it appears that the Church of Scotland not only condemned Sabbath Mails, but exerted itself to suppress them.

3. *But it is essential for purposes of business that the Mail be carried.*—The merchant says this, and the banker, and the doctor, and some others say it. "We must have our letters," they say, "otherwise the interests of trade may be endangered, or the lives of our patients."

But what is the merchant's necessity? Are the transactions which you conduct in a small country town of such vast importance, that the want of your Sabbath letters would seriously damage your prosperity? What letter did you ever get on Sabbath, that it was absolutely necessary that you should have got, and which you could not have got some other way; or what letter of the kind are you expecting? But perhaps it is not for your own sake you would uphold the present system; but for the sake of the great mercantile men of the country, who, you suppose, must tremble at the present movement. But you are mistaken. For suppose some sudden evolution of fortune were to carry you from your counter to a counting-house in London, and that your advices, which now involve a few hundreds per annum, were to be swelled to half a million, you would there find yourself deprived of a Sabbath delivery. In the mercantile metropolis of the world, and though you had become another Rothschild, you would find yourself without the possibility of getting your Sabbath letters. And when you expressed your surprise that things should be so much better managed in your native village, and announced that there it had been held absolutely necessary for its men of business to get their letters, the merchants of London would tell you that they were quite of another way of thinking; that so far from thinking it necessary that they should get them, they had resisted a proposal to that effect. Instead of considering the shut post-office a grievance, it was kept shut at their earnest solicitation.

Now we don't know to what class of logical argument this one exactly belongs; but we appeal to common sense if there is a fallacy in it: "If a necessity for a Sabbath post-office does not exist in London, it exists no where."

The banker's necessity falls before an argument of the same kind. He can only maintain his plea by magnifying in some extraordinary way the importance of his bank and its transactions, by proving, in short, that the branch is more important than the tree which bears it—the extremities of the body than the body to which they are attached. For, not to recur to the case of London, where the bankers united with the merchants in deprecating the opening of the post-office on Sabbath, I am informed that a few years ago all the bankers of Edinburgh agreed to discontinue their practice of sending for their business letters on Sabbath. The bankers of Edinburgh do not need their letters on Sabbath; but the managers of their country branches must have them. Is this "must" proved?

But how shall we answer the doctor's plea? It seems so philanthropic. It is not his own gain, but the good of others that weighs with him. It is not his purse, but his patients, who are endangered by shutting the post-office on Sabbath.

The medical profession may be divided into two halves—the town and the country. The former half do not wish for their letters, and for the most part do not send for them when they have the opportunity; and the other half, we maintain, do not need them.

Let any country doctor tell us how many of his patients send for him by post, in cases of emergency. In such cases do the country people sit down and quietly write a letter, and despatch it to the post-office—a mile or two off, it may be—and then wait in cool suspense for a dozen hours or so, hoping that the doctor might be at home when the letter was delivered, and that his engagements might allow him to come immediately. We don't

* All—I should say—with one exception—which, I believe, is the only Edinburgh bank that has since failed.