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FUNERALS ON THE LORD'S DAY.

There are few things that more forcibly illustrate the blinding influence of long established custom, than the insensibility of the great masses of Christians to the evil of Sabbath funerals. The practice of burying the dead on the Lord's day has been so long established, that few are disposed to question its morality, and fewer still to raise their voice against it. Such hold has it taken of the vitals of society that any questioning of its conformity to the Moral law, is ascribed to a squeamish Puritanic spirit, that seeks to be wise above what is written, and righteous above obligation. Indeed, so firmly rooted has the custom become even in Christian circles, that many persons choose to postpone the burial of their dead until the return of the Sabbath. Church goers not unfrequently forsake the assembling of themselves together in the Sanctuary, in order to follow to the grave the remains of a deceased friend. Ministers of the Gospel not unfrequently leave their pulpits, and disappoint their congregations, in order to grace a funeral procession with their presence, and to consecrate it with their prayers.

Now, it is not disputed that occasions may arise sufficient to justify an interment on the Lord's day. One may die of such a disease, or in such circumstances that the earliest possible burial becomes a matter of sanitary and moral obligation. In such a case, no question ought to be raised in regard to the distinction between Sabbath and secular time. The law of necessity and mercy covers such a case as that. The minister of the Gospel may leave his pulpit, the hearer may leave his pew, and even the communicant may vacate his place at a communion table, to go and bury the dead. The burials to which we take exception are not of that class. They are those for which there is no absolute necessity; that are not required either by pressing sanitary considerations, or by other circumstances over which relatives have no control. They are burials which, without the violation of any law sanitary or moral, could be attended to before or deferred till after the Sabbath. Such interments do not come within the provisions of the law of necessity and mercy. They are, therefore, a violation of the sanctity of the Lord's day. This we shall endeavour to show in the following remarks:—

Such funerals are in *direct opposition to the law of the Sabbath*. That law requires a cessation from all secular work. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." Now, let it be considered that the burial of the dead is as much *secular work* as any in which one can engage. It has no more an element of sacredness in it than the operation of the mechanic in his workshop, or the farmer in his fields. The husbandman is no more engaged in secular work in sow-