

annexed points not to any event peculiar to the commonwealth of Israel, but to one early as the birth of our world, and universal as the family of man. Nor was it included amongst those meats and drinks and carnal ordinances, which were imposed on men till the time of the reformation. It is enshrined in the very heart of the decalogue, and is surrounded by commands which are looked upon as universally binding. No reason can be assigned for relaxation or suspension in regard to it, which would not hold equally good in regard to any of the others.

It is self-evident, too, that the purposes of the Sabbath's establishment are not local or limited in their range. Here, certainly, there is no difference betwixt the Jew and the Gentile. We require as much as did the "chosen race" a special season for reflecting on God and communing with him—for searching the Scriptures—and for contemplating our duty and destiny. Christ proclaims the Sabbath to have been made for man, and Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. He would not have done so had the Sabbath been made solely for the Jew, and then designed to be excluded from that brighter dispensation which bears his name.

It is of importance to recollect that a marked distinction must be drawn between the institution proper and the period of its being kept. That a seventh portion of our time should be devoted to sacred purposes: this is the moral element, and was, therefore, unalterably fixed. But when this should be, whether at the commencement or the close of the week, was positive and purely circumstantial, and therefore susceptible of change. If an event occurred with which God saw fit to associate the Sabbath rather than the one of which it had been hitherto the memorial, he was at perfect liberty to select that event, and to transfer the Sabbath to the day of its occurrence. The resurrection of Christ was an event of this description; so glorious, that in comparison with it the work of creation had no glory. On the resurrection morn, Jehovah experienced a yet more exquisite satisfaction than when he viewed the fabric he had framed, and his word pronounced it good. He rested in his love, He was well pleased for his righteousness sake. For all time coming, therefore, this day was called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord did name—"the Lord's day." No longer the seventh, but this is the day which the Lord hath made, in which we are expected to rejoice and be glad. Though there be no distinct announcement of this alteration having taken place, there is a stronger body of evidence in its favour than is favour of many institutions and events of which not a shadow of doubt is entertained. We know that it was the "custom" of Christ to attend the Jewish synagogue, and observe the Jewish Sabbath prior to his death and resurrection. We nowhere read of his doing so subsequently. On the contrary, we find him repeatedly countenancing the meetings of his few faithful friends, on the first day of the week. This was the day selected by the Spirit for his first special descent from heaven.—It was uniformly observed by the Apostles and primitive Christians. What is stated respecting one Apostle and a single section of the Church, held good in regard to all. "On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." In short, all history, sacred and profane, unites in attesting that in the estimate and observance of the entire Christian Church, the seventh day was, on the best possible authority, supplanted by the first.—This cursory glance, dear friends, may be sufficient to shew that the Christian Sabbath is entrenched within an impregnable fortress of evidence, and founded on a rock, against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

We are thus supplied with a lofty and solid platform, on which to stand for pressing upon you, as we would now affectionately do, to count this day the "holy of the Lord, honourable," and in the observance of it to be followers of God as dear children.

Unquestionably, reverence for the Sabbath has not kept pace with the material and mental progress which our country has made. In taking an impartial view, many of you cannot fail to acknowledge that, in this respect, "the former times were better than these." And, although of late symptoms of improvement have appeared, we are very far, indeed, from having already attained to that obedience which the Law-giver requires, or to a satisfactory fulfilment of a law so beneficent in its design, so exceedingly broad in its application.

There are public abuses which darken the face of our rising Province, and provoke the wrath of heaven. Government is converted into a gigantic Sabbath desecrator, setting an example which, if followed by all classes of the community, would speedily annihilate the Sabbath.—Post Offices and Canals are open, Stages and Steamboats run, hundreds of public servants are regularly employed. Thousands of others indirectly are bound to the treadmill of labour in consequence. That day, the jubilee of the week, which is intended to undo the heavy burdens, and bid the oppressed go free, brings no relaxation to them. Be it yours, by the employment of every legitimate means, such as petitioning Parliament, organizing associations, getting lectures delivered and tracts circulated, to aim at the abolition of a system opposed to the dictates alike of humanity and religion. Let it not be said that, in a land which glories in being the asylum of liberty, any of our fellow-subjects should be systematically deprived of rights we profess to deem sacred, and be consigned to a slavery as unnatural as it is unnecessary.

We cannot here overlook the fact, that there is presented to us the prospect of an immediate introduction of railways, on an extensive scale.—The crisis is imminent. Realize the importance of instant action. If trains be allowed to run on Sabbath, the evils we at present deplore will be increased tenfold. Let each bring his personal influence to bear on all who have to do with the management, that at the very outset the fourth commandment be inserted in their code of regulations.

There are social abuses with some of which much that is pleasing is mixed up, and in whose behalf much that is plausible is urged. We refer not to buying and selling in general, and dealing in strong drink in particular, which secretly are carried on to a lamentable extent on Sabbath, in some of our cities. We refer not to those scenes of false delight, where Satan's seat is, whose end is bitter as wormwood, whose steps take hold on hell, and all whose delusive charms are spread out to entrap the unwary on this hallowed day. We take it for granted that you have no sympathy with those pursuits, so-called pleasures, which sear the conscience, blast the character, and peril the soul. We refer to other matters, which are not looked on in the same serious light, but whose indulgence is fitted to lead to results scarcely less disastrous. In the afternoon and evening of the Sabbath, visiting is by no means uncommon.—Let us not here be mistaken. There is visiting which is commendable. For example, visiting for devotional or benevolent purposes. To go to the house of mourning or the couch of sickness, in order to weep with those that weep, and perform offices of kindness, is entirely consistent with the mind of Him who hath said, "I was sick and ye visited me;" and with the genius of that religion, one of whose prominent features is to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction.

For Christians to collect in a social capacity in order to speak of the things that concern the king, is also praiseworthy. They that fear the Lord speak often one to another. The visiting to which we have reference is *convivial*. Friends and neighbours meet together in one another's houses to while away the tedious hours. They sit down to eat and drink, and even rise to play. The forenoon's sermon may be introduced, and criticism

indulged in; but this merely to give a gloss to the social gatherings. Conversation on purely spiritual themes is felt to be out of place. If introduced, it would throw a chilling damp over the entire circle. By a tacit understanding, it is interdicted. In discussing the current topics of the day, ranging over the exciting field of politics, depicting private character, dealing out the accumulated gossip of the week, the golden hours fly by. Thus, in many households, are Sabbaths committed to the sepulchre of the past, whence, on the great day and at the grand asseize, they will be summoned as swift witnesses against them. Can any good thing come out of this? The injury is twofold—to the parties *creating*, and to the parties *visited*. You drop in, perhaps incidentally, in passing to a friendly house. Others are there too. You wait on, meanwhile your family are allowed to do as they please. The reins of domestic discipline are relaxed. The public and private duties to which the Sabbath invites, are neglected. The domestic arrangements of your friend are broken in upon. He thinks it would not be polite to leave you, and therefore stays at home from Church. You give way to "foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient."—You leave the house yourself, and the inmates, materially worse than when you entered.

Travelling, in all its varieties, is another exceedingly common and highly criminal mode of Sabbath desecration. In regard to this, we grieve to think, professing Christians are by no means guiltless. We leave altogether out of account *Pleasure Excursions* by land and water. These prove so injurious in their tendency, involve such an amount of labour to man and beast, and form to so many the first step in the downhill course to ruin, that we presume on your condemning them as readily as we. It is to *travelling on business* we principally allude. Here the conscience is apt to become exceedingly elastic, and the margin left on the side of "necessity and mercy" is exceedingly broad. There is too great a tendency to pronounce that proper, or at least pardonable, which, on a more close and conscientious inspection, cannot be vindicated. A party in some distant city is under deep obligations to you. The information reaches you on Saturday that he is on the eve of failing and absconding. If you be not there by Monday you will lose your chance. Is not Sabbath travelling in such circumstances quite allowable? This is just a repetition of the reasoning of Amaziah, the apostate monarch of Judah to the prophet of God, "What shall we do for the hundred talents of silver?" A pecuniary interest was at stake—His came into competition with a divine command. Was it deemed sufficient to relax its obligation? The very opposite. Are you to obey only when it suits your personal interests? Then "what do ye more than others?" Would you be faithful followers of the Lamb? You must *deny yourselves*. Is not this to serve Mammon rather than God? What is it to forfeit a portion of that which perisheth with the using, compared with the forfeiture of God's favour, durable riches and righteousness? What shall it profit a man, &c. &c. But depend upon it, even in an extreme case like this, you will not suffer by resting upon the Sabbath day according to the commandment. The answer of the prophet to the temporising king will prove true.—*The Lord is able to give thee much more than this*. Before Monday the cloud may be dispelled; the tide which seemed to be setting in against you may take a favourable turn; and even, although in this particular instance, you may suffer, you will have a satisfaction in your own mind you would not otherwise experience. You may yet "get much more than this" in the general run of your business afterwards. "Godliness is profitable to all things." Numerous well authenticated illustrations might be adduced in which the acting the part we recommend has been found advantageous in a worldly point of view. Hundreds of Christian merchants rise up to testify, that in the