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THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 27, 1825.

BY

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SAMUEL BLATCHFORD, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE UNITED CONGREGATIONS

OF

LANSINGBURGH AND WATERFORD.

[PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST.]



WATERFORD.

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DECEMBER 3d, 1825.

REVEREND SIR :

THE United Congregations of Lansingburgh and Waterford, of which you are the Pastor, have appointed us a Committee, to tender you their thanks for the excellent discourse delivered by you, the last Lord's day, on the Sanctification of the Sabbath ; and believing, as they do, that it is well calculated to call the attention of the public to a better observance of that day, have instructed us to request from you a copy for the press.

We are, Sir,

Very Respectfully,

Your friends and Parishioners,

HORACE GALPIN,
SETH SEELYE,
ELIAS PARMELEE,
JOHN HASWELL,
JOHN HOUSE,
MOSES SCOTT,

COMMITTEE.

REV. DR. SAMUEL BLATCHFORD,

LANSINGBURGH, DECEMBER 5, 1825.

GENTLEMEN :

THE discourse which, through you has been solicited, by the Congregations under my charge, ought not to be withheld. Its subject is manifestly important: It was written without the most distant view to publication; several topics might have been discussed more at large, had the limits of a single sermon permitted it. I commit it, however, with all its imperfections to your use, and to the blessing of the God of the Sabbath.

And remain, with the most sincere regard,

Your affectionate Pastor,

SAM'L. BLATCHFORD.

To the Gentlemen of the Committee



SERMON.

EZEKIEL, XX. 12 :

MOREOVER, I GAVE THEM MY SABBATHS, TO BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THEM, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD THAT SANCTIFY THEM.

WE are this day, by the direction of the Synod of our Church, to bring before you a subject of deep interest and importance, which the present state of society would seem imperiously to require, and which is connected with the glory of God and our highest welfare.—It is the sanctification of the Sabbath which calls our attention.

God, my brethren, is the sovereign Lord—he it was who brought us into existence at first, and made us to be entirely dependent upon himself: his right, therefore, to us, and to all that we have for his glory, is indisputable. He must then be properly and distinctly recognized as the Lord of our time, and which can never, without violence to the obligations we are under to him, be alienated to any other purposes than those, which he has been pleased to permit or to direct. And, indeed, we should seem to abuse the general sense of mankind, that part of them, at least, to whom is granted the precious privilege of a divine revelation, were we not to allow that the sanctification, or the keeping of the Sabbath, is

of divine and moral obligation: and yet, is it not matter of deep regret, that so many proofs are afforded us—that such abundant evidence is continually passing before our eyes, of the direct violation of that time which God hath pronounced sacred, and which is instituted for his glory and the best interests of the world.

The words of the text express God's authority in his injunctions upon his ancient Church, and display, in a beautiful manner, how wisely the institutions of religion are connected with the most important purposes; and are therefore to be regarded by us with scrupulous exactness and the sincerest devotion. They are included in a catalogue of benefits with which God had remembered the Israelites. And if a Sabbath was a blessing to them, given in the exercise of divine condescension, it ought not to be less considered by us. The promise, or the covenant is also to us and to our children.

Let me then at present ask your attention, whilst I attempt to revive upon your minds a sense of the important obligations which lie upon us for the sanctifying of a weekly Sabbath, for the ends for which it is instituted.

By a Sabbath, in general, we are to understand a certain time, which is set apart from other time, and is appropriated as a day of rest, for the purpose of divine worship, and which is so appropriated by divine appointment. It is to be considered as a cessation from ordinary employment; a time, devoted to the duties of worship.

Now, all who are acquainted with the old testament scriptures, will have perceived that there were several times, which, by the authority of the Divine Legislator, were set apart for the observance of the Jewish nation; and these are called *Sabbaths*; because God had commanded his people to spend them in religious services, and forbidden them on such occasions to engage in any worldly business; such, for instance, were several feast days enumerated in the books of Moses, and such was the great day of expiation. These are to be regarded by us as parts of their ceremonial law, which is now abrogated by the dispensation of the gospel; but over and above these, was a weekly Sabbath, which is solemnly and emphatically impressed in the *moral law*, and was not designed particularly for them; but is of moral obligation to all, and under every dispensation. In confirmation of this we ask you,

I. To observe, that the law of nature, itself, which teaches us that there is a God, doth necessarily pour conviction on our minds, that such a Being is to be worshipped by all his intelligent creatures. And, if worshipped by mankind, that it is highly reasonable that some part or proportion of time should be set apart for this purpose.

Whoever, my hearers, believes in the existence of Deity, believes that he is possessed of every perfection in an infinite degree—that he is the first cause and the last end of all things: the great Creator and Governor of the universe: the sovereign Lord and King of all worlds:

and it would seem to be impossible that it should not thence be concluded, as indisputably reasonable and proper, that all his intelligent creation—his dependent creatures, should bow down before the grandeur of his excellence, and pay their homage to his infinite perfections: that in the very best manner of which they are capable, they should adore his name, and celebrate the exalted glories of his nature. And, moreover, this must be considered reasonable, when we reflect that this God is the author of our lives, the Creator of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits: that he hath afforded us seasons for labor, in which, the hand of diligence may be successfully employed for the purpose of maintainance and emolument, and seasons of rest, in which exhausted nature may be refreshed and restored to vigor and activity. Again,

II. Reason would naturally suggest to us, that, if it be proper that God should be worshipped at all, that it is suitable and highly desirable, that some particular portion of the time which he gives us should be devoted to his service—some time in which the family of man should meet for his service. And, doubtless, it is consistent with that order which is always to be esteemed and preferred, that there should be as much uniformity observed, in this particular, as possible. It is a favorite character which the infinite Jehovah assumes, and in which he presents himself to mankind, when he styles himself the *Father*, and permits us to call him *our* Father. It is then de-

sirable that his children should bring their offerings of prayer and praise as much as may be at the same time, and thus preserve a family likeness, and union in duty: for it would appear offensive to a sense of propriety for those children, members one of another, and especially where, in providence they are placed near together, for some to be working whilst others are worshipping—some diverting themselves with sports and vain amusements, whilst others were dedicating their sacred hours to devotion—some travelling on business or pleasure, or serving mammon instead of God, whilst others, in the sanctuary, were lifting up their hearts and praying “Lord, lift thou up upon us the light of thy countenance. That common social tie which binds man to man, when a general duty is the question, should foster a spirit of accommodation; and doubtless the appropriation of a certain fixed portion of time will be found to comport with such accommodation.

Thus far, then, reason, and conscience, and duty, and the fitness of the thing, will conclude in favor of some exact stated proportion of time to be set apart as *holy time* for the worship of God, not to be intruded upon by worldly wisdom. But then, what is that proportion of time which should be appropriated is a question, perhaps, which reason cannot so easily decide, and much less with that clearness and evidence as to determine it to be every man’s duty to comply with it. The morality of the Sabbath is indeed established as we have seen upon the fitness of reason and the

moral relation of things. The proportion of time to be recognized as holy time is then of acknowledged importance in the arrangement of its duties. And here my Brethren, where reason would be so inclined to reel, God, the great Father, who is himself the supreme object of worship, hath been pleased himself to interfere; and hath given to us his Sabbath in its exact admeasurement and proportion. He hath graciously condescended to determine and appoint that the *seventh* part of time, as a Sabbath of holy rest, should be set apart; wherein we are to abstain from worldly avocations, and religiously to devote ourselves to the sublime duties of godliness, both public and private. And since the sanctification of a Sabbath is in itself evidently rational, and morally fit and necessary, so it was worthy of the great Legislator himself to interpose and hand out to us, for our observance, the time which he would have to be employed in his service. We have then, much reason to feel ourselves happy in this particular, that he, who perfectly knew what measure of time would best comport with all the general cases and circumstances of mankind, should have been pleased herein to determine. Our reason then must give place to the Divine authority, for his counsels are founded in infinite wisdom—just and right is he. Nor have we any doubt, that could we have seen all those reasons and fitnesses which moved upon the Divine mind in this appointment, even, the common sense of mankind would have accorded with its present order and

proportion. We must have given our approbation to the *seventh* part of time, rather than to any other.

Now this arrangement was as early as the completion of the creation; so that, when man entered upon the first day of his first week, he was brought under the law of the Sabbath. In this we are instructed by the divine historian. "The heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them, and on the* seventh day God ended the work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all the 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." Nor can it be denied, that it is most reasonable to suppose, that man, immediately after his creation, when a sense of his Maker's kindness and glory was fresh upon his mind, amidst the guiltless scenes of Paradise, that he should begin his life with adoration of his Creator; and that his Creator would call him to the religious observation of the first day of his existence, which was the seventh from the beginning of God's mighty work, for the same general reasons as he afterwards prescribed to the Jews a weekly Sabbath.

These rational deductions, says a learned writer,‡ are confirmed by facts. It is a fact that

* It is observed by an eminent critic, that the Samaritan text, with the Greek and Syriac versions read, "God ended his work on the sixth day.—Orton's Expos.

† Dr. Kennicott remarks, that the Hebrew word here used carries with it a double idea; first of blessing, secondly of worshipping.

‡ Tappan.

the Patriarchs, long before the Jewish Sabbath, and all, even the most ancient heathen nations, distinguished time into weeks of seven days; which no appearance in nature could have suggested; and which therefore, must have resulted from the appointment of a weekly Sabbath. It is also a fact, that the earliest pagan writers, particularly Homer and Hesiod, speak of the seventh day as peculiarly sacred.* The latter styles this day the "illustrious light of the sun," and the sun was the supreme God of the Pagan world. Homer hath this verse, "then came the seventh day which is holy."

As to the Israelites, when God gave his commandment on Sinai, in the memorable expression "Remember," it implies that they were previously acquainted with a Sabbath of weekly occurrence. In some respects, however, the Jewish Sabbath, on very strong grounds may be considered as a new and peculiar appointment, adapted to their particular circumstances, which, whilst it afforded them the opportunity of celebrating the creation of the world and the divine perfections therein displayed, it was specially to be moreover observed by them, to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt; and on that day they were by divine direction to commemorate that event.† Now, though

* Mr. Selden, in his *Jus. Nat. & Gent. Lib.* 3 ch. 22, completely satisfies us, that Sunday was the first day of the week in the East from the remotest antiquity, and that on this day the idolators worshipped their supreme Deity.

† There is great reason to believe, that the Sabbath of the Israelites was altered with their year at their coming forth from Egypt, and a short at-

we have reason to believe that the Jewish Sabbath was not the primitive Sabbath, but that it was made to appertain to the Jewish polity under the express command of God, "*Thy children shall observe the Sabbath throughout their generations.*" Yet the morality of the Sabbath is not hereby destroyed, but confirmed: and the direct appointment of the seventh part of time is binding upon the world in all ages. The Jewish polity, however, being now terminated by the dispensation of the gospel, the peculiarity of this appointment ceases with it, and of course, without the

tention to this point may not here be improper. The case then seems to be this. At the finishing of the creation, God sanctified the seventh day. This seventh day being the first day of Adam's life, was consecrated by way of first fruits to God, and therefore Adam may reasonably be supposed to have began his computation of the days of the week with the first whole day of his existence. Thus the Sabbath became the first day of the week. But when mankind fell from the worship of the true God, they first substituted the *Sun* in his place, and preserving the same weekly day of worship; but devoting it to the Sun; the Sabbath was thence called Sunday. Thus the Sabbath of the Patriarchs continued to be the Sunday of the idolators 'till the coming up of the Israelites out of Egypt, and then, as God altered the beginning of their year, so he also changed the day of their worship from Sunday to Saturday. The first reason of which might be, that as Sunday was the day of worship among the idolators, the Israelites would be more likely to join with them if they rested on the same day, than if they were to work on that day and serve their God upon another. But a second reason certainly was—in order to perpetuate the memory of their deliverance on that day from Egyptian slavery. For Moses, when he applies the fourth commandment to the particular case of his own people, (Deut. v. 15.) does not enforce it, as in (Exod. xx. 11.) by the consideration of God's resting on the seventh day, which was the Sabbath of the Patriarchs; but binds it upon them by saying—"Remember that thou wast a servant in Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God hath commanded THEE to keep THIS SABBATH DAY." Vid. *Kennicott's Dissert. on the Ob. of Cain and Abel*, p. 134.

need of any further direct command, the christian Sabbath, or the first day of the week, hath attached to it all the sanctity and authority of the primitive Sabbath. It is emphatically called *the Lord's day*—the day in which He, who died for our sins, rose again for our justification; whose grace we know, and the mysteries of whose love we celebrate. The day sanctioned by those inspired men, who were specially taught by Jesus Christ in all things pertaining to his kingdom; who received their commission from his hand to preach the gospel to every creature, and were specially anointed to this office, by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, when the day of Pentecost was fully come; which, also, was the Lord's day. Of this day, they made use, for the purpose of carrying their great commission into effect; and gave the influence of their example, acting as inspired men, for the benefit of the church in after ages; an example, followed by the primitive christians,* without scruple; and therefore, under the certain conviction, that this day was, by divine authority, set apart for divine worship.

The dispensation of the gospel is a new creation, which hath broken in upon us; and the chris-

* Barnabas, in his Epistle, says, p. 56, "That we joyfully celebrate the eighth day, in memory of the resurrection of our Saviour, because, it was on this day, he rose again and ascended into heaven. Ignatius, the martyr, in his letter to the Magnesians, would have us honor this day of the Lord, this day of the resurrection, as the first and most excellent of days. Justin Martyr, says, "That the Christians assemble together on this day, because it was the day of the creation of the world, and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ireneus, Tertullian, Origen, say the same thing. Vid. Calmet's dict. in verb. Sab.

tian Sabbath is a standing memorial, both of the creation of the world and the redemption of man. It is, then, the Sabbath, which we believe, God gave us by creation—it is the Sabbath given us by the resurrection of Christ—it is supported by all the commands of God, as to its proportion of time, for its moral reasons must continue to the end of the world.

This proportion of time, too, is so wisely and kindly adjusted, that it respects all the circumstances of animal nature. It does not break in upon the necessary cares, and business, and labours of life—it does not come so frequent, as to incommode our lawful employments; nor yet is it delayed so long, as in any degree, to lose its efficacy—it is undeniably so adjusted, as, in the very best manner, to answer both the purposes of life and religion.

We have already hinted, that had it been left to mankind to determine what would have been an exact proportion of time, to have set apart for the business of religion, it never would have been settled. Indeed, in the corruption of our nature—in the natural enmity of our hearts towards God, there would have been no Sabbath. But, God hath fixed it. His high authority, mingled with his own wisdom and goodness, hath fixed it. We hear him say, amidst that awful apparatus which flashed on the burning mount, “*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou,*

nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

But it is now time that we should pass on to some special reasons for sanctifying the Sabbath—the Lord's day. And,

1st. Here it is proper that we should begin with the authority of God, as binding upon us the holy observance of this day.

We have already proved the perpetuity of the Sabbath, and shown you the express command of God herein. And surely then can any one, who hears me to-day, suppose that he is left at his own liberty to sanctify or not the holy Sabbath? It is the solemn and awful authority of God, which lies upon that person, and every one of us; and that authority is to be obeyed and not disputed. Will any one presume, even in his own heart, to say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him, and what profit is there in praying to the Most High?"—Sir, he is thy God, and his frown is death!—He will not suffer his authority to be trifled with, nor his law to be violated with impunity. He is angry with the wicked every day. God hath spoken in the most absolute and peremptory manner, and it ought to excite as much caution in you, as it regards the neglect of the Sabbath day, as it should the negligence of any other command.

Perhaps there are some present, who think but little of violating this command, and scruple not to take a journey of business or pleasure, or unnecessarily absent themselves from public worship, who would not dare to steal, or bear false witness; and yet they do not consider that profaning the Sabbath wantonly, and neglecting the worship of God, is as much a breach of the divine commandment as either of those sins would be: for is it not as much the command of God to keep the Sabbath in all the proper exercises of it, as it is not to steal and do no murder.

But, 2dly. The laws of the land and the good of society, oblige us to the sanctification of the Sabbath.

I know that I am speaking in the hearing of some, who are well versed in the history and polity of other nations; and no fact can be better supported, than that almost all nations, lawgivers and states have been convinced of the evident propriety of giving encouragement to the assembling of their people for religious purposes.

They have found by experience that there are no means more excellent for the purpose of strengthening the bands of society; for repressing and restraining private wickedness; for civilizing and moralizing the people; and for the support and maintainance of public justice and virtue; and, in a word, to make mankind enjoy their social connexions, their interest in and their concern for the state and community in which they reside.

Aside from higher considerations, how well calculated are such seasons to inculcate all these moral and social duties—to recommend all public and political virtues; such as justice and honesty and charity and humanity, obedience to the laws and respect for the Magistracy. Hence, all well regulated governments have shewed a regard to religion, as the best method of promoting the interests of society. To this purpose temples have been built—rites and ceremonies instituted, and certain fixed days appointed for the people to assemble for religious purposes. Even was this the case among the heathen nations, who had the most absurd notions concerning the Deity, and the most ridiculous observances in the worship of those whom they called their gods. Yet, even this was deemed too great an advantage to be overlooked. They judged the benefit of society to be connected herewith—and they found it so. It contributed not a little to promote intercourse, affection and agreement among one another.

But how then may we well suppose, that a religion coming to us from heaven, attended with the purest and most divine institutions of worship, will promote all these important purposes to the interests of the state, and the social and civil good of community, to say nothing of the eternal good of mankind. And, accordingly, we have only to open the statute-books of the several states of the Union; and, especially, I would allude to our own, and how excellent and how full are those

laws which are therein found to guard the Sabbath from profanation, and to secure to the worshipper of God a season of sweet tranquility, in which he may serve the Lord without distraction.

Our laws, indeed, have left every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. We may sit under our own vines, and under our own fig-trees, and there are none to make us afraid. Yet, is the Sabbath recognized by the statutes of our country as that sacred time, which is not to be disturbed by the wanton interruptions of the profane, or the intrusions of ungodly men. And, indeed, my hearers, let the Sabbath be abandoned, human and social rights would expire, and the best privileges of man would be buried in its ruins. It was tried once, and what was the result? O let infatuated France tell, by the story of her assassinations—her adulteries—her causeless divorces—the blood which flowed in her streets, from the veins of her infants—her virgins—her philosophers and her priests, in the rage of her infidelity, and the days of her terrible republic!

What then, we ask, from the experience of ages, can be so great a security to any people as the guardian influence of religious institutions—the instructions of the BIBLE—the institutions of CHRISTIANITY—the institution of the Sabbath, which is urged upon us by the consecrated language of an Apostle, “*Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.*”

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Every good man—every benevolent man, were there no other considerations than those which respect outward prosperity, the security of life and property, and limbs—the upholding of justice in its impartial grandeur—the excitement of mercy in gentle pity for the miserable—or the encouragement of charity, with her orphans by her side, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, instructing the ignorant, and drying the tears of the widow—every such man will honor the Sabbath, and lend his cheerful aid to its maintainance and integrity.

Are you then a patriot, and do you love your country? for the love you bear your country, you will honor the Sabbath; or, we will suspect your honesty. Are you a parent, and do you love your children? teach them to honor the Sabbath, by honoring it yourself, and bringing them to the house of God; or we will charge you with a fictitious affection, which overlooks their best education, and neglects the means of their highest happiness. Are you a magistrate, acting under the laws of your state, and, do you suffer the Sabbath to be violated under your eye? We will suppose, you have not well considered the important trust committed to your hands, or the guardian provisions of the country would not be suffered to sleep, under the warrant of your commission.

But, 3dly. There are other advantages connected with the sanctification of the Sabbath, and which afford a reason for its observance.

What so much contributes to personal devotion? "As iron" saith the wise man, "sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend." It has been observed, that there is a sort of contagion in human passions. Every motion of the heart hath a sort of air peculiar to itself; and when we observe in others these visible signs, our own affections will rise within us. Therefore, devotion will be more warm, and the pious elevation of the soul greater, when, in the sanctification of the Sabbath, a full assembly is collected, replete with a sense of the Deity, offering to him a united sacrifice of praise and worship; because of the transcendant perfections of his nature, and the rich display of his surprising grace. It is, brethren, in the sanctuary; in the place where God records his name, that he hath promised to meet his people. When the Sabbath, then, is not sanctified, what are we to conclude; but, that by neglecting this sacred institution, you are so far from growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that the love of God hath never yet warmed your heart—that you are without God, and suffer yourselves to be without hope in the world. It is the Sabbath which has been particularly distinguished as the day of divine influence—the day when God hath been pleased, in the most signal manner, to bestow the richest benefits upon the world. He, therefore, who trifles with this day, would intercept the influences of divine grace—stop the current of mercy in its progress through the world,

and dash from his own lips the cup of salvation!

Lastly. The observance of the Sabbath, in the duties of public worship, has an immediate tendency to fit us for heaven.

A very great part of the exercises of the Sabbath, duly sanctified on earth, bears a strong resemblance to the employments of the heavenly world. Heaven is an eternal Sabbath. There the spirits of just men made perfect approach with delight the seat of the infinite Jehovah. With adoring praise, they pour forth their lively gratitude. With exquisite pleasure, they contemplate the Author of all things, who governs and actuates the immensity of beings, which occupy the universe of life. The hallelujahs of praise break forth in uninterrupted harmony from every angel, and every redeemed sinner. And, my brethren, in the due sanctification of this holy day on earth; in a general consent to worship God; not to speak our own words, nor to think our own thoughts; to have our meditation of God; to croud about his altars; to esteem a day spent in the courts of the Lord's house preferable to a thousand elsewhere: O! this is to congregate with the hosts of glory, and to constitute a heaven upon the earth. Hereby we shall know him who hath sanctified the Sabbath, and be maturing for those enjoyments, where there remaineth a rest, a *Sabbatismos*, for the people of God.

And now let us not forget that the Sabbath, its sanctification, is a *SIGN* between God and us.

All the Sabbaths given to the Jews were memorials between God and them. The weekly Sabbath must, therefore, have been of this character. And unless God be less jealous of his glory now, than he then was, or ceases to claim our worship, we are to regard the christian Sabbath as a sign between God and us. For,

1st. The Sabbath is to be regarded by us a standing sign to us of the perfections of God, as displayed in the works of his hands. It was instituted after he had ceased from all his work; when, therefore, we consider the heavens which he made, the sun, and the moon and the stars, which he ordained; the world also, in which we dwell, with all the variety it contains, what adoring wonder doth it become us to entertain, at such a development of the wisdom, the power and the glory of God! Doubtless, every returning Sabbath is well calculated to remind us of Him, who spake and it was done, who commanded and all things stood fast.

But, He, who is the Creator of all things, is also the Creator of man. He created our bodies out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. He invested us with all our intellectual and moral powers and enstamped upon us his own image. It was with the creation of man, that he finished his great design: And to what purpose did he create us; but, that we should glorify his name and enjoy him forever? How powerfully then, should the Sabbath teach us our obligations to Him who

made us, and the relation in which we stand to God. No one, methinks, can be guiltless, who closes his eyes against the instruction which the Sabbath imparts, and refuses to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

2d. But, over and above this, the christian Sabbath is to us also a rich sign, on the part of God, of what he hath been pleased to effect in our favor as sinners—all our hopes of salvation depend on the event of that day, when Jesus rose from the dead: *For if Jesus Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain.* You are not now, my hearers, to be informed, that altho' man was created in the image of God, and was under unspeakable obligations to love and obey him; yet, man became a sinner; and, hereby, falling from the rectitude of his original nature, he fell under the curse of the law which he had broken; and must inevitably have perished, without hope, unless sovereign grace should interfere, and by a plan, which infinite wisdom could alone devise, *mercy and truth should meet together, righteousness and peace should embrace each other.* Blessed be God, such a plan was formed. He of whom it was written in the volume of the book, *Lo I come to do thy will, O God;* he came in the fullness of time. His credentials were divine. They are to be read in the purity of his person, the splendor and variety of his miracles, the sublimity of his doctrines, and the death which he died. He answered the prophecies of the old testament concerning the Messiah, and his name alone is

given under heaven whereby we must be saved.—
 “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” He, brethren, was delivered for our offences, and he rose again for our justification. In his resurrection from the dead, we have an irrefragable proof of this. It is hereby our faith is confirmed in his person; in the sacrifice which he offered; in the atonement which he made; in his ability to save, and the certainty of eternal life to all who believe in his name. The Sabbath, is a sign to us then, of an obligation to God, both on account of his creating goodness and his redeeming love; and is to be strictly regarded by our expressions of worship and of gratitude, which he so justly claims.

But we must not enlarge—I shall therefore only remark, that our sanctifying or profaning this holy day, is to be considered as a sign which we present to God of the sense which we entertain of our obligations to him, to whom we are indebted for all we enjoy and all for which we hope; himself the greatest, the wisest, the best of all Beings; who hath, in the exercise of an indisputable right, flowing from his own perfections and our dependence upon him, commanded it upon us, that we should “love him with all the heart and soul, and mind, and strength.”

How affecting then is it to reflect, on that sign of our religious and moral character which such

multitudes among us, present to him, who is jealous of his glory, and claims to be worshipped by all his intelligent creation !

I need not at present point out to you the alarming increase of those acts, whereby the sanctity of the Sabbath is violated. You have them before you on our public roads—our natural and artificial rivers—in the indulgence of amusement: the pursuits of business—the occupation of our streets by saunterers and men of boisterous mirth—the neglect of the sanctuary of the Lord's house.

Brethren, these are awful SIGNS indeed ! SIGNS, however, held up before the eye of God. SIGNS which go before us to the judgment of the great day. SIGNS, upon which that award will be eternally justified—"Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me."

But I have done. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

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