

"keeping of this commandment, there is great reward." "But I would not think of starting on Sabbath; still, when I am actually on the way, it cannot surely be improper to go on. I prefer the quiet of home to the turmoil of a tavern. I can easily be back in time to accompany my family to church." Exceedingly plausible, but when weighed in the balances it is found wanting. Let us unravel this well, and mark how flimsy it is. It is wrong to start, but not wrong to prosecute, a journey on Sabbath, when once started.—Wherein consists the difference. A day we generally consider to be twenty-four hours. *The Sabbath is a day of the same duration with the other days of the week.* It matters not which part you encroach upon. He that offends in one is guilty of all. You deem it not sinful to travel early in the morning or late in the evening—alter or before the public service. Another may entertain the same opinion respecting any other portion of the day, and with as great justice. All the parts, in point of sacredness and obligation, stand on a level. Let your principle be carried out to its legitimate length, the Sabbath might be devoted to constant travelling, and soon be annihilated.

You do not relish remaining over Sabbath in a noisy and uncomfortable tavern. But is God's will to yield to your ease and comfort? You should be willing to submit to a little inconvenience to obey Him who loadeth you with benefits. You may expect to meet with God in the use of the private means by the way, more than you would do in the public, supposing that in order to enjoy them you unnecessarily kept not your foot from the Sabbath. If you be fertile in expedients and sincerely anxious to do good and communicate, you may scatter seed by the way side, you may leave footprints behind you in the place where you stay. The example you give of preferring God's precept to your own pleasure, is fitted of itself to exert a salutary influence.

You wish to get back within the bosom of your family. Most praiseworthy in itself; but, remember, "he that loveth father and mother, wife and children, more than me, is not worthy of me." If you have reason to believe any member of your circle is dangerously ill, that alters the matter entirely. "Mercy is better than sacrifice." But if you have no such apprehension, be persuaded, by all means, to remain where you are, and allow not the joy of meeting to be embittered by the thought that it has been obtained at the sacrifice of principle. Professing Christians, your responsibility is great, your example is influential, "you are the light of the world." "But if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness." Let not your inconsistent practice form a pillow on which the worldling may repose—an opiate by which he may drug his conscience. If you be found visiting or travelling on Sabbath, he will be only too glad to take advantage of it. The malignant cry will be raised over you, "Art thou also become one of us?"

In some country districts it is by no means uncommon for harvest operations to be carried on to a certain extent upon the Lord's day. The grain is ripe, ready to be cut down and gathered in. A storm impends. It runs the risk of being destroyed. What harm in peaceably housing it? Why let a season's labour be lost? You cannot possibly count on the apprehended loss being sustained. There are many cases in which it has been quite the reverse—in which grain taken in has been destroyed by various causes, and that left out has been preserved. Besides, by taking the law into your own hands, you shew a want of confidence in Divine Providence. That gracious being who prepares corn when he has provided for it, who crowns the year with his goodness, and gives rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, will fill your mouth with food and gladness if he sees fit. "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." But you have no option in this matter. There has been special legislation from heaven

upon it. God anticipated the temptations to which your peculiar circumstances would expose you, and inserted this clause in the code of regulations, for your guidance—"in earing time and harvest shall thou rest."

Indulgence in light-reading is another crying evil on Sabbath. There are not a few who peruse over the polluting pages of some exciting novel, to perusing the book of God. Their minds are thus dissipated and their morals undermined. On them the Sabbath arises not with healing under its wings. There are others, who, if they do not feed on the adulterated intellectual food with which the press teems, run over, without scruple, the columns of a newspaper, and find their appropriate element in the book of travels, or history, or science. Thus are the faculties and feelings secularized—the moral sense blunted—and an unmistakable want of relish engendered and evinced for that best of books which, to the genuine Christian's taste, is sweeter than honey. The man who breathes in such an atmosphere cannot but think his own thoughts. The perusal of even professedly religious newspapers, is exceptionable. It sets a bad example. You may read what is good, but then others take advantage of it to excuse themselves for reading what is bad. *The secular, too, is so often mixed up with the sacred, that in glancing at the latter the former will, almost insensibly, attract the notice.*—And even supposing you sustain no injury personally, better far confine yourself to works of a thoroughly unexceptionable kind, and act on the apostolic principle, "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient."

The reading and writing of letters forms another most common mode of Sabbath desecration. How many, either before going to church or so soon as it is over, repair to the Post Office.—The letters they receive, like the fowls of the air, pluck up the good seed. Any favourable impressions are effaced, like the footprints in the sand, by the tide of worldliness which sets in. Nothing has a more deadening tendency than this. It withdraws the mind from its appropriate orbit, and forces it down on what is earthly, sensual, devilish. It brings all the other things into a direct competition with the one thing needful—the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof.

"But may not a walk be taken into the country without the slightest detriment being sustained, or disobedience committed." It is good to breathe the air of heaven, to view the world of nature, to hold communion with nature's God. Undoubtedly. We can conceive of individuals going forth, like Isaac, to meditate at eventide, and finding in every insect that flutters in the breeze, or plant that opens its blossoms to the genial sun, fresh matter for wonder, love and praise. But for one going forth in this spirit, there will be ten going forth in a different, and these will be only too ready to take hold of the one as an apology for themselves. Let them see you traversing the field, instead of attending to personal and domestic duty, within the secrecy of your own closet or the bosom of your family, they will be only too happy to lay hold of it, and make capital out of it. And do you not find in the course of such a walk more to secularize than to solemnize you. Too often objects present themselves and incidents occur which tend to divert the mind, rather than waft it to the skies.—Besides, while by no means finding fault with the most fervent admiration of the beauties of nature, let us not forget that it is not to those merely or mainly the Sabbath invites our attention. We are called upon to contemplate the wonders of a work, before which creation sinks into the shade. The mystery of Godliness, the wonders of redemption—he solemn and sublime truths that cluster around Bethlehem's manger, and Calvary's cup—these are the "things" you are invited to turn aside and see—things forming a "great deep," into which the angels to desire look. Lapse the spirit of these exalted intelligences, and you will

have neither time nor taste for strolling about on a day when this forms the key-note in the song of angels and the redeemed, "the Lord is risen indeed."

"I have plenty of pious books; I can stay at home and read, and get as much good as if I went to church." This is a very common mode of speaking, but it is most dangerous and delusive. Attendance on public ordinances is a clearly commanded duty. In the Old and New Testament it is enforced by precept and example. It has been the test of piety in every age. God's express injunction is, "Forsoke not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." If you do, you rush against the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler, and cannot, of course, expect his blessing in the use of the private means. Nor is the performance of one duty an excuse for neglecting another. "To read religious books—that you ought to do—but then you ought not to leave the other undone. Let your principle be carried out and what would be the result? There would be no churches or ministers. The candlestick would be removed; a darkness that might be felt would prevail. The world would resemble France, when a similar experiment was tried. The genius of Robespierre would preside, and the reign of terror be established.

There are other forms of Sabbath desecration to which we would have wished to have adverted. Let these suffice for the present. We would have also liked to have considered the mode in which the Sabbath ought to be observed, and the advantages, physical, intellectual, social, and moral, and spiritual, connected with its observance. These points open up a field, to enter on which, would unduly extend this Address.

We would commend what has been said to your candid and serious consideration. "If there be any virtue, or any praise, think on these things."

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

Signed in name of Committee,  
ROBERT F. BURNS, Convener.

KINGSTON, April 21, 1853.

N.B.—The following is the portion of last Synod's deliverance having a bearing on the above: "The Synod resolve to issue a Pastoral Address on the subject—devolving this duty on Mr. R. F. Burns, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Gregg; such Address to be published in the *Record*, and read from the pulpit by all Ministers and Missionaries, who are also recommended by the Synod, to preach, in connection therewith, a sermon on Sabbath Observance."

#### LETTER FROM THE STUDENTS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, BELFAST.

To the Students of Knox's College,  
Toronto, Canada West:

DEAR BRETHREN,—

We regret exceedingly that you should have reason to blame us for negligence, in not replying to your previous letter. On inquiry as to the cause, it appears that your letter did not reach our Association till late in the session, when the hurry of collegiate business prevented an immediate reply; and before our assembling again, the Secretary, for the time being, was called to other duties, and unable to resume his office. Your letter was thus mislaid, and when the Committee of the past year came into office, they were not aware of its existence. Our neglect then must be attributed to ignorance rather than to any other cause; and we have to thank you heartily for renewing a correspondence which