In our inquiries concerning the Christian Sabbath, few things are more interesting or instructive than its history. The judicious and worthy author of the following excellent Lectures, has expressed an opinion that the consecration of one day in seven to rest from bodily labor, and to the service of God, may be traced back very distinctly to the close of the work of creation. The reasons which he offers in support of this opinion will not here be repeated. They will probably be deemed sufficiently solid by most readers. From the moment there was a man upon the earth, it seems to have been the will of God that a seventh part of time should be consecrated to his service. It is quite certain that much, very much, is made of the Sabbath throughout the whole of the Old Testament, and, especially, that the Prophets, in all their reflections on the melancholy past, and in all their anticipations of the portentous future,
represent the sanctification of the Sabbath as lying at the foundation of all temporal as well as spiritual prosperity, and the neglect of this divine institution as most certainly drawing down the destroying judgments of God on those who indulged it. This feature of the prophetic parts of the Old Testament, is too prominent to escape the notice of any intelligent reader. The Prophets dwell much more on moral than ceremonial observances; and denounce the terrors of the Almighty much more frequently and solemnly against delinquencies with regard to the former than the latter. Yet who that has read their thrilling pages has failed to observe that the desecration of the Sabbath is the object of their constant and most emphatic proclamations of Divine wrath; and represented as that great and radical sin, which, more than most others, is adapted to undermine religious character, and to destroy nations? In fact, there is no sin, unless, perhaps, it may be that of idolatry, which is more heavily censured, or more awfully threatened, throughout their writings, than the breach of the Sabbath. Surely, such language as the following ought to make a deep impression upon every reflecting mind: Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it. 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. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour your palaces, and it shall not be quenched. Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, and that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. Yet they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my Sabbaths. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and will bring you into the bond of the covenant. Thus saith the Lord, because they have forgotten me, and cast me behind their back, and defiled my sanctuary, and profaned my Sabbaths—Behold, I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled. Thus saith the Lord, because they have profaned my holy things; because they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them; therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon
them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

None, it is presumed, will be surprised at this language, who consider the consecration of one day in seven to the service of God, not as a mere ritual observance, but as an undoubted duty of Moral and Perpetual Obligation. That this is the case with the Holy Sabbath, as laid down in the fourth commandment, is well established by our Author in the second Lecture in the following series. It has been sometimes said, that the fourth commandment, though it holds a place among other commands, all of which are allowed to be of universal and perpetual obligation, cannot now be considered as in force, because it enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week, which is now generally acknow
ledged, among Christians, not to be the Christian Sabbath. This inference, however, can by no means be admitted. The commandment in question cannot be considered as fixing the precise day, in order, which ought to be observed; but only as requiring that, after six days of labor, the seventh should be a day of rest, and be kept holy. Strictly speaking, then, in this sense, the Christian Sabbath is as much the seventh day as the Jewish Sabbath was; that is, it is as much the seventh part of the week, and succeeds to six days of labor as really as the Hebrew Sabbath did. The fourth commandment, then, far from being repealed or altered, is as much in force as ever, and applies as perfectly to the New Testament Sabbath as to that of the Ceremonial economy; and, of course, ought to be regarded as establishing the moral and perpetual obligation to devote one day in seven to the service of God, just as indubitably as other parts of the same code render obligatory at this hour, and will for ever render obligatory, abstinence from idolatry, venerating Jehovah's name, honoring parents, or speaking the truth to our neighbors.

With regard to the change of the Sabbath, under the New Testament dispensation, from the seventh to the first day of the week, the enlightened Author
of the following Lectures has written so well, that further enlargement on the subject in this Introductory Essay is deemed unnecessary. It will be more to our purpose to take a cursory survey of the history of the ancient Church in regard to the observance of this important institution of our holy religion. Mr. Agnew has most correctly stated that the "ancient Fathers of the first and second centuries" testify, that the early Church ever sanctified a weekly Sabbath, and carefully attended to those public and private observances which belonged to it as a day of holy rest. It may not be either uninteresting or useless to state a little more in detail the views and habits in reference to this subject, which the early records of the Church enable us to ascertain.

The younger Pliny, who was the contemporary and friend of the emperor Trajan, and for some time, during the reign of that emperor, governor of Bithynia, in giving an account to his master of the practices of the Christians in his day, states, that "their custom was to meet together early in the morning, before it was light, on a stated day, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and bind themselves, by a Sacrament, to do no evil," &c. From this testimony, it is evident that the early Christians had
a fixed or stated day on which they convened to worship God. The testimony of Ignatius,* who suffered martyrdom early in the second century, is still more explicit. He exhorts the Magnesians "no longer to observe Sabbaths, (i.e. the Jewish Sabbaths,) but to keep the Lord's-day, on which our Life was raised from the dead." Clemens Alexandrinus also speaks of the day under the same title, as a day the observance of which was incumbent on Christians. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, who lived toward the latter part of the second century, is quoted by Eusebius as stating the fact, that the Christians in his time "observed the Lord's-day as a holy day." Melito, bishop of Sardis, who lived about the same time, is also represented by the same historian as having written a book "concerning the Lord's-day." Irenæus, toward the close of the same century, in writing to Victor, bishop of Rome, says "The mystery of

*It is known to all well-informed readers, that the genuineness of the Epistles of Ignatius has been deeply questioned by the most learned divines and ecclesiastical historians who have written for the last two hundred and fifty years. The evidence of interpolation in reference to one subject, is so abundant, that the writer of these pages would never think for a moment of quoting him as a witness on that subject. In reference to other subjects, however, he would quote him freely and without scruple. This is also known to be the opinion of some candid friends of prelacy.
the Lord’s resurrection ought to be celebrated only on the Lord’s-day.” Origen also calls the first day of the week “the Lord’s-day,” and distinguishes it from the Jewish Sabbath, to which he says, un-equivocally, it ought to be preferred.

But when the early Christians had occasion to peak to the Pagans concerning this sacred day, they commonly called it Sunday, the title by which it was most familiarly known to the mass of the heathen population. Thus, Justin Martyr, in his Apology, addressed to the Emperor, says, “We all meet together on Sunday, on which God, having changed darkness and matter, created the world, and on this day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead.” Thus, also, his contemporary, Tertullian, in reply to the accusation of the heathen, that the Christians worshipped the Sun, says, “We do, indeed, make Sunday a day of joy, but for other reasons than that of worship to the sun, which is no part of our religion.” At other times, when the same father is speaking to his fellow Christians, he commonly uses the title of “the Lord’s-day;” more especially when it is his purpose to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath. In like manner, the first Christian emperors use the names “Sunday” and “Lord’s-day” alternately, according as it was their
purpose to address Pagans or Christians. Of this we have a remarkable specimen in the language of Valentinian the younger, when he says, "On Sunday, which our forefathers very properly called 'the Lord's-day.'" In short, it is perfectly evident from the earliest and most authentic records, that the first day of the week, from the time of the Apostles, was statedly observed by the Christian Church; that the favorite title by which they spoke of it, was "the Lord's-day;" and that when they called it "Sunday," it was in accommodation to the popular usage of the Pagans around them, who, in adopting the measure of time by weeks, and in giving names to the days of the week, gave the name of "the day of the sun" (dies solis) to the first.* This day was also sometimes called, by the early Christians, "the day of bread," (dies panis,) because the "breaking of bread," as a memorial of Christ, or, in other words, administering the Lord's supper, in many churches, made a part of the stated service of every Lord's-day.

As to the manner in which the early Christians sanctified the Lord's-day, it may not be uninteresting to state a few particulars. And here it must be borne in mind that the Christians, during the apos

* Bingham's Origines Ecclesiasticae. B. xx. c. ii. 1, 2.
tolic age, and for more than two centuries afterwards, were severely and constantly persecuted. During a large portion of this time, they were not permitted openly to assemble in peace for the public worship of God; but were often obliged to come together by a kind of stealth; before day, or after night-fall. This is evident from the account given by Pliny, before alluded to, who states that the Christians were accustomed to meet before it was light, on this day, and sing their morning hymns to Christ. In like manner, Tertullian, in answer to one who asked how they should celebrate the solemnities of the Lord’s-day, when exposed to the violence of the Pagan soldiery, replied, that they should do it as the Apostles did, by faith, and not by bribing them; for if faith could remove mountains, it could much more easily remove a soldier out of the way. But that, if they could not meet by day, they had the night sufficiently clear, with the light of Christ, to protect them. The same author tells the heathen, who had maliciously charged them with murdering and devouring an infant in their assemblies, that they were often beset, often betrayed, nay, daily seized in their religious assemblies. But yet that no one ever found them acting such a tragedy; no one ever gave evidence
of their being such Cyclops and Syrens before a judge. Nay, they were sometimes barbarously murdered in their assemblies, the laws forbidding them to meet, and the government refusing to license their places of worship, charging them with being unlawful cabals, where they met only to plot treason and rebellion against the rulers. Under this pretence, as Lactantius and Eusebius both tell us, one of the heathen magistrates burnt a whole city, in Phrygia, together with the house in which many of the inhabitants were assembled to worship God. The imperial laws forbidding them to meet for religious worship, are distinctly mentioned by Pliny, as well as by several Christian writers. So that it is evident, that in those days of persecution, the Christians could not meet for the purpose of public worship but at the hazard of their lives.*

Still they did not think this a sufficient reason for "forsaking the assembling of themselves together." In spite of all the opposition and danger which they had to encounter, they met continually, every Lord's-day, to solemnize the appointed services. Of the manner in which they sanctified the day, the learned Bingham makes the following statement.

* Bingham's Origines Ecclesiasticae. B. xx.
"They not only rested from bodily labor, and secular business, but spent the day in such employments as were proper to set forth the glory of the Lord, to whose honor the day was devoted. That is, in holding religious assemblies, for the celebration of the several parts of divine service, as psalmody, reading of the scriptures, preaching, praying, and receiving the communion—all which were the constant service of this day. And such was the flaming zeal of those pious votaries, that nothing but sickness, or a great necessity, or imprisonment, or banishment, could detain them from it; and then, also, care was taken that the chief part of it, the communion, was administered to them by the hands of the Deacons, who carried it to those who were sick or in prison, that, as far as possible, they might still communicate with the public congregation."

This is plain from the account which Justin Martyr gives of their worship: "On the day called Sunday, all that live in city or country meet together, and the writings of the Apostles and Prophets are read to them, after which the bishop or president of the assembly makes a discourse to the people, exhorting them to follow the good things they have heard; then we all rise up together, and offer prayers; and when prayers are ended, bread
and wine and water are brought to the president, who prays and gives thanks, according to the bes. of his ability, over them, the people answering, Amen. After which, distribution is made of the elements to all who are present, and they are sent to the absent by the hands of the deacons.” By this account it appears that all Christians joined, as far as was possible, in the public service of the Lord’s-day, and particularly in receiving the communion, from which the absent were not exempt, if there was any possibility of receiving it.*

In the religious exercises of this day, among the early Christians, there were some peculiarities worthy of notice. They supposed that the first day of the week, as it is observed as a memorial of our Lord’s resurrection, ought to be kept as a season of humble, grateful joy; and, therefore, that there was a kind of spiritual incongruity in fasting on that day. Of course, setting apart the Lord’s-day as a fast-day was considered as a departure from the spirit and purpose of the day. Tertullian says, they counted it a crime to fast on this day; and Ambrose bears the same testimony. Another practice, founded on the same principle, and as rigidly inculcated and enforced, was, in all worship,

* Origines Ecclesiasticæ. xx. 2.
public and private, to *pray standing* on the Lord’s day. On this day it was considered as unlawful to *kneel*. This posture was reserved for days of *fasting* and *humiliation*. The early Christians laid so much stress on this rule, and enforced it so rigidly, that we find no case of exception to the practice, but that of *penitents*, under ecclesiastical discipline, who were required to pray kneeling, even on this day of devout joy. The learned Bingham observes, that this practice was so fixed, general, and long continued, that he is unable to determine when the contrary practice of kneeling on the Lord’s-day was introduced.

But attending on public worship with diligence, and, as it would seem, through a large portion of the hours of every Lord’s-day, was by no means the whole of that sanctification of the day which the early Christians considered as incumbent upon them. They carefully abstained from all servile labor, except what became necessary in discharging works of necessity and mercy. And when the empire became Christian, and, of course, the authority fell into Christian hands, this abstinence from all worldly labor, and all secular employments, was enforced by the imperial laws. The scrupulosity of the Jews, indeed, in the observance of their Sab-
It was not inculcated. It was allowed to labor in fighting, to preserve men's lives against an enemy; in toiling at the helm and oar, to escape the violence of a tempest; in travelling to Church, to attend on the service of God; in dressing food for sustaining life; in delivering man or beast, when in manifest danger of death; in a word, their law on the subject was, that every kind of work was to be abstained from that could be avoided, and the whole of the Lord's-day devoted to the service of God.

Upon the same principle, when the empire became Christian, all proceedings at law were forbidden and suspended; excepting such as were absolutely necessary, or involved the exercise of important charity—such as the regular appointment of curators and guardians for orphans; taking legal measures to guard against injury or loss by fire; or going through the forms necessary for the manumission of slaves. With respect to these, and a variety of similar things specified in their laws, when they could not be postponed without great injury to the cause of humanity, they were allowed to be attended to on the Christian Sabbath, so far as to obviate the evils which would otherwise be incurred.*

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* Bingham, B. xx.
Public and popular amusements were also interdicted, among Christians, on the Lord's-day, from an early period; and when the empire became Christian, were prohibited by law, and under severe sanctions. No ludicrous sports, games, or recreations, however lawful at other times, were allowed on this day. The theatre, the horse-race, the circus, the diversion of hunting, the amusement of dancing, of luxurious feasting, and every kind of dissipating pleasure, were solemnly forbidden, and in many cases visited with heavy penalties. In short, the law of the Church forbade every occupation or amusement which was adapted in any measure to turn a day of spiritual and sacred rest, into a day of carnal indulgence.

In regard to the utility and importance of the Lord's-day, Mr. Agnew has acquitted himself so well, that little need be added to his representation of the subject. It is probable, however, that if our author had prepared his Lectures for the press within the last three months, he would have taken some notice of a most interesting body of testimony recently presented to a Committee of the British House of Commons, appointed to deliberate and report on some further provision for securing the observance of the Sabbath. A mass of testimony
has seldom been presented to the public on any subject more adapted to instruct and impress than that of which I speak. Ecclesiastics, and secular men, of different professions, were called before the Committee, and interrogated as to their belief of the utility of the Sabbath; the mischiefs arising from its neglect; and their acquaintance with any facts which were adapted to manifest the value and the necessity of this great and inestimable Christian Institution. It was truly edifying and deeply impressive to find ministers of the Gospel, worldly men, eminent Physicians, as well as those who were distinguished in other walks of secular life, all concurring in the conclusion, not only that the consecration of one day in the week, as a day of sacred rest, is essential to the moral and spiritual interests of men, but that it is no less essential to their intellectual and physical well-being: that the Physician and the Lawyer as really need a day of rest in each week from the toils of their respective professions—to refresh and invigorate their minds as well as their bodies, and to prevent the mischiefs of exhaustion—as the moral man and the Christian need a sanctified Sabbath to benefit their souls, and prepare them for the joys of that
Eternal Sabbath which remains for the people of God.

Is it possible for a reflecting mind to resist the power of such testimony as this? Can even the atheist, who wishes well to the physical constitution of his species, and to the peace, order and strength of civil society, refuse any longer to yield to the light of testimony which indubitably establishes—if "all men are not liars"—that the weekly rest of the Sabbath cannot be dispensed with without deep injury to every individual and family in the community; without impairing the vigor both of our bodies and minds; without prematurely destroying the beasts which serve us; without laying the foundation of disease in every department of our nature: in short, without conferring a morbid character upon all the vitals of our temporal prosperity, to say nothing of that corruption of moral principle, that degradation of moral character, in a word, those countless forms, and that measureless amount, of moral evil to which it inevitably leads?

The truth is, it would seem that the great Governor of the world has not more deeply or indelibly impressed upon our whole nature the evidence that food and sleep and temperance are indispensable to the healthful exercise of our faculties, than that the
regular observance of the weekly Sabbath is essential to the security of all our best interests as intellectual, corporeal and moral beings; and that just in proportion as we disregard it, we draw down upon ourselves physical and moral injury. It is not necessary to our reception of this fact, that we are able to fathom all its reasons. It is enough that the fact be established, and by testimony which cannot be suspected of leaning to the side of what it has been convenient for some to stigmatize under the name of "puritanical strictness."

The subject of the following Lectures, then, is one which does not merely concern the Christian. It is a subject in which every father of a family who wishes to train up his children in the paths of honor and usefulness,—every good citizen, every patriot, every statesman, every friend to the best intellectual and physical culture of his species, ought to take a deep and cordial interest. He who contemns and disregards the Lord's-day, may think that he means well; may make high professions of his patriotism, and boast of his light and benevolence; but he is undoubtedly acting a part hostile to the best interests of the community. He is, undoubtedly, exerting a pestiferous influence, the mischief of which may extend further, and last
longer than the most zealous advocate for the sanctification of the day was ever able to unfold.

The practices of many decent worldly men in our community, who, though they make no profession of practical piety, yet claim to be cordial respecters of religion, and to be friendly to the Sabbath; and the habits of some inconsistent professors of religion, in regard to the observance of this sacred day; are such as well deserve their serious consideration. They allow that the Sabbath is a divine institution, and of inestimable importance. That, as it secures a regular suspension, one day in seven, of worldly labor; a careful cleansing from the dust and dirt of the week, and appearing in decent habiliments; a serious and orderly attendance on public worship; and an opportunity of the most favorable kind for meditating on moral and spiritual subjects; it ought to be countenanced and maintained by every well-wisher to human happiness. Yet they argue and act upon the principle, that what is called the "strict" method of sanctifying the Sabbath is not binding upon Christians at present. But that, after the usual attendance on public worship, it is innocent and useful to indulge in a little relaxation—in social visiting—in riding abroad for health and pleasure—and in moderate,
well-regulated *feasting* with select friends. To these things they frequently add, the perusal of *newspapers* and *novels*, the writing of *letters* on business, and the various forms of private and social amusement which are adapted to kill time, and to obviate the intolerable weariness which the exercises of religion are apt to induce in the minds of those who have but little taste for them.

Could such persons take even a glance, with Christian eyes, at the natural and unavoidable consequences of their conduct; could they trace with intelligence and candor the immediate and obvious effects of the indulgences which they think so innocent; they could not possibly fail of coming to the conclusion, that their habits are essentially hostile to the best interests of religion and society. Are not their social visiting, their rides of pleasure, and their luxurious feasting, adapted to turn away their minds from the spiritual employments which ought to occupy the day, and to diminish their taste for such occupations? When such amusements immediately follow the public service of the sanctuary, do they not tend to banish from the mind all those serious impressions which that service may have induced? Do not all these dissipating employments necessarily occupy *servants*, and compel *them* to be
absent from the house of God, to engage in servile labor, often as great, and sometimes much greater, than is common on the secular days of the week, and thus cut them off from all the advantages of the Sabbath? And can any one doubt that even the short hours which those who indulge in these habits actually spend in the sanctuary of God, are rendered much less profitable, if their profit be not wholly destroyed, by the dissipating influence of social amusements, or by the heaviness which is the natural consequence of luxurious feasting? In short, is it not evident that these encroachments on the appropriate sanctification of the Sabbath, are not merely adapted to rob God of a large part of that holy time which he claims as his own; but also to unfit those who indulge in them for employing in a suitable manner even the remaining hours which they professedly devote to his service? Thus they "wrong their own souls;" injure their servants; set an example to their neighbors which can scarcely fail of exerting a mischievous influence to an undefinable extent; and render the Sabbath as an appointment of God, less beneficial to all around them.

Besides, every thinking and conscientious man, as he will endeavor to "do to others as he would
that they should do to him?" so he will feel bound to act, in all cases, upon principles which he would be willing should be **the principles of universal action**. Now, suppose every member of this nominally Christian community were to spend his Sabbaths, as is actually done by those of whom I have just spoken. Suppose **all** were to employ a large part of every Lord's-day in visiting, in riding abroad, in feasting, and in the various forms of more decent dissipation in which thousands of nominal Christians think it harmless to indulge: who does not see that the Sabbath would be the most busy, stirring, and even laborious day in the week? Who does not see that all the domestics in society, all the animals which serve us, and all the individuals who live by ministering to the wants and the comforts of others, as well as those to whom they minister, would find the Sabbath the most busy day in the week, and little, very little, either of time or of heart left for its appropriate employments?

It is perfectly manifest, then, that if we desire to sanctify the Sabbath in such a manner as will, in any tolerable degree, secure to ourselves, our servants, our domestic animals, and the community at large, the essential benefits of the day, it can only
be accomplished by "a holy resting all the day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as may be taken up in works of necessity and mercy." Just in proportion as we deviate from this plain, simple, and Christian view of the subject, we nullify the Sabbath, as to its main design, and destroy its most hallowed and precious influence both on ourselves and others.

The following eloquent appeal, by a distinguished Layman, of the British Parliament, cannot be read without feeling that it is worthy of the most serious consideration of all who bear the Christian name.

"Let us appeal to that day which is especially devoted to the offices of religion. Do they joyfully avail themselves of this blessed opportunity of withdrawing from the business and the cares of life; when, without being disquieted by any doubt, whether they are not neglecting the duties of their proper callings, they may be allowed to detach their minds from earthly things, that by a fuller knowledge of heavenly objects, and a more habitual acquaintance with them, their hope may grow full of immortality?" Is the day cheerfully devo-
ted to those holy exercises for which it was appointed? Do they indeed 'come into the courts of God with gladness?' And how are they employed when not engaged in the public services of the day? Are they busied in studying the word of God, in meditating on his perfections, in tracing his providential dispensations, in admiring his works, in revolving his mercies, (above all the transcendant mercies of redeeming love,) in singing his praises, and 'speaking good of his name?' Do their secret retirements witness the earnestness of their prayers, and the warmth of their thanksgiving, their diligence and impartiality in the necessary work of self-examination, their mindfulness of the benevolent duty of intercession? Is the kind purpose of the institution of a Sabbath answered by them in its being made to their servants and dependants a season of rest and comfort? Does the instruction of their families, or of the more poor and ignorant of their neighbors, possess its due share of their time? If blessed with talents, or with affluence, are they sedulously employing a part of their interval of leisure in relieving the indigent, and visiting the sick, and comforting the sorrowful, in forming plans for the good of their fellow-creatures, in considering how they may promote both the temporal and
spiritual benefit of their friends and acquaintance, or, if their’s be a larger sphere, in devising measures whereby, through the divine blessing, they may become the honored instruments of the more extended diffusion of religious truth? In the hours of domestic or social intercourse, does their conversation manifest the subject of which their hearts are full? Do their language and demeanor show them to be more than commonly gentle, and kind, and friendly, free from rough and irritating passions?"

"Surely, an entire day should not seem long amidst these various employments. It might well be deemed a privilege thus to spend it in the more immediate presence of our heavenly Father, in the exercises of humble admiration, and grateful homage; of the benevolent, and domestic, and social feelings, and of all the best affections of our nature, prompted by their true motives, conversant about their proper objects, and directed to their noblest end; all sorrow mitigated, all cares suspended, all fears repressed, every angry emotion softened, every envious, or revengeful, or malignant passion expelled; and the bosom, thus quieted, purified, enlarged, ennobled, partaking almost of a measure of the heavenly happiness, and become for a while,
the seat of love, and joy, and confidence, and harmony."

"The nature, and uses, and proper employments of a Christian Sabbath, have been pointed out more particularly, not only because the day will be found, when thus employed, eminently conducive, through the Divine blessing, to the maintenance of the religious principle in activity and vigor; but also because we must all have had occasion often to remark, that many persons, of the graver and more decent sort, seem not seldom to be nearly destitute of religious resources. The Sunday is with them, to say the best of it, a heavy day; and that larger part of it which is not claimed by the public offices of the church, dully draws on in comfortless vacuity, or, without improvement, is trifled away in vain and unprofitable discourse. Not to speak of those who, by their more daring profanation of this sacred season, openly violate the laws, and insult the religion of their country,—how little do many seem to enter into the spirit of the institution, who are not wholly inattentive to its exterior decorums! How glad are they to qualify the rigor of their religious labors! How hardly do they plead against being compelled to devote the whole of the day to religion; claiming to themselves no small merit for
giving up to it a part, and purchasing, therefore, as they hope, a right to spend the remainder more agreeably! How dexterously do they avail themselves of any plausible plea for introducing some week-day employment into the Sunday, whilst they have not the same propensity to introduce any of the Sunday’s peculiar employment into the rest of the week! How often do they find excuses for taking journeys, writing letters, balancing accounts; or, in short, doing something, which, by a little management, might probably have been anticipated; or which, without any material inconvenience, might be postponed! Even business itself is recreation, compared with religion; and from the drudgery of this day of sacred rest, they fly for relief to their ordinary occupations.”

“Others, again, who would consider business as a profanation, and who still hold out against the encroachments of the card-table, get over much of the day, and gladly seek for an innocent resource, in the social circle, or in family visits, where it is not even pretended that the conversation turns on such topics as might render it in any way conducive to religious instruction or improvement. Their families, meanwhile, are neglected; their servants robbed of Christian privileges; and their example
quoted by others, who cannot see that they are themselves less religiously employed, while playing an innocent game at cards, or relaxing in the concert-room."

"But all these several artifices, whatever they may be, to unhallow the Sunday, and to change its character, (it might be almost said to 'relax its horrors,') prove but too plainly, however we may be glad to take refuge in religion, when driven to it by the loss of every other comfort, and to retain as it were a reversionary interest in an asylum which may receive us when we are forced from the transitory enjoyments of our present state; that in itself it wears to us a gloomy and forbidding aspect, and not a face of consolation and joy; that the worship of God is with us a constrained and not a willing service, which we are glad therefore to abridge, though we dare not to omit it."*

Another testimony from a layman, and a statesman, still more illustrious—I mean Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the British Court of King's Bench, and one of the most learned and able men of the seventeenth century—is in the following strong language—language worthy of being inscribed in letters of gold in every Christian dwell-

* Wilberforce's Practical View. Chap. IV. Sec. 2.
ing on earth. It is contained in a letter to his grand-children, toward the close of a long, active, and eminently useful life.

"I will acquaint you with a truth that above forty years' experience, and strict observation of myself, hath assuredly taught me. I have been near fifty years a man as much conversant in business, and that of moment and importance, as most men; and I will assure you, I was never under any inclination to fanaticism, enthusiasm, or superstition."

"In all this time, I have most industriously observed, in myself and my concerns, these three things—first, whenever I have undertaken any secular business on the Lord's-day, (which was not absolutely and indispensably necessary,) that business never prospered and succeeded well with me."

"Nay, if I had set myself that day but to forecast or design any temporal business, to be done or performed afterwards, though such forecast and design were just and honest in themselves, and had as fair a prospect as could be effected, yet I have been always disappointed in the effecting of it, or in the success of it. So that it grew almost proverbial with me, when any importuned me to any secular business that day, to answer them, that if they sus-
pected it to succeed amiss, then they might desire my undertaking of it upon that day. And this was so certain an observation of me, that I feared to think of any secular business that day, because the resolution then taken would be disappointed or unsuccessful."

"That always the more closely I applied myself to the duties of the Lord's-day, the more happy and successful were my business and employments of the week following. So that I could, from the loose or strict observance of that day, take a just prospect, and true calculation of my temporal successes in the ensuing week."

"Though my hands and mind have been as full of secular business, both before and since I was a judge, as it may be any man's in England, yet I never wanted time in my six days to ripen and fit myself for the business and employments I had to do, though I borrowed not one minute from the Lord's-day to prepare for it by study, or otherwise. But, on the other hand, if I had at any time borrowed from this day any time for my secular employments, I found it did further me less than if I had let it alone: and, therefore, when some years' experience, upon a most attentive and vigilant observation, had given me this instruction, I grew
peremptorily resolved never in this kind to make a breach upon the Lord’s-day, which I have now strictly observed for above thirty years. This relation is most certainly and experimentally true, and hath been declared by me to hundreds of persons, as I now declare it to you.”

If this be so—if every desecration of the Lord’s-day be not only a sin against God, but also against our own interest and happiness—how great is the infatuation as well as the guilt of those, in high and in low places, who seem to think that every portion of time they can filch from this holy day, and devote to their pleasures or their gains, is so much clear profit! They may make their robbery of God a source of temporary gain; but it will be gain loaded with a curse. The Lord of the Sabbath can and will, sooner or later, avenge his own cause, and manifest that the prosperity sought and acquired by such impious means is anything but a real blessing.

The advance of our country, within the last ten years, in what is expressed by the general term of “internal improvement,” is, in some respects, a most animating spectacle. To see our principal rivers navigated by so many beautiful and convenient Steam-Boats; and every part of our union
intersected by *Canals* and *Rail-Roads*, furnishing facilities of intercourse of the most extraordinary kind, and binding together the most distant parts of our confederated republics by ties more powerful than Constitutions and Laws can form—presents to the patriot a prospect of the most intense interest. But, if that patriot be an intelligent *Christian*, he will perceive in this extended scene *one feature* which will fill him with anguish and deep apprehension. I refer to that deplorable profanation of the Lord’s-day which is so conspicuous on *all* the lines of our Steam-Boats, Canals, and Rail-Roads, and on *some* of them so obtrusively and shamefully conspicuous, as if the object were to insult as well as to rob God; and to render public feeling as speedily and as thoroughly as possible callous to the outrage on all religious decorum, by giving to it all possible familiarity and publicity. Is it not a fact, that, in a community nominally Christian, and in the midst of the richest Gospel privileges, our public conveyances are studiously made so attractive, by cheapness of fare, by crowds, and by every species of public allurement, in their Sabbatical excursions, that their gains are far greater on that day, than on any other day of the week? What is this but realizing anew, in substance, the old "Book of
Sports," so famous in the land of our fathers, and so hateful to the memory of every intelligent Christian? With this material difference, that the profanations of the sacred day which we lament among ourselves, though countenanced by multitudes of nominal Christians, are not yet sanctioned by legal authority, nor proclaimed with approbation from our pulpits.

It is hardly necessary to ask, in the language of his own word—"Shall not God be avenged on such practices as these?" The truth is, they carry a curse with them. The malediction of a holy God is manifest in the characteristics which accompany, and in the consequences which uniformly follow in their train. They are naturally, I had almost said unavoidably, connected with so much intemperance, impiety, profaneness, domestic disorder, waste of precious time, and the contraction of various corrupting habits; so much adapted to attract and assemble the profligate, and to render them still more hardened and expert in wickedness—that no one who has witnessed them once, can ever doubt that, as they originate in impiety, so they tend indefinitely to deepen and extend those corrupt habits which destroy domestic peace, and poison all the fountains of social and political happiness.
O that, in these circumstances, we had some pious and faithful Nehemiah, or Ezekiel,—as in days of old,—to stand up before this whole nation and, as the Lord's witness, to bear testimony against the violation of the Sabbath, and to call the people to repentance and reformation! Above all, O that when, in this respect, "the enemy is coming in like a flood," and when so many who occupy high places in society are, practically at least, joining the ranks of the adversary, and cheering him on, the Spirit of the Lord might "lift up a standard against him," and thus save us from that aggravated guilt, and those national judgments, from which it would require a course of miracles to deliver us unless we repent and reform!

After all, however, there is no hope of the Sabbath being really sanctified, in any scriptural, or truly edifying manner, unless there be some taste for its appropriate duties. There may be, indeed, without this, a mere negative observance, in other words, a decent abstinence from outward and disreputable violations of the day. But unless there be some relish for the spiritual employments of the Sabbath; unless there be some degree of taste for the retired and appropriate employments of the devout worshipper, there can be no genuine, accepta-
ble sanctification of the day. The public eye may be satisfied; but the individual himself will no rea any spiritual advantage. There may be a frigid, inoffensive observance; but there will be no eal Sabbath, to benefit the Church as a body, or to dify the individual Christian.

Hence the exceeding great importance of endeavoring to train up children and youth, from their earliest years, in an habitual and deep reverence for the Lord's-day. Connected with this thought, it has often occurred to the writer of these introductory pages, to ask, whether some method might not be adopted to dispel the gloominess which children, in pious families, are too apt to connect with the scriptural and becoming observance of this holy day? He who should frame any plan for accomplishing, in a good degree, this object, would be a real benefactor to the Church and to the world. It cannot be doubted that the object may be, in some measure, attained by wise management. No attempt will be made, at present, to propose a distinct plan for this purpose. Yet if the suggestion of a few hints on the subject should be the means of exciting some more competent counsellors to improve and extend them hereafter, the writer will be abundantly rewarded.
The difficulty most serious, among children, and most desirable to be avoided, is making the exercises of the Sabbath a mere drudgery. Whatever, then, can be done to prevent this, and to cause the youthful mind to take an interest in the reading, and in the subjects of study prescribed, instead of regarding them as an irksome task, will be a most important gain in this matter. With respect to children from five to ten years of age, various methods may be adopted to awaken their curiosity, and engage their attention. Selections from the Bible, especially of the historical kind, accompanied by illustrative cuts and prints, addressed to the eye, and commented upon by parents or other teachers, can scarcely fail of exciting and gratifying the tenderest minds. Other pious works, adapted to the weakest capacities, and illustrated and adorned in the same manner, for the sake of diversifying the objects of attention, would naturally be productive of the same effects. In regard to children more advanced and intelligent, the happiest results have flowed from their being required every Sabbath, immediately after returning from the hearing of each sermon, to reduce the substance of it to writing, and to read the notes so taken, as an exercise on Sabbath evening. This leads to increased attention in hearing;
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to habits of review and reflection afterwards; and to those various forms of intellectual effort, which at once interest and gratify the youthful individual at the time, and gradually, but most surely, promote the strengthening and enlargement of his faculties; to say nothing of that growth in solid theological and scriptural knowledge, which is more important than all the rest, and which is thus acquired by means of a process which may, doubtless, be so managed as to be regarded less as a task than as a recreation.

To these exercises might be added others, equally calling for pleasant effort to most young minds, and equally adapted to promote the intelligent study of the Scriptures. Such as giving to each youth a select portion from the word of God, to be the subject of study and writing; for example, a striking character—as that of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, Peter, or John;—a type; a miracle; a prominent historical fact—as the flood, the tower of Babel, the departure out of Egypt, the expulsion and destruction of the Canaanites, the building of the Temple, the Babylonish captivity the circumstances of the Saviour's birth, the final destruction of Jerusalem, &c. If subjects of this nature were given to young people, from ten to six-
teen or eighteen years, to be considered and written upon, and access to commentators and other good helps freely afforded them,—how much improvement might not result from the exercise, both to the children themselves, and their parents or instructors in reviewing their work? Christian parents would have an additional inducement, in these circumstances, to provide their families with the best Commentaries within their reach, and with a small selection of good books, which would be connected with a sensible enlargement of the habits of reading and thinking,—and, of course, the best kind of reading,—both among young and old.

Besides the employments above suggested, there might be other scriptural exercises assigned, no less adapted to interest the youthful mind, to bring it in contact with the Bible, and, at once, to store it with sacred knowledge, and to beget habits of reflection. Such, for example, as selecting some conspicuous, leading text of Scripture on a given subject, and requesting children to search out, and array in their order, parallel texts; and also presenting certain moral and theological topics for consideration—as the sin of lying—disobedience to parents—forgiveness of injuries—the folly of worldly ambition—the advantages of humility—remarkable answers
to prayer—the duty of patience—the sin of evil-speaking, &c.,—and inducing them briefly to put their thoughts on such topics on paper, in the form of short essays, and deriving support to the opinions which they express both from reason and Scripture. Were exercises of this kind, occasionally alternated, and otherwise diversified, assigned to children and young people, from Sabbath to Sabbath; and assigned not so much as a task, as a privilege, and, if possible, as a reward, and with all those circumstances of kindness and even of occasional approbation, where it can be sincerely bestowed, which wise and pious parents know how judiciously to employ—the consequences might be confidently expected, by the divine blessing, to be both pleasant and salutary;—to render such children familiar with the Bible, without making its perusal a burden; and to enable them to understand its contents without the formality of reminding them at every step that this was the purpose. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that if this plan of spending the intervals of public worship on the Lord's-day, were zealously adopted, and wisely pursued, it would render that day the pleasantest day of the week to children—and cause them to anticipate its return with interest, and be almost sorry when it came to an end; while
it would make the carrying into execution the plan, on the part of parents, as delightful and instructive to themselves, as it could be to their beloved offspring.

But on these suggestions it would be improper further to enlarge. To Christian parents of sincere and intelligent piety, the slightest hints will be sufficient to set their minds at work in the execution of plans which may be endlessly modified by the peculiar situation of themselves or their children. Let it only be observed, that the great master principle of all sound education,—and of the moral and religious part of it, as well as every other,—is as early as possible to teach them to think—to impart to them an interest in thinking—and, above all, to make thinking on the contents of the Bible interesting and delightful.

One topic more, and these introductory remarks will be closed. The worthy Author of the following Lectures generally speaks of the Lord's-day under the title of the Sabbath. To this title some have objected; alleging, that as that was the title of the Jewish day of rest, and as we deem it important to distinguish between the Old Testament rest on the seventh day of the week, and that of the first day of the week, under the New Testament
economy; so we ought to employ a different word, in all cases, to designate the latter day. This objection seems to have but little foundation either in reason or Scripture. It is undoubtedly true, that, in the second and third centuries, we find the Christian Fathers carefully distinguishing between the Jewish "Sabbath," and the "Lord's-day:" because, when the change in the day occurred, it was insisted by the Jewish converts, who formed the great body of the first Christians, that the seventh day ought still to be consecrated to the worship of God. The Gentile Christians, therefore, in order to conciliate the Jews, and allure them into the Church, honored their Sabbath; so that, for several hundred years, both days were considered as holy days, and devoted to religious purposes, through the greater part of Christendom. The Eastern and Western Churches, indeed, were not entirely of one mind as to the precise character of that celebration of the Jewish Sabbath, which ought to be adopted by Christians. Hence, in the East, the seventh day of the week was generally observed as a festival, as well as the first; while in the West, it was generally kept as a fast. This diversity of practice, and the degree of collision which grew out of this diversity, rendered it, not merely convenient, but
absolutely necessary, that the distinction between the two days should be constantly maintained. Hence the exhortation by Ignatius, quoted in a preceding page,—"No longer to observe Sabbaths but to keep the Lord's-day." In short, the language used by the early Christians, when speaking of this day, seems to have been constantly dictated by the occasion on which they spoke, and the persons addressed. The apostolic writers commonly style it the "first day of the week," because their minds were full of it as a precious memorial of their Master's glorious resurrection from the dead on that day. Toward the close of the century, and a long time afterwards, the favorite title of the day was the "Lord's-day," as an affectionate memento of the whole character and work of Him to whose kingdom and honor it was devoted. When the early Christians had occasion to speak of this day to the heathen, they called it, as we have before seen, "Sunday," in conformity with the Pagan title given to the first day of the week. And when they were called to distinguish between this day and the Jewish Sabbath, which they also kept, but with less solemnity, they called it by any of the names before mentioned, but more commonly than otherwise by that of the "Lord's-day."
If it be asked what title ought to be given to this season of sacred rest, by us, at the present day, I answer, the name is of small importance, provided it be distinctly understood. Perhaps, however, "the Lord's-day" is, on the whole, the most eligible title, and it were to be wished it might be brought into general use, as the most strictly appropriate, and evangelically expressive. But this object can probably never be attained. There is something about this title which will for ever prevent it from being familiar on the popular lip. On the other hand, it is to be lamented that the Pagan title of "Sunday" has taken such deep root in the nomenclature of Christian society. The early Christians seldom used it, but when they were addressing the Pagans. And although it would be going to an extreme in scrupulousness to plead a conscientious objection to the use of this title, because it is Pagan in its origin, which would equally apply to all the other days of the week; yet there seems to be some solid reason for choosing a Bible name for that day which is so important for keeping alive religion in our world, and which holds so conspicuous a place in the language of the Church of God. Among all the names answering this description, the title of "the Sabbath," or "the Christian Sabbath," is,
in my opinion,—next to the "Lord's-day,"—decisively the most eligible. I, therefore, have no objection to Mr. Agnew's adoption of this title throughout his work. It is convenient, expressive, and unexceptionable.

Among other objections to the use of the term "Sabbath," as expressive of the Lord's-day, it has been incautiously alleged, that "the only bodies of professing Christians, throughout Christendom, who apply this term to the first day of the week, are the Church of Scotland, the Dissenters in England, and their descendants in America: that in this application it is unknown among the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, and throughout all the Protestant Churches on the continent of Europe." This statement is entirely incorrect. The term "Sabbath" is undoubtedly applied to the first day of the week in the Homilies of the Church of England; in the "Acts of the Synod of Dort," which, as every one knows, speak the authoritative language of the Church of Holland; in the "Ecclesiastical Polity" of "the judicious Hooker;" in the writings of Bishop Pearson, of Bishop Horsley, of Bishop Porteus, of the eloquent Wilberforce, of Dr. Thomas Scott, the pious and excellent Commentator, of Messieurs Jones, of Nayland, Robinson
of Leicester, and Cooper, of Hamstal Ridwace, of the Christian Observer, of London, and of a host of other English and Continental writers, of the most elevated character. So far, then, as Protestant authority goes, the suffrages in favor of this title are widely extended, and of unquestionable respectability.

On the whole, then, though I prefer the title "the Lord's-day," as more strictly appropriate to the New Testament economy, and more evangelical than any other; yet I can by no means feel the force of the objections to the terms "the Sabbath," and "the Christian Sabbath." Either of these terms is, assuredly, more likely to be received into popular use than "the Lord's-day." It is a scriptural term, used in a commandment, which I have no doubt is unrepealed, and still obligatory on Christians. It is a perfectly expressive term, designating the day as a day of rest from servile labor, and all worldly employments; and intended, also, to be a standing commemoration of Jehovah's rest from the work of creation; and of our Divine Saviour's rest (if the expression may be allowed) from the labors, the sufferings, and the humiliation of the work of Redemption. These ideas surely give to the term Sabbath, under the New Testament economy, as
appropriate a meaning, both *philological* and *theological*, as ever it had under the former dispensation.

But it will be improper longer to detain the reader from the following Lectures. They will well reward his perusal; and my prayer is, that they may be extensively circulated and useful.

*Princeton July 30th, 1833.*