

down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of himself."

II. *The Sabbath is desecrated when only a portion of its hours are devoted to sacred purposes, the remainder being spent in business or in pleasure.*—The spirit, as well as the letter, of the Sabbath law requires, that we consecrate each seventh day to the worship of God. No one doubts who heretofore the six days given for worldly business are to be taken entire; and were not the carnal mind enmity against God, and not subject to his law, the distinction of "church hours" would never have been heard of. This is one of the many ways in which the church of Rome, and those who symbolize with her, make void the law of God by their traditions; and the fact, that some of our statutes, and many of our church-going population, still recognize "church hours" as possessing an exclusive sanctity, and a special obligation, which do not appertain to the other parts of the day, proves, that the Reformation was incomplete, and that Protestants have yet much to learn, in respect of duty, as well as of privilege.

This distinction has not even the shadow of scriptural authority; and, if admitted, it would utterly destroy the harmony which exists between the type and the antitype—the earthly and the heavenly rest. It is obviously based upon the assumption, that our obligations to keep the day *holy*, are human and conventional; and it involves the double guilt of taking from, and of adding to, the things written in the book of God. It implies that the duty we owe to God is altogether public and ceremonial; that family worship, the religious training of our children, and the cultivation of a devout spirit, in the use of closet exercises, are matters of trivial importance, and may be neglected without loss, or guilt, or any great risk; provided we spend a given number of hours in the great congregation.—Nay more, it implies an insinuation that God has claimed an undue proportion of our time; that his Sabbath is a tax on our temporal interests, and a bar to our happiness; and that consequently, we do well to alienate part of it to business or pleasure, as we may feel inclined. These are some of the guilty implications with which this irreligious mutilation of the Lord's day is chargeable; and the bare mention of them is sufficient to draw forth the cordial condemnation of each lover of the Sabbath. Every sound argument which can be adduced to prove that a part of the Sabbath ought to be sanctified, carried to its legitimate issue, will prove that the entire day is *holy*, and ought to be employed in the public and private exercises of religion.

Let none, therefore, deceive themselves, by imagining, that if they attend a place of worship once or twice, they are at liberty to spend the remainder of the day in journeying, pleasure excursions, domestic amusements, or preparatory arrangements for the business of Monday. The day, the whole day, is the Lord's, and He commands us to "KEEP IT HOLY." He scorns a divided allegiance; and it is at our peril if we divide its hours between his worship and the service of Mammon. If we mar the type we dishonour its author, we destroy its efficacy, and we forfeit our interest in its heavenly anti-type. To rob God of a part of his day in private, after we have been professing to worship him in public, is rank hypocrisy; it is to enact the sin of those deceivers who called Jesus "Lord, Lord," but

did not things he commanded them, and if we become partners in their guilt, we shall assuredly be made sharers in their punishment. If we condemn the secularity of the Jews, who turned the temple into a house of merchandise; and abhor the impiety of Belshazzar, who, "with his princes, his wives, and his concubines," in their proud revelry, "drank out of the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the house of the Lord," let us shrink from the no less palpable sacrifice of prostituting the evening hours of the Lord's-day to writing letters of business, taking stock, fagging at the ledger, or a survey of the farm. If we would escape the curse of him "that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully, there must be no mistake in this matter, no halting between two opinions—no trimming between God and Mammon. The "sign" * will take effect, proving, either that we are for the Redeemer, or that we are against him; that we are of those who gather with him, or that our perilous employment is to scatter and destroy. The commandments of the Lord are not grievous; and he will not allow us, with impunity to treat them as if they were so, or to asperse him, by word or deed, as if he were an austere Master "reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed."

"But wisdom is justified of her children;" and the people of God are forward to confess that his "service is perfect freedom;" and that in keeping his commandments "there is great reward." "This is the DAY, which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." "A DAY in thy courts is better than a thousand I had rather be a door-keeper" (or as the margin reads, "I would choose rather to sit at the threshold") "of the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." This is the genuine language of all who love God, in all churches, and in all parts of the earth. To them the Sabbath-day is the best and brightest of the seven. They long for its dawn; they regret its decline; they rejoice to know that on it "God rested from all his work which he had made;" and that he "blessed it and sanctified it," from its commencement to its close. They exult in the fact that their Lord broke forth from the captivity of the grave, and entered into his state of meritorious REST, "very early in the morning, when it was yet dark;" and that he continued to commune, and to break with his disciples till it was "toward evening, and the day far spent." Whether they consider the example he has set them, the commandments he has given them, the claims of his love, the interests of his cause, the happiness of their fellow-men, the wants of their own souls, or the fatigues of their bodies, they dare not alienate any part of his day from its divine and legitimate uses; and to all who tempt them to do so they say, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

* Ezekiel xx. 12.

A FEW WORDS TO THE WORKING CLASSES ON THE SABBATH QUESTION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—

The question as to keeping sacred the rest of the Sabbath is creating every day a deeper and more extended interest. Both parties engaged in the discussion plead your

welfare as largely staked on the sides which they respectively defend. On the one hand, it is alleged, that the industrious poor should have the means of recreation and enjoyment on the Lord's-day, and that what is called a better observance would only prove a *butler* observance of that sacred season: while, on the other hand, it is argued, that pleasure can only be procured by labour; and that if the rest of the Sabbath be to any extent compromised, all its inestimable benefits must be brought into jeopardy. I do not at all regret that the controversy has taken this direction. In all religious questions, our grand appeal must be to the scriptures. But the bible itself represents the Sabbath as a day of rest—a day on which servants are not to do customary work—a day of relief, in other words, for the labouring and heavy-laden; and, therefore, any view of the Sabbath really unkind and inimical to the Working Classes must be equally opposed to revelation as to a humane and enlightened expediency.

A great effort has recently been made to limit the hours of labour. After many debates resumed in successive sessions, a ten hours' factory bill has actually passed through Parliament, and become the law of the land. By private negotiations and combined remonstrances, the victims of long hours in shops, warehouses, offices, &c., have in many instances, obtained a similar, though not equal abridgement of daily service. The success of this latter movement is far from being complete, but the movement is not over,—it is now prosecuted more energetically than ever; and I rejoice in this opportunity of expressing, though in an incidental manner, my earnest desires for its triumphant issue.

It is of very great importance to limit the hours of labour. Every argument, however, on behalf of such a cessation of toil, applies with tenfold force to a limitation of the days of labour. Whether the respite be demanded as conducive to health, or to domestic order and fellowship, or to mental cultivation, a part of each day can have no such efficacy as an entire stated day, in attaining the ends contemplated. Suppose a labourer to have only one hour of leisure out of the twenty-four, how great is the unlikelihood that he will turn it to any profitable account? If he should think of improving himself in any way, this work of self-improvement must be so soon arrested that he has no heart to begin it. He is wearied and jaded, and the hard experience of the day still affects his spirits, when his task is concluded. He is tempted to sink into stupor, or to seek a remedy for indolence, worse than the disease, in some pernicious stimulus. When a laborer has two hours, he has double encouragement to make a good use of them. What, then, shall he think of a whole day to himself? If the idea were not so familiar to us, it would be resplendent with fascinations; and the delight which it inspired would be qualified only by the fear that a conception so charming was too good to be realized. The Jews reckoned the day as beginning with sunset. Give the workman all the Sabbath to himself, and he will feel as if sunset on Saturday were the beginning of a day. At evening time it will seem light. His pillow will appear to be softer and sweeter than usual, while he lays his head on it, saying, There is to be no toil to-morrow! And when he awakes, he will wonder, perhaps, what is making him so glad, till he remembers that the light which shuns upon him is the light of liberty, and that the