

quently indulge, to a fearful extent, in Sabbath desecration. The Sabbath, with too many, is thus a mere cessation from the more open worldly employments, and not a sacred season for spiritual exercises in communion with God.

Too few regard it as one of our greatest blessings, not only in a spiritual but even in a temporal point of view. The grounds upon which it rests, the benevolent designs of its institution, and the blessings which it conveys to us, are not well considered. The doctrine of our "confession" is most explicit. It says, "As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding upon all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto himself". The relation in which we stand to God as his moral creatures, is the foundation on which this institution rests. He is our creator, and has a right to our homage. We are his creatures, and are under an obligation to render that homage. That relation must continue while creator and creature continue; and while the relation continues, His right to receive, and our obligation to render homage, must of necessity continue also. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment lay the obligation to observe it upon the high unchangeable ground—the equity of it. The positive command, and the whole tenor of the revealed will, confirm this view, enforce the claims, facilitate the observance, and regulate the manner and measure, but do not create the necessity of the Sabbath. Correct views, and corresponding observance of the Lord's day must lie at the foundation of practical religion, and will be a favourable index of a heart right with God. The Sabbath can never be neglected where religion is vital, nor ever be properly observed where vitality is wanting. Its faithful ob-

servance will bring its own reward. Its profanation is most heinous. It contemns the goodness that grants the Sabbath, the authority that commands it, the fellowship and blessings to be enjoyed upon that day. It seldom fails to bring its punishment along with it. Its violation too frequently escapes the punishment it merits at the hands of men, because they are too often unwilling to urge the law. But this sin, above all others, shall not escape the righteous judgment of God sooner or later.

*Secondly.* The attention of the committee has been directed to various species of Sabbath desecration, with the efforts put forth to prevent them, and further suggestions in connexion with this subject.

There is a great amount of Sabbath desecration permitted and practised within doors and in families which does not, therefore, meet the public eye, but is clear before him who seeth in secret, and will bring the hidden things to light and open view at a future day. The aged parents and masters who should be examples, guides, and teachers of good things, too freely indulge in idle conversation, carelessly perform or entirely neglect Sabbath duties in secret and in the family, so that instead of having a church in the house, and the family being mutually edified and trained up for the Lord, growing indifference to sacred things gradually but steadily prepares the way for real atheism. Many labour in their houses, upon the evening of the day of preparation, to so late an hour and to such excess, as to unfit them for the Sabbath when it comes. How frequently is the drowsiness in the public assembly betraying an ill-spent evening of preparation, turning the Sabbath into a mere carnal cessation from more public labour instead of a spiritual feast of communion with the blessed God. Many enter upon business or journeys late in the week, and plead a sort of imaginary necessity for continuing them upon the Lord's