

God as a day of rest, obtains to an awful extent. Decency and good order, as well as the spirit and sanctity of religion, are outraged by public diversions, the almost unrestrained sale of intoxicating liquors, the allowance of places of gambling and amusement, and the open profanity and drunkenness of great bodies of the people. Whilst we deprecate all coercion in religion, and can be no parties to any forcible interference with the sacred right of conscience and private judgment, yet we are convinced that there is ample scope for legislation on the question. We rejoice that a noble band of patriotic statesmen have been found sufficiently courageous and faithful to introduce the subject into Parliament, and, although met by much scorn and obloquy, have persevered in their exertions to obtain an Act for the better observance of the Sabbath. Hitherto they have been defeated; but no doubt they, or others in their place, will again press the subject on the attention of the British Parliament. With us it is a matter of unfeigned gratitude to God, to know that you have hitherto been amongst the foremost by petition, and every other means in your power, to promote this laudable object; and we again urge you to a repetition of these exertions. Faithfulness to God, the love of our country, the preservation of the spirit of true piety and religion, the security of our respective families from contagion and evil, the regard which we have for the perishing souls of men, the desire to extend the observance of the worship of God, and the hope of averting those judgments which have invariably fallen on apostate churches and nations, unite to induce us to continued and strenuous exertions, by petition and otherwise, to obtain such an enactment as may secure the sanctity of the Lord's day.

Whilst on the subject of petition, we call your attention to a case of great interest, which it is believed can be settled only by the interference of the British Parliament, and which they will be induced to take up only by the interposition of the British public. The case to which we advert is that of the encouragement afforded by the Directors of the East India Company to the collection of a tax commonly called "the pilgrim tax;" in which the direct support of idolatry is connected with the public revenue. In this manner idolatry is recognized, sanctioned, and encouraged, not only to the national injury and disgrace, but to the fearful obstructions of those Missionary exertions which are made by our Connection, in conjunction with other Christian bodies, for extending the blessings of religion to that great and interesting country. We think civil rights cannot be better employed than in thus removing great and glaring evils, and in expunging from the national statute book those laws which obviously oppose the principles of religion and the good of man. If you should, in the course of the year, be called upon for your suffrages on this question, we hope you will afford your moral weight to the cause by the expression of your opinion to the Legislature by petition.

Do not suppose, dear brethren, that by these suggestions respecting the Sabbath question and the pilgrim tax we invite you to intermingle in the agitations of the times on party politics. We fervently pray that He who so obviously raised up our Connection as a purely religious community may now and in all times preserve it from becoming a political association. Whilst you exercise your rights as Englishmen, recollect you belong to "a kingdom which is not of this world;" and that to yield yourself to party strife, debate, and angry collision, cannot but sully the "beauty of holiness" which it is so necessary to cultivate; as well as rob you of your peace and happiness. But as it will be impossible, in the present state of our national affairs, that you should fully escape the obligation in taking part in many questions which come before the public, we feel it our duty to guard you against a hasty judgment and a false position. Whilst our predecessors maintained their independence, they were always distinguished for patriotism, and by a catholic spirit. Mere party politics, as such, have been avoided in the public acts of the body; and when circum-

stances have imperatively demanded an expression of opinion on the exercise of a constitutional right, loyalty to the throne, homage to the laws, and respect towards the civil and ecclesiastical institutions of the country, have invariably characterized this flow of feeling and avowal of principle. We are persuaded that no interest of Methodism, any more than its genius and spirit, can make it necessary or desirable that we should assume an anti-national attitude. We do not exist for sectarian purposes, and ought to guard against a bigoted spirit. The object of our connexional union has not been to assault and break down other evangelical churches; but to maintain a fraternal fellowship with them, and diffuse amongst them a measure of that reviving influence which it pleased God first, in these latter ages, to impart to our venerable Founder and his coadjutors. It would ill become us, after professing, for nearly a century, that we have existed for purely religious purposes, to be animated by a truly catholic spirit, and to be guided by the most friendly feelings towards the Church of England, now, for party and political objects, to place ourselves in an hostile attitude. Methodism allows perfect freedom of sentiment and opinion in its own communion; but we entreat you to use your liberty with a constant reference to the authority of the word of God, the pure and holy principles of Christianity, your own religious character and profession, the position which has been chosen and occupied by our connexion in relation to the national institutions, the avowals of sentiment which have been so often made, and the prospect of general usefulness in the world. Under the guidance of these great rules we shall, as a Christian body, be preserved from going astray; but in following the impulses of party feeling, or of a worldly expediency, we shall be in the utmost peril of sacrificing that great work of God with which we have been entrusted.

For ourselves, dear brethren, we are resolved by the grace of God to go to our respective Circuits with a determination to devote our utmost energies to the promotion of your spiritual happiness, and the revival and extension of the work of God. In this latter purpose we invite your united and zealous co-operation. Our glory from the beginning was that of winning souls to Christ; and this is our peculiar business and calling. Every Christian is blessed that he may be made a blessing; and every religious society is as a city set on a hill that it may give light to all around. We entreat you to join with your preachers, in every place, to promote by all the means in your power the revival of the work of God. Your prayers and faith should have respect to this. Make it a point of duty daily, specifically, and believingly, to beseech God so to pour out his gracious Spirit upon your own particular societies and congregations so as to purify his people, and "convert sinners from the error of their way." But prayer without pains and exertion will be insufficient. Reprove sin; bear your testimony for the truth; speak, as opportunity may arise, of the work of God in the heart; recommend all with whom you may have intercourse to come to Jesus Christ; and do all with the meekness and fervour of religious love. Add united individual exertion. Promote the establishment of prayer meetings in the most suitable parts of our large towns as well as country villages. Circulate religious tracts; invite the careless to attend the house of God; watch over those who appear to receive the word of God, and encourage their union with societies; and let no one be content without doing something daily to promote the salvation of sinners and the glory of God. Let us learn to act on the noble principle of primitive Christianity: "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Never were we, as a religious body, more loudly called than we are at present to strenuous and persevering exertion in the cause of Christ. The evil agen-