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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

The Sabbath.

(From Lectures to Young Men, on the "Shorter Catechism," by Ashbel Green, D. D.)

(Concluded.)

IN our last lecture I endeavored to show that the fourth commandment of the decalogue is *moral*, in the highest and strictest sense of the word; and that it is, of course, of perpetual obligation—requiring us to keep holy to God all such set seasons as he hath appointed in his word, and especially to consecrate to his exclusive service one whole day in seven. Which day of the week ought to be thus consecrated to God, we are now to consider. On this point the statement of our Catechism is, that—"From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath."

There are some, my young friends, who explicitly deny the truth of the first part of this statement; that is, they deny that the obligation to observe the seventh day of the week as a Sabbath, was coeval with the completion of the work of creation, or from the beginning of the world. They insist that it had no other or earlier origin, than the time when the command before us was delivered to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. But this opinion, although adopted and defended by some men of eminence in the church, appears to me to be in direct opposition to the sacred record (Gen. ii. 2, 3), where it is said, "And

on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he rested the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Those who deny the primeval institution of the Sabbath, say, that the blessing here pronounced on the seventh day, and its sanctification as a day of holy rest, was *prophetic*; that is, God *then* ordained that at some future time—and according to these interpreters, that time was then more than two thousand years distant—the seventh day should be kept holy, and that a blessing should then attend its observance. I must say, that this appears to me one of the harshest and most forced interpretations of a plain passage of Scripture, that I have ever seen. The reason assigned for God's blessing the Sabbath day is, that on it he rested from all his work, and the text distinctly implies that *at that time* he blessed and sanctified it. His resting from his work, and his blessing and sanctifying the day of rest, are represented as contemporaneous. The language in which both facts are announced relates to one and the same period. Yet those from whom we differ in this matter, construe the language in relation to the fact *literally*, in the present time, and the language relative to the benediction and sanctification of the day *figuratively*, as referring to future time—future by the space of two thousand five hundred years. This, my dear youth, is taking such a liberty with the language of sacred Scripture as I deem altogether unwarrantable: and I feel it to be my duty to warn you, not to listen.