

forbidden to assist at any funerals but those of their nearest relatives. In the time of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, whilst all decorum was manifested in the sepulture of the dead,—the relatives and friends of the deceased being present at the funeral obsequies, whilst funeral dirges were sung by hired mourners, and these accompanied by musical instruments,—we nowhere read of any religious service either prescribed or performed on such an occasion. We refer to this circumstance here entirely for the purpose of showing that there is not the shadow of Scriptural warrant for any religious service in the burial of the dead, and far less for the celebration of funeral obsequies on the Lord's day. Do we then disapprove of all religious services on such an occasion? Quite the reverse.—The death of a fellow-creature is an event calculated to teach us many important lessons, to show us the evil of sin, to lead us to serious reflection in regard to our own mortality, as well as to a diligent preparation for death, judgment, and eternity. But this can only be by the divine blessing accompanying the dispensation, and this blessing is secured in answer to prayer. "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Every fresh instance of mortality that we see or hear of should be made a season of earnest, importunate, and persevering prayer.—All that we contend for here is, that there is no specific religious service enjoined in Scripture in connection with the celebration of funeral obsequies; and instead of there being any warrant in the Bible for the burial of the dead on the Lord's day, there is everything that would lead us to an opposite conclusion.

Having thus shown that there is no scriptural warrant for Sabbath funerals, we are now in a position to inquire how far the practice is defensible on the ground of expediency. And now, we say, without the least hesitation, that Sabbath-funerals, except in clear and unequivocal cases of necessity and mercy, are a direct violation of the fourth commandment. That Commandment strictly enjoins: "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it, thou shalt not do any work". We ask, then, are not Sabbath funerals in themselves and in all about them a secular work?—

Are not the undertakers on such occasions required to work? Are not those connected with the hearse, man and beast, obliged to work? Are not the grave-diggers and those connected with the Cemetery or Church-yard obliged to work?—It is out and out in itself a secular work, and therefore just as much a desecration of the Sabbath as any other work. But we rise still higher and maintain that Sabbath funerals run counter to the very spirit of the Sabbatic Institute. And what is that? It is love to God and love to man. And do not Sabbath funerals deprive many of those very exercises by which this principle is fed and strengthened? Do they not spoliage our fellow-creatures of their heaven-gifted birth-right? True, in a small community such as this, comparatively few are compelled to engage in secular work, even though all were interred on Sabbath. But the principle is the same whether there be but two or whether there be two thousand. We have other strong objections to Sabbath funerals, but these we must reserve till another opportunity.—Are Sabbath funerals, then, in all cases, a violation of the fourth commandment? No. If a malignant epidemic is raging in a place, and if the keeping of the dead corpse over the Sabbath is calculated, according to the testimony of the Medical Faculty, to spread that disease, then it is just as much our duty to bury the dead on the Sabbath as it is to go to the house of Prayer, for the purpose of supplicating the Lord of the Sabbath that the plague may be stayed.

#### EXAMINATION OF MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIONS AND POPULAR FALLACIES.

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(Continued.)

3. Occasionally, however, the objector strangely alters his tone, and from complaining of the harshness of the institute which sets apart one day in seven entirely to religious services, declares the appointment to be unnecessary, because a true Christian will make a Sabbath of every day. "I am an every-day Christian", you will sometimes hear it said, "why talk of one day in seven for religion, my idea is that every day of the seven should be a Sabbath". It has been justly noticed, that those who speak thus, are not always the most religious of persons, and that if they believe that every day should be a Sabbath, their notions are very low indeed of what a Sabbath should be.—But apart from this, there are two things which we deem it sufficient to urge in reply to this objection.—First, it utterly misrepresents our views. Who ever taught, who ever thought, that in argu-

ing that one day in seven was to be kept holy to the Lord, all the other six days might in this case be given to a uniform and undisturbed secularity? Can a more thorough perversion of our meaning be imagined than this—"Be religious on the first day of the week, and you may be as worldly as you like on other days"? No; the true spirit of the Sabbath appointment is, not that we should condescend the religion of the week into the Sabbath, but that we should carry forth from the Sabbath its hallowed impulses and feelings into the other days of the week, to elevate and sustain us amid its wearisome secularities and depressing cares. Our souls are to be attuned and attempered then, "the Lord has given us the Sabbath", not to relax us of our religion, but so to revive our religion on that day, as to impel its healthy tide into the remotest nook and corner of every-day duty.

And general experience abundantly proves, that constituted as human nature is, and circumstanced as the vast majority of our race are, and ever must be, some such appointment as the Sabbath, is indispensable to the keeping alive of religion in the hearts and habitations of our people. For the question is not how a man of retired habits and abundant means could keep his godliness in vigor without a Sabbath-day, but, how the erasure of this day from the list of moral appointments, in other words the degrading of it to common uses, would affect those whose waking hours on other days, are almost wholly engrossed by traffic or toil. Extinguish the Sabbath, and religion has only the little intervals between the hours of labour in which to proclaim her lessons and to assert her claims. And if, even with the Sabbath on her side, which commands all to be silent that she may be heard, she finds it difficult to maintain her supremacy, what would be the case were her voice only to be raised amid the thousand discordant sounds of secular pursuits. You bid her fashion the iron, and you will not give her time to heat it; you bid her paint her image, but it is upon moving canvass. With one hand you propose to draw water from the cistern, while, with the other, you have cut off the communication of that cistern with the lake that feeds it. That man may be kept religious, he must give to the subjects of religion more than the mere snatches of time or half thoughts; hours upon hours must be set apart, in which its hallowed associations and holy employments shall have opportunity to exert their full influence. Deprive him of this, and your every-day Sabbath will soon turn out to mean no Sabbath at all.

4. Another attempt is sometimes made to loosen the sense of obligation in respect to Sabbath observance, by insinuating that the evidence is of so dubious a nature, that much may be said on both sides. It is at the most a balancing of probabilities. No one will be blamed for not discovering a law but dimly written,—so dimly, that if it is binding at all, it must be admitted that there are persons of undoubted piety in our age, especially on the Continent, who do not feel or acknowledge it to be so. We have said enough in previous portions of this tract, to show that we do not admit the truth of the statement on which this apology proceeds. We hold with Jonathan Edwards, that "the command is so plainly spoken that the ear may hear it, and this is enough". At the same time, we are prepared to admit, in reference to this and many other duties, that it is quite a possible thing