

tance, both to their individual happiness and to national strength? We wish to see secured for the artisan time for recreation, but we wish to see secured for him time for religion too, and shall we be asked to sacrifice the more important for the less important?—Would not recreation itself, without intelligence and morality, rapidly degenerate into brutal licentiousness? And how are these to be secured by those sons of toil, without a weekly recurring day given to converse with divine truths and eternal realities? Let the real state of the case be clearly seen. The hours for recreation on common days, have gradually passed from the hands of the working man—commercial enterprise has bought them up and changed them into hours of toil; and now when the question is asked, what time shall he have for recreation, the answer given is—his Sabbath-day! Well, let us suppose the presumptuous and impious demand yielded, what security has he that his Sabbath once given to recreation, would not soon be demanded for toil also, and the poor deluded artisan discover, when it was too late, that that blessed institute which had enshrined his dignity, his liberty, and his immortal interests, was lost; and that, in an evil hour, he had sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage. The man of toil is insulted by that sentimentalism which never looks above his physical condition, and shuts out the idea that he is an immortal being, travelling to an eternal world. And surely it is a far truer philanthropy which delights to behold him exchanging not mere animal toil for animal recreation, but moving with a virtuous household to that hallowed place where rich and poor meet together, raising his thoughts above all that is sordid and secular, holding converse with themes that at once dignify and purify, receiving motives to virtuous action, solace to grief, and with “looks commercing with the skies”, meditating on those things into which even angels desire to look. These are the men that make an empire great, by keeping it virtuous,—the salt of the earth, the lights of the world.

2. Would we then interdict the study of the works of God, it is sometimes asked, and denounce every man as a Sabbath-breaker, who, on the first day of the week, was found meditating in the fields, or musing by the river-side or the ocean shore, or turning his gaze upward to the starry firmament. It is worthy of remark that the objector has here shifted his ground. Formerly, he demanded the Sabbath for amusement, now, he asks that a portion of its precious hours may be given to the devout contemplation of the divine handiworks. This is a favourite position with some, but two simple statements will be sufficient to dispose of it. 1. It is never to be overlooked that the most important revelation which God has given of himself to man, is that contained in his written word, and that it is to the study of this, especially, that the return of the Sabbath invites him. He stands to God in the relation not of an innocent creature, but of a guilty sinner, and it is in the knowledge of God as he is revealed in his word, that is, not simply as his Creator, but as his Redeemer, that he finds the means of his deliverance. Now, it is to God in this combined relation, as the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we are to offer worship, and one of the most prominent and gracious ends intended by the gift of the Sabbath, was to secure opportunity to his people for performing this service, and

for performing it socially—“not forgetting the assembling of themselves together”. Any service rendered to God merely viewed as his Creator, by a human being in the assumed position and character of innocence, would be rejected, like Cain’s proud and impious offering of fruits and flowers. A mere intellectual homage to the power, wisdom, and beneficence of God as seen in creation, made a substitute for the evangelical and contrite worship of a scripturally enlightened and renewed heart approaching God in his own appointed ordinances, and through his own blood-consecrated medium of access, is an utter perversion of the very spirit and purpose of the Sabbath, and a kindling upon the altar of God of strange fire. 2. At the same time, there is no enlightened friend of the Sabbath who would hesitate to admit, that in connexion with the more peculiar and prominent services of the Sabbath, and in subserviency to them, no exercise can be more appropriate or congenial, than the devout contemplation of the works of God. The Sabbath intermingles in itself the memorials of creation and redemption, and so should he that would rightly hallow the Sabbath, intermingle them in his thoughts. But then, let us clearly understand what is meant by the *devout contemplation* of the works of God. Not surely what so often passes for this in practice, the mere Sabbath-walk or holiday-stroll, the enjoyment of which principally depends on keeping God out of the thoughts, and which so often beginning with undevout frivolity, ends in crime. Not even the solitary musings of the man who has an eye for the mere beauties of scenery. The truth is, that everything in a case like this, depends on motive and spirit. So that we can easily conceive two sons of a pious father going forth on a Sabbath evening, from beneath the parental roof, into the neighbouring garden or field, and while their external conduct is very much alike, the one shall in the sight of God be a Sabbath-breaker, and the other not.—For, the first has merely gone forth to escape from pious exercises and holy conversation which he does not relish, to while away the vacant hours that make him exclaim, in heart, of the Sabbath, “what a weariness is it,” to indulge unmolested the waking-dreams of avarice or ambition, perhaps even to invite temptation in its grosser forms. The other has walked forth like Isaac, with a heart attuned to devotion, intent to “meditate at even-tide,” and every object in nature is like Jacob’s ladder the pathway of his thoughts to heaven, each flower suggests an emblem or a lesson,—the azure firmament is itself a sublime revelation,—ocean is to him the mirror of the Almighty and the emblem of eternity,—

“His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—My Father made them all.”

This would undoubtedly be Sabbath-keeping, though even from the solitary walk in the field or by the ocean-shore, we can conceive a Christian disciple, in the present state of society, to abstain, aware how liable his example is, in such a case, to be abused, and well knowing that many things are lawful which are not expedient.

(To be Continued)

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SABBATH.

It seems to be one of the laws of nature,—a law essential to the preservation and health of all organized beings, that there shall be seasons of periodic repose. Whilst things without life are ceaselessly in motion, the planets in their orbit,—the ocean in its capacious bed,—and the rivers in their wonted channels, it is otherwise with things possessing life. Plants, and Trees, and Animals have their alternations of summer and winter, of day and night, and by natural consequence of activity and repose.

But, besides, what is common to man and the inferior animals, in the rest arising from the alternations of day and night, some further provision was wanted.—Man’s mind as well as his body was to be exercised; he was morally allied with angels as well as physically allied with inferior animals; and, to recruit from the waste of nervous action in thinking and feeling, it was necessary that he should have, in addition to nightly rest, a season of weekly rest. “A physician”, says the celebrated Dr. Farre of London, in his evidence before a committee of the British House of Commons, appointed to investigate the effects of labouring seven days in the week, compared with those of labouring only six and resting one, “A Physician, says that truly scientific man, always has respect to the preservation of the restorative power; because, if once this be lost, his healing office is at an end—a physician is anxious to preserve the balance of circulation as necessary to the restorative power of the body. The ordinary exertions of man run down the circulation every day of his life; and the first general law of nature, by which God prevents man from destroying himself, is the alternating of day and night, that repose may succeed action. But, although the night apparently equalizes the circulation, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life. Hence, one day in seven, by the kindness of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect by its repose, the animal system. You may easily determine this question as a matter of fact, by trying it on beasts of burden. Take that fine animal, the horse, and work him to the full extent of his powers every day in the week, or give him rest one day in seven, and you will soon perceive, by the