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THE SABBATH.

A

SERMON

PREACHED OCTOBER 13, 1833,

AT

INDIANAPOLIS.

BY REV. ANDREW WYLLIE,
PRESIDENT OF INDIANA COLLEGE.

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SERMON.

EXOD. XX. 8.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

THAT the command in the text is of perpetual obligation may be shewn from the nature of the command itself, and from various declarations of sacred scripture. The command is certainly moral, so far as it respects some portion of time to be employed in the duties of religion; so far as it prescribes a precise portion of time so to be employed, the Sabbath is a positive institution.—That there should be public observances for the purpose of keeping up in the minds of men a sense of God and religion, nature dictates, and none but the atheist will deny. Such observances are found among all nations and in every age of the world. It is more clearly evident that God is, and that we are his creatures, than that worship is due to him from us. What he is, especially what he is to us, ought surely to be acknowledged. He is our Maker; we should serve and honor him: our Preserver; we should owe our dependence on him: our Benefactor; we should be grateful for his favors: our Law-giver; we should obey him: our Judge; we should acknowledge our responsibility to him. The truth contained in the second of each of these several couplets of propositions is as plain and just an inference from the first as any inference can be. The connection between the axioms of a mathematical demonstration is not more certain. But if God is thus to be acknowledged by acts of devotion, it is reasonable, and indeed the nature of these acts requires, that they should be done in public. If so, there must be concert—there must be time appropriated and set apart for the purpose. What particular time should be so appropriated depends upon the will of the Law-giver.

The institution, for this purpose, of one day in seven is not to be referred to any peculiarities of the Jewish religion. It existed from the creation. The main reason for the observance of a Sabbath is drawn from the creation, and belongs equally to the consideration of all men. The Sabbath is plainly not of the nature of a Jewish ceremony. Its place among the precepts of the decalogue, all moral, and the circumstances of its promulgation shew this.

In various places of the old testament it is foretold that the observance of the Sabbath is to be perpetual. Instance Isaiah, lvi. 6, 7 and 8, "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his

servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith yet will I gather others to him beside those that are gathered unto him." And in the 24th chapter of Matthew, where our Lord is giving an account of the destruction of Jerusalem, he directs his disciples, verse 20th, to pray that their flight from that devoted city might not take place in the winter; "neither on the Sabbath day." At this time the Jewish ceremonial was abolished, but the quotation just made shows that the Sabbath remained. But no change is any where in scripture intimated as to take place in the worship of God after the abolition of the Jewish economy to the end of time. Therefore, the institution of the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation.

That the first day of the week is, since the resurrection of Christ, to be observed as the Sabbath has been proved in various ways. It is manifest from Heb. chap. iv. verses 9 and 10.

The whole passage is an argument to prove something. What this is, the conclusion shows. This is in these words "there remaineth therefore a rest," in the original it is, "a Sabbatism," a Sabbath keeping "to the people of God." That this Sabbath keeping is different from that which was instituted as a memorial of the creation, and which was afterwards introduced into the Jewish ceremonial is plain from the following verse, "For he that has entered into his rest," namely Christ "he also hath ceased from his own works," in accomplishing our redemption "as God did from his;" his works in the creation of the world. This is indubitably the apostle's meaning, and it shows that the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, bears the same relation to the finishing of our redemption by Jesus Christ, that the former Sabbath, which it supersedes, did to the creation of the world. In conformity with this interpretation we are expressly told, Isaiah lxx. 17, 18, that the Sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation should not be kept in gospel times. "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice forever in that which I create: for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Here, when it is said, that the old creation should no more be remembered, we are to understand the expression as referring to the keeping up a remembrance of it by an instituted memorial, that is, the Sabbath at the end of the week: and when we are commanded to "rejoice forever" at the accomplishment of the new creation, it must, to keep up the correspondence between the two parts of the com-

parison, be understood as referring to some other instituted memorial by which the former was to be superseded; and this new memorial is to remain "forever," to be observed forever as a day of rejoicing. Here is predicted, evidently, the new testament Sabbath.

The special reason for the Jewish Sabbath is not good with respect to the Gentile nation, nor to the Jews themselves since the resurrection of Christ: Deut. v. 15, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." See Jer. xvi. 14, 15.

There is a remarkable passage in Psalms cxviii. beginning at the 20th verse, which here deserves our notice. The twentieth verse shows us the way to eternal felicity opened; "the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter." The twenty-first expresses the Psalmist's determination to praise God, the author of his salvation. The twenty-second celebrates the risen Saviour as become "the head stone of the corner," in the building of grace which God was about to erect, an everlasting monument to his praise. This is evident from the construction which the apostle put on the passage in Acts iv. 10, 11. The twenty-third verse gives the glory of the great enterprise to Him to whom all glory is due. The twenty-fourth indicates a day set apart as a day of rejoicing. Who does not here see plainly foretold the first day of the week, the great day of the Church's joy for the return of the glorious bridegroom, whom the grave had for a short time removed from her sight.

The day of Pentecost, on which the Spirit was manifest in such a wonderful manner, was the first day of the week. See Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.

The first day of the week was observed as the Sabbath by the apostles and primitive christians. Acts xx. 7.

The first day of the week is called the "Lord's day." Rev. i. 10.

Lastly: the first day of the week has been observed by the great mass of professing christians from primitive times to the present, as a day of sacred rest. Many other proofs might be adduced but these are more than sufficient unless men choose to cavil, and when that is the case, reasoning is superfluous.

On the proper manner of observing the Sabbath I shall say but little. It is clearly pointed out by numerous plain scriptural precepts and approved examples. It is sufficient, therefore, to observe that the proper sanctification of the Sabbath implies a cessation from all unnecessary worldly business and amusement, and the employment of the whole day in the public and private exercises of religion, and in acts of charity and beneficence.

The importance of observing the Sabbath in this way, it is my intention to consider more at large.

The human body is a machine which requires food, sleep and relaxation to keep it in order. That a seventh portion of time should be devoted to bodily rest, merely for preserving the health and tone of the body, cannot be demonstrated. But it is highly probable. It is certain that those who rest from their worldly employments on the Sabbath, do more work, and to better purpose, than those who do not. This may be accounted for, partly from the fact that this class is made up of the sober, thrifty, industrious part of the community. For the same sense of duty which teaches them to honor God by observing the institutions of his worship, teaches them, also, to practice those virtues and acts of good management, which so directly tend to success in all the business of life—industry, order, frugality, temperance, charity.—They labor, too, with more alacrity; because they believe that God will bless the work of their hands. Many of the lessons which they receive on the Sabbath, relate directly to the practice of these virtues. But besides all this, there is good reason to believe, that the mere relaxation of the physical system from the exertion of six days trial, is in itself salutary: and that it is true with respect to the mortal body, as well as the immortal soul lodged within it, that “the Sabbath was made for man.” The same will also hold with regard to those inferior animals which the Creator has subjected to the control of man, and whose labor is so important an auxiliary in all his operations. This is found by experiment: and our mail stages, which acknowledge not the Sabbath of the Lord, find it necessary to make, in the relays to which they resort, a kind of artificial Sabbath, for the preservation of the lives of those noble animals which are employed in their conveyance.

But in considering the adaptation of the Sabbath to man's physical constitution, the structure of his mind must be principally regarded. Business requires a certain attention of the faculties which cannot always be kept up. When the mental powers have become jaded and weary by continued exertion, they operate without effect; or they operate injuriously. When the mind is fatigued, the attention is bewildered, and we take things by the wrong end. Set a man to work on any subject when he is refreshed by rest, and he will execute in one hour what he could not have done in ten, after his powers have lost their tone by being pushed to the point of exhaustion.

But this is not all. The most of human pursuits produce in the mind a state of too much excitement when too intensely followed. The world has its enthusiasts as well as religion. And an immoderate ardor is far more to be dreaded in secular pursuits than in the concerns of religion. And it is far more com-

mon. It will be conceded by all whose opinions are entitled to respect, that a cool and dispassionate state of the mind is as necessary to correct judgment, as correct judgment is, to successful action. But when for some time the energies of the mind have been continually and intently bent on objects congenial to its prevailing disposition, the passions become stimulated to a degree of force and activity too powerful for the judgment. Consequently the determinations which are taken in this excitement of the feelings partake more of imagination than of reason, and are not to be trusted. They are fallacious, and if put into execution must prove detrimental, I do not mean to the interests of the soul and of eternity, for that is too obvious to need a remark, but to the interests of the present life. What then is the remedy? Let the mind rest: and while it rests, its temperature will gradually subside to the point of healthful action. This cooling process will be greatly promoted by turning off the attention, in the mean time, to objects of a different nature. This the Sabbath does.—The blunders in their various pursuits which the votaries of the world are continually making, with so much loss to themselves and others, may thus be fairly traced to their habitual neglect of the Sabbath, and other religious institutions connected with it.—How different are the views of which we take of things when placed in the midst of them, from those which we take of them when the perplexing scene to which they belong is thrown far behind us, as we are borne along on the swift current of time! In the former case, they fill the whole field of vision, and appear in vivid colors: in the latter, they are seen dimly; and that, only through openings between other objects of deeper interest that have intervened. When we look back on life through the dim retrospect of memory, we are amazed at our own folly, and wonder why we could have been so much concerned about things so trivial. The repose of a single night often enables us to detect, in the decisions of the preceding evening, the grossest errors: and we rise to execute what we had resolved to abandon, and to abandon what we had resolved to execute.

But the Sabbath serves, not only to correct the false impressions which worldly objects had left upon the mind, by the single and simple operation of that repose which it brings from the cares and anxieties which attend all worldly pursuits: it conduces to the same effect by another and more powerful influence—that which religious objects produce. The Sabbath turns the thoughts into a new direction; and though, when the day is past, they may return into their former channel, they will flow with less impetuosity, and, consequently, with less danger even to the temporal interests which they involve. The ministrations of the sanctuary bring into view objects from the past and the future—objects from the invisible world—of vast magnitude and deep concernment.

The mind enlarges to embrace them; and thus, almost mechanically, adjusts itself to a standard of judgment entirely different from that which is formed by contemplating the microscopic objects of this little world. Account for it as you will, observation shows that there are fewer, much fewer, rash and ruinous adventures entered into by that class of people who respect the Sabbath than by those who do not.

If the mind of man were a pure intellect, he would still need, though much less than he does, the aid of outward observances in religion. But he is constituted of sense and imagination; and these have often, and, in the present state, must have, a greater influence over him than the understanding. The religion of such a being must be made up of something more than abstract truth. We can have no immediate intercourse with the spiritual world. God, in his essential nature, is to us inaccessible. He dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory. We discern his being and attributes only through the medium of external things. The case is the same with respect to the world of morals. Virtue and vice are not objects of sense or imagination: they make no impression, unless embodied in overt acts. Spiritual and moral ideas must be associated with times, places, circumstances and material images, in order to affect us. Faith cometh by hearing. Those things with which spiritual and moral ideas are associated we call holy things. The Sabbath is holy. It is the Lord's day. His authority is connected with it: and so is his blessings. If the Sabbath were a mere vacuum, a portion of empty time, it would make an impression, on the same principle that empty space would make an impression, if defined all around by enclosing objects. The contrast would strike us, and the void space would become distinctly visible; like some great prairie of the west, defined by surrounding forests. There is something in the very stillness of the holy Sabbath morning peculiarly grateful to the pious heart. The time, vacated of other things, seems filled with God. It is then that the pious soul, disengaged from earthly ties, rises on the wings of holy contemplation, to take her station in the temple above. Then she anticipates the period of her final release from this world of pollution and sorrow, and joins the society of blessed spirits in heaven. Let none despise these rapturous extacies of faith and hope. They are not the idle roving of a disordered imagination. They have a foundation in truth: and they are useful, to extract from the heart the stings of disappointment, soothe its sorrows, calm the surges of passion and restless desire, and bring back the soul from her wanderings amidst the vanities of life to her rest in God. This holy calm of the soul is not only desirable on account of the enjoyment which it brings, but for its moral influence in tranquilizing the spirits and reanimating the soul with fresh courage and strength, to encounter the temptations

of life. It is a cordial which strengthens, no less than cheers.—The world abounds with bad men: the best are imperfect: the ignorant are governed by the cunning. Thus it happens that a mass of opposition is always placed in the way of virtue. The principles of wicked men lead them to put the worst construction on the conduct of the good. This kindles resentment and provokes to retaliation, which is contrary to the precepts and spirit of the Gospel. Here is a great trial: and to meet it there is no better preparation than that holy calm which the Sabbath brings with it, considered merely as a space of time vacant from worldly turmoil and sacred to pious contemplation.

But the Sabbath is much more than this. It is the central point of ten thousand blessed influences. Man cannot make himself better by a mere effort of the will. If he could, who would not at once be perfect? Every good man would. But sanctification is quite another affair; and must be carried on according to the established laws of mental operation. Now association is one of the most powerful of these laws.

The inanimate form, from which the spirit of a dear friend and companion has just taken its flight, is nothing more than ordinary dust. The grave where it is deposited is not more sacred than any other spot of earth. The scenes in which the years of our early life so sweetly glided away, while yet our spirits were buoyant with alacrity and care, fear, suspicion, were strangers to our youthful bosoms—these scenes are no more lovely than any other scenes. Bunker's hill, and the rock at Plymouth; Braddock's field, and the plains of York town; Valley Forge, and Mount Vernon, have nothing more than a thousand other places to recommend them. Home is a paltry monosyllable. All this may be true to the apprehension of cold philosophy. But to nature it is outrageously false. You stand on Bunker's Hill. Fallen heroes rise around you! You see them in their glory! You see the advancing columns—the heavy artillery—the lines bristling with bayonets. The flash, the shout—all the thunder of battle stuns your senses. But your mind feels no fear, for the patriotic fire of seventy-five is kindled in your breast. You stand on the rock where our fathers landed. An expanse of ocean, not to be repassed, separates you from your native land, now no longer yours, since persecution has forced you into exile. You are on a bleak and barren coast. The winds howl dreadfully. The skulking savage glances by. A feeling of desolation comes over you, and you learn the value of that pious confidence, which stays the soul on God in the midst of so many causes of despondency. By the tomb of Washington what soul of man would not be lifted above the tenor of its ordinary conceptions; and, after passing in review the actions of his glorious life, would not sur-

render itself to the mingled emotions of exultation in the issue of the long and dubious contest in which he was engaged, and of admiration of the unparalleled virtues by which he conducted it to a successful issue, and most of all, gratitude to Almighty God for shewing to the world such a bright example of all that is great and good.

It would be difficult to conceive circumstances better calculated to bring at once upon the mind a combination of holy influences, than those which attend the institution of the Sabbath. The solemn stillness of the scene already noticed, all secular employments being removed from the hand and the thoughts; the day itself sacred to communion with God; the time that he himself hath appointed to meet with men and bestow imperishable blessings on their souls; the work of Creation, the work of Redemption, in moral grandeur surpassing the first; a future blessed and immortal life, of which it is the pledge—all these associations, connected as they are, with the first day of the week, must give to it the power of awakening in every pious heart emotions tending at once to cheer, exalt and purify. This would be so, were the Sabbath observed in solitude and silence. But its influence becomes still greater and more delightful, when we take into view the social exercises in religion, with which it stands connected. What can tend more to purify and elevate the affections, than the concert of many voices solemnly chanting the praises of God, the Creator, Benefactor, Sanctifier, Redeemer, Saviour, Friend. What on earth better calculated to awaken devotional feelings than the union of a congregation of worshippers silently bowing before the mercy seat, while one voice, in the subdued accents of humble supplication, embodies the prayers of the whole assembly, and faith is directed to the Great Advocate, who, in his office, presents them before the throne on high!

The preaching of the word, another ordinance accompanying the Sabbath, is the great means appointed by God for the salvation of men: "For when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The foolishness of preaching is not, however, foolish preaching. Whoever will read attentively the writings of Paul on this subject, addressed to Timothy and Titus, must see that neither learned disquisitions and rhetorical flourishes, on the one hand, nor the noisy and empty declamations of conceited ignorance, on the other, can be entitled to the name of preaching. No preaching is to be considered as in conformity with the ordinance of God, which is not instructive, full, various, practical. Truth and duty, in all their bearings, must be illustrated and enforced. The Sabbath affords an opportunity admirably suited to this end. The audience are an assembly of worshippers, convened, not to be entertained by the productions of hu-

man genius, but to hear the word of God. And, so long as the minister confines himself to that standard, he may speak "as one having authority." His doctrine will distill as the dew and as the rain upon the tender herb: for he "proclaims the name of the Lord." In the mean time, the Holy Spirit is present with his influences to make the word effectual. The circumstances are all solemn. The people are in the Divine presence. Judgment and eternity are in view. Life is uncertain, and they may be hearing for the last time. These considerations are present to the speaker as well as to the hearers. He must feel their influence, and feeling their influence he must be persuasive. His topics are of the utmost importance, and though many of them are trite, their permanent connection with the great interests of our nature and with the best feelings of the heart must always make them interesting.

The scene presented by a pious and orderly family, assembled on Sabbath evening around the domestic hearth, for purposes of instruction and devotion, is the most lovely and the most important that can be seen on earth.

The Sabbath opens a school of instruction to the poor. To the poor the gospel is preached.

The fact is manifest beyond all contradiction that the observance of the Sabbath has a salutary and powerful influence upon the morals of the community. Intemperance, idleness, prodigality and ruffian violence and other vices of a gross and ruinous character do not characterize a church going people. That these and other vices of a like kind do characterize those who neglect the sanctuary and profane the Sabbath is equally notorious. If there is any such thing as reasoning from facts, the wholesome influence of the Sabbath upon the morals of society will not be disputed.

It also improves the manners of a people. Decorum of behaviour is always to be observed in the house of God. Meetings for religious worship are social meetings of the best kind. There is no idle or scandalous talk allowed in these meetings. Here artificial distinctions are forgotten. The rich and the poor meet together on the same level of the depravity, the interests and the responsibilities of one common nature. The arrogance of the proud man is checked, when he finds himself cited before the same tribunal with his poor neighbor; and the poor are encouraged to lift up their heads with a becoming sense of their best privileges, as being not less than the rich the objects of grace from that glorious Being who is no respecter of persons and who often chooses to make the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. Considerations such as these, which the circumstances of a worshipping assembly so obviously suggest, tend to soften and improve the social feelings; while the habit of appear-

ing in public where the strictest attention is required to propriety of behaviour will teach the value of good order and induce a taste for the beauty of decency and decorum. It must doubtless be owing to considerations such as these that the observers of the Sabbath, though they may be plain and unceremonious in their manners, are never rude and indecent.

There are, I know, meetings sometimes held on the Sabbath professedly for religious purposes, and yet, so much disorder, not to say indecency, is permitted, that they may seem to contradict the foregoing remarks. But they do not. For by such meetings the Sabbath is not sanctified but profaned. For if there is an occasion which, above all others, requires the most delicate regard to the precept "Let all things be done decently and in order," the circumstances of an assembly met on the Lord's day for the purposes of devotion furnish that occasion.

The benevolent design and beneficial influence of the Sabbath, as it respects the laboring classes of the community, deserve our notice on this occasion. It is a well known maxim in political economy that the price of any thing is as the supply: low, if the article is abundant, high, if it is scarce. Now, if the laboring classes were all to work on the Sabbath it would add one seventh to the amount of labor in the market: consequently the price would be diminished in the same proportion. That is, the laborer would get no more for the work of seven days than he now does for that of six.

The Sabbath is an institution peculiarly favorable to the poor in this respect, also, that it presents motives, and furnishes occasions for the exercise of charity. The connexion between love to God and benevolence to man is strong and intimate. That between love to God and love to those who bear the image of God is still stronger and more intimate. There must be therefore a close connexion between the overt acts which are the proper expressions of these principles. It is found to be so in fact. The truly pious are always the most charitable. The hypocrite and the formalist may imagine that they do God service while they substitute the outward show of religion for works of charity and benevolence, or even for those of justice and common honesty; yet there can be nothing clearer than that such pretence has no countenance from any part of the word of God. There is no sentiment which the word of God more strongly reprobates. Accordingly, all pious and enlightened observers of the Sabbath, from the primitive age of Christianity down to the present day, have uniformly acted on the belief that works of charity stand closely associated with the sanctification of the Sabbath, and may with the greatest propriety be performed on it. And surely the principles of charity and benevolence can no where find more copious and appropriate nutriment, than in those means of grace which

the Sabbath gives us so favorable an opportunity of enjoying.—The enemies of the Sabbath never will succeed in their efforts to abolish this sacred institution: but if they should, though the consequence would be a general deterioration of morals, the rapid ebbing of that tide of benevolence which has been fed by the waters of the sanctuary, would give the first visible indication of so disastrous a change.

The great importance of the Sabbath arises from the intimate connexion in which it stands, by divine appointment, with all religious duties. These duties are also means of grace. So that grace is to be expected in the way of a diligent attention to these duties, and in no other way. If people encourage themselves in the omission, or even in the negligent performance, of duty, from the vague expectation that God will do every thing for them, they turn his grace into licentiousness. While they allow themselves and their children to despise and neglect the Sabbath; they plainly neglect their own salvation and that of their children, and have no reason to suppose that God will ever accomplish it for them. Regeneration is no where in the book of God, except in those cases which are strictly miraculous, represented as an event suddenly starting into existence without any thing in the foregoing train of events calculated to prepare the way for it. In the experience of the immediate disciples of our Lord, as stated in the gospel history, this was plainly not the case. Their minds evidently passed through a very gradual change, from the moment when they first attached themselves to his person, till the day of Pentecost. Previous to this period, it is difficult to fix a point at which one would be authorized to say, their minds were renewed. At first, they seem to have been influenced by secular motives alone. These seem to have never lost the ascendancy in their minds, till the crucifixion of their Master put an end to all their worldly expectations. This example was certainly meant for our instruction; and among other lessons which it is calculated to teach, it evidently teaches this, that, though in the experience of those who are regenerated, we must conceive a point at which the mind instantaneously passes out of a state of nature to a state of grace, yet much instruction is necessary to prepare it for making the transition. What is that state of mind to which we give the name of piety? Is it not made up of certain modes of thinking and principles of action, which, without a certain amount of knowledge, cannot be conceived to exist. The character of God, his law and gospel must be in some degree understood, before there can be either repentance or faith. Instantaneous impressions made upon the mind where no instruction is communicated are always transitory. A real and permanent change in the elements of thought and action in man's moral nature, must be brought about in the way of instruction. And for communicating

this the Sabbath affords the best opportunities, both in the public congregation and in the domestic circle. Were these opportunities diligently improved, the christian world would, I am persuaded, soon assume a new aspect. As it is, the children of professing parents are not regenerated, because they are not instructed. And these children, when they in their turn become parents, neglect their children altogether, having never even promised to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—They may retain so much reverence for the Sabbath, owing to the influence of early impressions, as to abstain from their worldly business on that holy day. But its sacred hours are not devoted to the pious exercises of reading and hearing the word of God, meditation, self examination and prayer. And thus it often happens, that the grand children of pious parents, or at least of persons professing piety, become open contemners of religion and profligate in their lives.

The efforts of some, who call themselves christians, to bring the Sabbath into disuse, appear to me utterly unaccountable. The Sabbath is certainly one of the most precious ordinances of religion—and without it all public worship would cease. It is coeval with the creation. It is connected with the most solemn ideas drawn from the history and order of the church, and her redemption by the Son of God. Its obligation rests upon the clearest dictates of reason and scripture. Its influence upon society has been proved to be most salutary. Every pious heart loves the Sabbath.—What do people mean, when they say that the Sabbath is not more holy than another day? Do they mean that it does not love God or man more than other days? If so, they have made a notable discovery! The letters that compose the name of God are not more holy than any other letters: Nor can there be any thing holy in the order of arranging them. Tell me, then, whether the monosyllable G-O-D is to be pronounced with no more reverence than its anagram? Your father is dead. There lies his body! The particles of matter composing it are no more sacred in themselves, than the particles of matter composing any other substance. Why then wrap their aggregate in a shroud, and lay it in the coffin? Why not commit it to the dung hill or throw it to the dogs!

It is a shame to be compelled to resort to such gross illustrations; but the shame belongs not to me, but to those who, for years past, have been publishing things, and to the many more who have been encouraging the publication of things in opposition to the sanctity of the Sabbath, so puerile as to admit of no other refutation but such as is calculated to strike the dullest apprehension.

Sabbath-breaking is, as has often been remarked, one of those sins which "go before unto judgment," being usually punished in

this world. It marks the place where "the broad road" makes the most noticeable deflection from "the straight and narrow way." Young people! you are especially interested in this remark.—When gay companions solicit you to join a party made up for the purpose of seeking amusement on the Lord's day, then, call to mind the mandate of the text! Then listen to the voice of the divine monition, "My son! when sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Consider, that, by visibly neglecting to join the society of such as love to repair to the sanctuary to render homage to the Most High, you voluntarily throw yourselves in the way of a thousand temptations; break off from the society and example of the pious; neglect the means of grace; expose yourselves to the corrupting principles and practices of such as fear not God; and that, when once initiated among them, it will be next to impossible for you to return to the paths of innocence and peace; and that to pass from a neglect of the public offices of religion to the vices of idleness, profligacy and dissipation will be easy and almost unavoidable. How many, when left to experience the bitter consequences of a wicked life, have lamented—alas! when it was too late—the first decisive step which lead to their everlasting ruin—that which took them from the house of God, in the thoughtlessness of youthful folly, to seek for pleasure in traversing the woods and meadows, and at length, in the haunts of dissipation.

Let us remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. It is the day which the Lord hath consecrated and blessed; the day which calls off our minds, from the trifles that on common days perplex us, and from the loathsome exhibitions of character which not unfrequently the world forces upon our view, to the contemplation of the wisdom, power, goodness, grace and love of God our Creator and Redeemer; the day which engages us with our friends in the performance of duties and the enjoyment of privileges, designed and calculated to warm our hearts with love to God and to each other; the day on which we rest our bodies from toil, and may enter with our spirits into the rest which remaineth for the people of God, and anticipate the bliss of heaven; the day in which the Most High condescends to converse with men in his earthly courts; the day when the Sacred Oracle gives responses to all humble enquirers after the knowledge of truth and duty; the day on which we have more than ordinary encouragement to come to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need; the day in which Jerusalem which is from above, and which is the mother of all the faithful, unfolds her pearly gates and invites us to enter in, that we may sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Let us then remember to sanctify this blessed day. Let every return of its sacred light be greeted with cheerful hearts. Wherever it finds us, at home or abroad, let us rest according to the

commandment. Never let us be so ungrateful, seeing that God has allowed us six days to ourselves, as to sacrilegiously rob him of the seventh. Never let the atheistical imagination enter our minds that any of our interests can be promoted by so doing.— Ever let us think and act upon the principle that success in our pursuits depend upon the blessing of God which we forget if we violate his Sabbath. And let us, in every prudent way, encourage others, especially those whom God has placed under our direction and guardianship, to venerate the Sabbath and the institutions connected with it. Legislative enactments cannot guard the sanctity of the Sabbath from violation. Yet it is a shame that, in a christian country, laws should be made and provided to reward men for its violation. The cause of this lies in that spirit of infidelity which lurks in the public mind. Men do not perceive the value of the Sabbath. Let us then, who are its professed friends, testify our respect to it, by shewing that we derive from its observance a holy influence into our hearts producing in our lives the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And, wherever our lots in the world may be cast, let us not rest till we have provided for the proper celebration of the Sabbath in public; imitating in this the piety of the sweet singer of Israel who resolved that he would not come into the tabernacle of his house nor go up into his bed—that he would not give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he should find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.”

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