

for a mind that is desirous of evading the evidence regarding it, to succeed in doing so. It is a profound observation of Pascal's, that many principles and precepts are presented in the word of God, in such a manner as to operate as moral tests. That is, they are presented with just so much of distinctness that an individual free from prejudices, and seriously intent to discover the mind of God, will find them there; while on the other hand, they do not stand forth upon the sacred page, with such a prominence and amid such a blaze of demonstration, but that the mind that dislikes the doctrine or the duty, may evade its evidence. Suppose this to be in some degree the case with the law of the Sabbath, would it excuse the man who did not see it in the Bible, or would not his rejection of the Sabbath in such circumstances, afford a culpable instance of that moral perversity which makes the eye dim that it will not see, and the ear heavy that it will not hear.—The reference to some of the Protestant Churches on the Continent, will not serve the purposes of the objector. We know how long familiarity with a sinful practice, diminishes the sense of its sinfulness. It is thus that we account for the feeble tone of condemnation, in which some of the American Churches speak of the heaven-defying slave system. But the assertion itself is much too unqualified, for it is a fact, that just as the slumbering Churches on the Continent are awakening to life, they are acknowledging the necessity of a Sabbath, and that their most enlightened and pious pastors are at this moment sighing for its restoration, reminding one of Nehemiah going forth by moonlight, and marking the ruined walls of Jerusalem, and the gates thereof consumed with fire, and calling to the people to rise up and build the wall.

(To be Continued.)

### PREVAILING FORMS OF SABBATH DESECRATION EXPOSED.

BY REV PETER M'OWAN.

Whilst the institution of the Sabbath is a fence to the general interests of religion, and a bulwark thrown up to repress the floods of ungodliness, it also operates as a moral and religious test to the children of men; discovering either their love or their hatred, their loyalty or their rooted enmity to Jehovah, their Sovereign Lord. In proportion as nations, churches, or individuals rise, in the scale of religion and morality, they venerate and religiously improve this holy day; and in the same degree as they decline from the love of God, and the belief of His truth, they despise and profane it. The righteous call it "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable"; and they honour Him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words. But the ungodly say, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?"

Some boldly deny its moral obligation; affirming that it originated in state policy or in priestcraft: or, that it is, at best, a fragment of the Jewish economy. Others admit its divine origin, and concede that its design is humane and wise, but, on the plea of public utility, infirm health, or the heavy stake they have in the trade and commerce of the country, they pervert it, more or less, to purposes of secular toil, or of worldly pleasure. The proud profane it, because it encroaches on their fancied independence;

the avaricious, because it limits their opportunities of amassing wealth; the lovers of pleasure, because it interferes with the gratification of their lusts; the undevout, because of the spirituality of its duties and design; and the unbelieving, because it assumes the Being of a God, the existence of Providence, the responsibility of man, and the truth of revealed religion.

Convinced that the profanation of this blessed day is one of the great national sins on account of which God continues to visit us with judgment, and that its sanctification is essentially connected with our national prosperity, the advancement of the divine glory, the salvation of the world, and the permanent revival of religion in the churches of Christ,—we proceed to point out "SOME OF THE PREVALENT FORMS," or modes, in which the day is desecrated by those for whose present and everlasting benefit it was instituted.

1. *The Sabbath is desecrated, the efficacy of its ordinances is neutralized, and its benignant design is frustrated, when men are at no pains to prepare their hearts, or to set their affairs in order for its due sanctification before it arrives.*—True religion is no enemy to industry. On the contrary, the scriptures commend it as a virtue, while they denounce idleness as an odious vice. The fourth commandment, in particular, is not more explicit in enjoining that we rest on the seventh day, than that we "labour and do all our work," on the preceding six days. It is the divine will that we so dispatch and arrange our worldly and domestic affairs during the week, that they may stand still without detriment to them, or distraction to us, while we "wait only upon God," in his house, or in our closets, on his own day. The history of each well-instructed religious family and firm in the land, proves, that such a plan of preparation is both practicable and profitable.

"REMEMBER the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."—That is, look before you to the conclusion of the week; anticipate the Sabbath, and do not allow yourselves to be so immersed in worldly pursuits, that it shall come upon you unawares. Have respect to it through the whole of your week-day duties; and give no pledge, neither enter into any engagement, which will entangle your consciences, or lay you under temptation to neglect its ordinances, or to secularize its hours. The ancient Jews so venerated this solemn injunction, that they devoted the day preceding their Sabbath to preparatory duties, and hence it was called "the day of preparation".

Had those professing christians who are shareholders in Sabbath-breaking railways, or partners in other companies which desecrate this day, remembered this injunction, they would have demanded a legal pledge, that no Sunday trading would be allowed, before they bought a share, subscribed a pound, or signed a document. But they forgot, if they did not utterly disregard, the word of the Lord; and many of them are now suffering the penalty of their unfaithfulness. Had some professing parents remembered it before they apprenticed their children to Sabbath-breaking tradesmen, they would not now have had to deplore the undutifulness of those who ought to have been the joy of their hearts and the glory of their declining years. And had some commercial travellers so remembered it, as to have stipulated with their employers, that they should neither transact business at home, nor travel abroad, on this holy day,

they would not have been so lost to God, and to honour, as they unhappily are.

Neither the Sabbath nor its ordinances operate as a charm on the soul of man. It is awfully possible for us to observe the day without securing its design: to be in the house of God without realizing his presence; and to hear his gospel without feeling its power. These results are not only possible, but they will infallibly ensue, unless we "set the Lord always" before us, and so subordinate our worldly affairs to our spiritual interests, that instead of hindering, they may contribute to our being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day".

Considering how intimately the efficacy of ordinances and the salvation of men are linked with the observance of the Sabbath, and how necessary previous preparation is to its due sanctification; those Ministers incur a fearful responsibility, who, by tasking their servants to perform an unreasonable amount of work, or who, by postponing the payment of their wages till a late hour on Saturday night, lay them under strong temptation, not only to neglect all preparation for the services of the day, but to desecrate the day itself. Those Heads of Families also are culpable, who not only permit, but encourage their servants and children, to leave certain departments of household service to be performed on the Lord's day morning, which, with forethought, might have been done on the previous night; or who teach them to anticipate certain duties on the Sunday evening, which properly belong to the following morning.

The comparative inefficacy of gospel ordinances in these lands is a ground of grief and surprise to all godly persons and faithful ministers. With an unprecedented number of faithful men in the ministry, who generally preach the gospel in a plain, powerful, and persuasive manner, and with the most untrained liberty to profess and practice true religion, a large proportion of those who attend our sanctuaries remain unsaved. Without denying the existence of auxiliary hindrances, it is our firm conviction, that a chief cause of the mutuality of gospel ministrations with multitudes, both men and women, is the hurry and distraction of mind, induced by the absorbing avidity, and idolatrous devotedness with which they pursue the world, up to, and often beyond, the sacred precincts of the Sabbath-day. If the ground be unprepared, it avails nothing though the seed be good, and the sower diligent, for it will lie on the surface, and, in that case, it will either be devoured by the birds of the air, or scorched by the sun, or choked by the briars and weeds. If we grieve away the Holy Spirit during the six days, how can we hope he will come and comfort us on the seventh. If we do not supplicate his aid in private, and are unmindful of his monitions in our daily walk, how can we expect to be favoured with his celestial influences in public, when, with minds preoccupied, we go with the multitude who keep holy day. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The Sabbath must be remembered before it comes, in order to be enjoyed when it comes. Sabbath ordinances must be approached in a Sabbath frame, otherwise they will harden rather than soften, and blind, rather than enlighten; and to secure this frame, we must not only lay the world aside with our hands, in proper time, but eject it from our hearts; praying with all prayer, that the Lord of the Sabbath, would possess them by his Spirit,—"casting