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SERMON I.

TEXT.—“*And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day.*”—Luke 6c. 2v.

THE occasion of this reproof of our Lord's disciples, by the Pharisees, as related to us in the Chapter from whence the text is taken, was this. Jesus, with his disciples, whilst journeying on some errand of benevolence upon the Sabbath day, passed through certain fields of corn, which laid in his way. And as they passed, the “disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.” By the Jewish law, a traveller did not commit an act of trespass, in gathering of the fruits of any man's lands, if he did so, merely to satisfy the immediate cravings of his hunger. But what elicited the reproof, was that the disciples did this upon the Sabbath-day; when the slightest labour in the preparation of food, was deemed unlawful. And to such an extent was the principle carried, that it was considered preferable to suffer hunger, rather than violate the rule. Our Lord however, justified the conduct of the disciples, and alleged in confirmation of what he advanced, the example of David. David, he said, “when himself was an hungred and they which were with him,—went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone.” By this example, Jesus gave the Pharisees to understand, that certain Divine precepts may be imposed for particular ends; but when those ends are not to be attained by their observance, that the duty of complying with them ceases. This rule of interpretation is undoubtedly correct, but it is one