

any rate no protestant man, will question or deny it at this time of day, then it disposes of all Sabbath day recreation and amusement. And it does so, not only to the christian but to the mere moralist who acknowledges the being of a God and of course the obligations of natural religion. The Sabbath is an institution of Religion,—and if religion be a reality, if it have a spirit as well as a form, it is manifest that the form is the exponent of the Spirit. The form is the medium through which I get at the thing and through which the religion, whatever it be, binds me by its obligations to shew whose I am and whom I ought to serve. Now, viewed in this aspect (and I want you so to view it) is not the incongruity and questionableness of Sabbath day recreations as well as their criminality, at once apparent. Is the Sabbath an institution of religion through which as a creature, rational and responsible, I draw near to God and render to him the homage which is his due? Then unless we confound things that differ and ignore the plainest distinctions, unless we make play worship, and recreation one phases of pleasure in all aspects tantamount to the exercises of Godliness it is obvious that the Sabbath is not the season to be so employed however justifiable all this may be in itself. The truth is, and man cannot alter or annul it, the Sabbath is in virtue of its being the Sabbath a grand transmuter, a grand changer of the relative nature of conduct; and just from its very sacredness and the high purposes it is intended to serve of bringing me near to God, and of bringing God near to me, and of binding me as a creature more closely to him. I will add in the midst of this Christian Association, as a sinner saved by grace, it cannot allow of inferior secularities as the mere and specific gratification of our sensuous nature. The compilers of our Catechism were equally at home in the region of natural and revealed Religion and well did they know their mutual bearings. Their moral Philosophy was as sound as their Divinity was orthodox, and they but gave utterance not to the breathings of rigid Calvinism (as some would have it and as many slander it) but to the united voice of Theism in all its forms and in all its obligations when they declare that “the Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in