

below the promise originally held out to the public. Consequently, in these Colonies, though wholly subject to the legislation of the Crown, there is as yet but a partial abatement of those evils of the system, which first excited the attention of Parliament. Even that measure of giving the slave a right to purchase his own freedom at a fair appraisement, by the fruits of his industry, which Earl Bathurst stated to be an indispensable part of the proposed plan of improvement, and from which, he added, neither the Parliament nor the People of this country would be diverted, seems now about to be abandoned, in deference to the selfish and ignorant clamours of the planters. It forms the law of only one Colony, Trinidad, and, even there, it has been rendered nearly inoperative.

In the other Slave Colonies, having Assemblies of their own, the state of things is still less satisfactory; and it is now perfectly clear, that, without the direct intervention of Parliament, there is not the smallest hope of seeing His Majesty's recommendations there carried into effect. Those Assemblies, with one concurrent determination, have either rejected them entirely; or have adopted, in lieu of them, such partial and ineffective measures as serve only to elude and defeat their object. In none of these Chartered Colonies have adequate means of instruction as yet been provided for the slaves. In none of them, but two, has an end been put to Sunday markets. Sunday Labour has been no where precluded, by giving equivalent time in lieu of Sunday to the slave; who is still forced to toil, either for his master or for his own subsistence and that of his family, during seven days of the week. The testimony of slaves is not yet admitted in the King's Courts to any beneficial purpose. The sacred institution of marriage is still almost entirely neglected. Families are still allowed to be separated by sale. No real and effective rights of property have been conferred upon the slaves. The power of redeeming themselves by the fruits of their own industry at a fair appraisement, is still withheld from them.—Nothing effectual has been done to prevent the abuse of the master's power of punishment. The practice of flogging females, and the use of the cart-whip in the field, are obstinately retained. Independent guardians have not been appointed to watch over the execution of the laws for the protection of the slaves. The presumption of law is still, except in one Colony, in favour of the slavery and against the freedom of all who have not a white skin. The administration of justice is most defective; and the laws generally are harsh, oppressive, and unequal, denying to the slaves even the common rights of humanity, and to the free people, whether black or coloured, any fair participation in the civil and political privileges of British Subjects.

In proof of the above statement, it is only necessary to refer to the Official Documents laid on the Table of Parliament, of which an abstract will be found in the last seven numbers of the Anti-Slavery Monthly-Reporter, viz. Nos. 28—34. The existence of the flagrant evils which have been specified as characterizing the system of Colonial Slavery, it is true, has been disputed; but their reality is most unquestionably proved, in opposition to all contrary assertions, not only by direct testimony, but by the very nature of the reforms recommended by His Majesty's Government, with the consent of the West India Body at home, and still more by the determined resistance of the Colonists abroad to the adoption of them: if the evils proposed to be redressed had not had a real existence, the Colonists would have been eager to adopt the proposed enactments, (which, in that case, would cost them nothing,) in their own vindication.

It is certainly discreditable to the national character, as well as criminal in itself, that such a state of things should exist in any part of the British Dominions—that nearly a Million of the King's Subjects should be suffered to continue in a condition of life thus degraded and oppressed; outcasts from the pale of the British Constitution, and even from that of humanity itself: and effectual means cannot too soon be taken by Parliament to remedy this tremendous evil, by carrying into effect, not any new or rash measures which have not been fully considered and matured, but the very measures to which, with the general concurrence of the West India Body in this country, the Government and the Parliament have been actually pledged for the last five years.

It is surely time that the work of reform, so long and so distinctly promised, should not be confined, as hitherto, to mere ineffective recommendations; but that the Government should do that in the unchartered Colonies, which yet remains undone there; and that Parliament should do that in the chartered Colonies, which the Colonial Assemblies have been called upon to do for themselves, and which, if it should be left to them, will never be done at all.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AFRICA.—The Rev. Messrs. Hencke, Salzbach, Holswarth, and Schmidt, embarked at London, in October last, for Accra, on the Gold Coast, in Western Africa. Messrs. Morro and Peck, and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, embarked about the same time; the two former for Sierra Leone, and the two latter for the River Gambou, under the patronage of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

MEDITERRANEAN.—At the press of the Church Missionary Society, established at Malta, 54,500 copies of different works, destined to convey religious instruction principally, have been printed: 13,500 in Italian, 18,000 Greek, and 23,000 in Arabic. Of these, 33,931 copies have been distributed.

DIVINITY.

ON SABBATH-BREAKING.

A Fragment, by the late Rev. R. Robinson, of Cambridge.

1.—On the Nature of the Lord's-day.

The setting apart of one day in seven for the worship of Almighty God, is to be considered in three different points of view. In one view it is an act of moral duty, in another it is positive obedience, in a third it is political virtue. I will explain myself.

Moral obedience is that duty which every man as a creature is naturally and necessarily obliged to perform. Man is a creature; God is his Creator.—This creature has received from his Creator all he enjoys. We are in a state of entire dependence on God, who governs him by a wise and good providence. If he discharge his duty, God is able to gratify all his just wishes; and if he neglect it, God is able to punish him beyond what his fancy or fears can suggest. It is, therefore, fit and right in the nature of things, that every such creature should sometimes, by some public exercise of devotion, express his belief of the being and perfections of his Creator and Benefactor. He should sometimes openly pay him that homage of reverence, worship, prayer, and praise, which is due both to the eminence of his perfections, and the excellence of his government. Now, this is a duty of a Lord's-day, and they who neglect or refuse to spare time to do it, may truly be said to live without God in the world. It is, then, a moral action to set apart some time for public worship.—Positive law is the express command of God, and obedience to such command is called positive obedience. It pleased God, in the infancy of the world, like a wise and tender parent, to point out moral duties to his creatures by positive commands, and to order the Jews to keep holy the seventh day of the week. Thus he regulated moral obedience by positive law. Just as we regulate the natural appetites of our children for eating and drinking, by habituating them to eat and drink at convenient times, and in convenient quantities, which we teach them to call breakfast, dinner, and supper.

When Jesus came into the world, he came not to establish Jewish ceremonies, but to give mankind a religion fitted to all times, and all parts of the world, in order to which it was necessary to abolish old rites, and either to command or exemplify a more simple and practicable sort of worship.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, that great event on which all Christianity depends, came to pass on the first day of the week. It is natural to suppose that this event would so affect the apostles, as to engage them to suspend all secular business, and to address themselves wholly to religious exercises; such as social prayer, praise, reading and examining prophecies, and so on. Scripture history assures us, this natural effect was produced; and it further informs us, that on that day week they met again for the same purposes, and that after Jesus had instructed them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, they held their religious assemblies on the first day of the week. Moreover it informs us, that the

apostles abolished the ceremonies of Moses, and made no exceptions in favour of the seventh day (Acts xv.) From all which we fairly conclude, that the setting apart of some time for public worship is a moral action; that a seventh part of time is a just proportion; and that the observation of the first day was introduced by inspired apostles, whose example in this case is equal to a positive law.

Political virtue is obedience to the just laws of our country. The lawgivers of Great Britain have thought fit to incorporate the observation of a Lord's-day into their civil statutes. Above 800 years ago, king Athelstan forbade by law all profanation of the Lord's-day. Many acts have been made since to enforce the observation of it. In the reign of Charles II. a statute was made, by which no person is allowed to work on the Lord's day, or expose any goods to sale, or to drive cattle or waggons, or to travel with boats, lighters, and so on, except as excepted in the act. This is now in force, (29 Car. 2. c. 7). Our lawgivers have discovered in these acts a wise attention to the good of society; for the Lord's day relaxation, considered merely as a civil institution, is attended with innumerable advantages to the health, morals, and interests of the whole nation.

2.—Of the Profanation of the Lord's-day.

There are two ways of profaning the Lord's-day; the first is, by neglecting to perform the duties of the day; the other is, by practising those things which ought on that day to be avoided. Most Sabbath-breakers do both.

There are three sorts of duties which belong to this day, and none of them can be neglected without incurring blame.

The first are exercises of piety due to God, such as prayer, praise, public worship, and reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures, by which we acknowledge the dominion of God over us, and our willing submission to him. Neglect of these is contempt of God. It sets his power at defiance, and discovers ingratitude for his goodness, distrust of his wisdom, yea, doubt or disbelief of his being.

The second sort of duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. We owe our families a virtuous example. We owe our ministers some countenance—we owe our superiors submission. We should encourage and emulden the good by our exemplary conduct; and we should by the same means reprove and correct the wicked. Silent obedience is strong reproof.

The third sort of duties are those due to ourselves. What should we think of a poor man, who having a vine, never prunes it; or a gardener, never digs it; or a cow, never feeds her? But how much more brutal must he be, who having both body and soul, never spends a day to relieve the one or improve the other! To neglect all these on a day set apart for performing them, is a profanation of the Lord's-day.

The other way of profaning the Sabbath is by doing such actions as ought to be avoided. These are of three sorts.

The first are unlawful actions, which ought not to be done on any day. To enumerate these, would be to draw out a list of all the crimes that men commit. This, however, we venture to affirm,—many crimes, unlawful at all seasons, become supremely horrid by circumstances of time and place. Drunkenness, for instance, is always a vulgar, hateful vice, even in times of public festivity; but to be drunk on the Lord's day, when so many thousands are lamenting the sin, and interceding for the sinner, is to offer a public affront to God and all good men.

The second sort of actions are those lawful on other days, and unlawful only on this. Of this sort are manual labours, public sales in shops and elsewhere, and, in a word, all exercises prohibited by either the appointments of God, or the just laws of men.

The third sort are those which are improper; not forbidden indeed by any positive laws, human or divine, but yet evidently wrong, because inconsistent with the duties of the day. To pay and take wages, to cast up stock, to post books, to write letters of business, to read books of amusement, to take unnecessary journeys, to pay trifling visits, to spend one part of the day in going over the grounds to see cattle and crops, and the other in eating and drinking, and dressing and smoking, and reading the news,—what are all those but expressions of disregard to God, and disinclination to duty?