

The Christian Sabbath Examined, Proved, Applied, Chapter 6

The Sanctifying of the Sabbath

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The Sabbath is not just a day of rest; it is a day of rest *in order that the people of God may devote themselves to holy exercises*. “To raise this notion of desisting from work to the primary and main idea of the sabbath was the error of Phariseism, always severely condemned by the Lord. It is very evident that one may completely refrain from doing any work on the first day of the week, and yet so crowd the day with his own work, with speaking his own words and following after his own pleasure, that for him the day becomes of all days most unholy. It is therefore important that we bear in mind from the outset that rest and idleness are not identical. In fact, that we desist from daily labor on the first day of the week has its purpose in the positive notion that we should fill the day with other activities, with the work of God and for *the rest*.”¹ While it is true that a person should live holy throughout the week and engage in daily prayer, Bible study, psalm singing, private and family devotions; the Lord’s day (unlike other days) is *wholly* sanctified. On other days devotion to God must be fit in around the duties of business or school and other activities, but the sabbath day is *totally* devoted to God. “The Sabbath-rest resembles that of heaven, which is a rest without a rest, wherein the soul is most busy and active, serving the Lord without weariness.”²

1. Public Worship

The sabbath day is the day that God has set aside for the public worship of Himself. This involves preaching from the Bible,³ reading the Word of God,⁴ the administration of the sacraments,⁵ the giving of tithes,⁶ hearing the Word of God,⁷ prayer to God,⁸ and the singing of

¹ Hoeksema, 3:256.

² Boston, 2:196. “Q. 35. How much of the Sabbath is to be spent in the public and private exercises of God’s worship? A. The *whole* of it, from the ordinary time of rising on other days, to the ordinary time of going to rest; [except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy]” (*Fisher’s Catechism*, p. 69). Does this mean that every waking moment on the Sabbath involves preaching, Scripture reading, psalm singing, etc.? No. While the day does include more of what people usually identify as private devotions and family devotions, it means that all conversation, meditation and thought on the Lord’s day are focused upon Christ, His Word and work. It means that even after public and private *formal* exercises of worship are concluded, the worship of God continues in our hearts, minds and souls.

³ Mt. 26:13; Mk. 16:15; Ac. 9:20, 17:10, 20:8; 1 Cor. 14:28; 2 Tim. 4:2.

⁴ Mk. 4:16-20; Ac. 1:13, 13:15, 16:13; 1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:13.

⁵ Mt. 26:26-29, 28:19; Ac. 20:11; 1 Cor. 11:24-25. The neglect of public worship on the Lord’s Day shows not only a total disregard of the fourth commandment, but also a disregard of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper and God’s visible church. God instituted a government—an authority structure—for His visible church. The administration of the Lord’s supper is to be done on the Lord’s day by a duly-appointed minister of the gospel. The Lord’s supper is a public ordinance that is only for members of Christ’s visible church. It also is only to be taken after the preaching of God’s Word. In the Lord’s supper, Christ’s death is showed forth. Believers, by faith, spiritually feed upon Christ and are made “partakers of his body and blood with all his benefits.” To purposely avoid becoming a member of Christ’s visible church, and especially to spurn the Lord’s table, is in a sense a form of *self-excommunication*. In the parable of the wedding feast those who refused to come because of various excuses (business, etc.) were cast into

psalms.⁹ Those who believe and teach that church attendance and public worship are optional do not understand the Scriptures. Those who claim Christ as Savior, yet neglect the public gathering of God's covenant people on the Lord's day, the day specifically set aside to honor Jesus Christ, are Christ-dishonoring hypocrites. "The New Testament sabbath being observed on the first day of the week, is without doubt designed particularly for the honor of Christ, and to be celebrated as an abiding memorial of his resurrection from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and our accepted surety: for, as by dying he paid our debt, being 'delivered for our offenses,' so by his resurrection he took out our acquittance, for he 'was raised again for our justification,' Rom. iv. 25. The advancement of that despised Stone to be the head of the corner, was that which made this day remarkable, Ps. cxviii. 22, 24; and they who despise this dignified day, do in effect still trample upon that exalted Stone."¹⁰ When God has given us six days in which to conduct our affairs, the missing of public worship for sleep, business or personal pleasure is inexcusable. The state of our hearts is proved by our outward actions (Mt. 6:16-20); to neglect the public honoring of Jesus Christ for any reason other than illness or emergency proves that one's love and allegiance to Christ are a sham.¹¹

2. Family Worship

The Lord's day is also a day for family worship.¹² This places a special responsibility upon heads of households to lead by example, to lead their families in worship and

outer darkness (Mt. 22:1-14). Although this parable applies specifically to those who reject the gospel, what about those who spurn the Lord's table in order to sleep in or go to the beach, etc.?

⁶ 1 Cor. 16:1-2.

⁷ Lk. 2:46, 4:20; Ac. 8:31, 20:9; Rom. 10:41; Jas. 1:22.

⁸ Dt. 22:5; Mt. 6:9; 1 Cor. 11:13-15; Phil. 4:6; 1 Th. 5:17; Heb. 13:18; Jas. 1:5.

⁹ 1 Chr. 16:9; Ps. 95:1-2, 105:2; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

¹⁰ Matthew Henry, *Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 1:125.

¹¹ A portion of Scripture which clearly teaches that public worship is not optional for Christians is Heb. 10:24-25: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Christianity is not a private affair. While it is true that everyone must individually believe in Jesus Christ, once a person becomes a Christian, he is part of the body of Christ and must live in support of that body. Note that the author of Hebrews sets love and good works toward our brethren in opposition to forsaking the assembling of the saints. To forsake the public assembly is in essence a disregarding of Christ's body. It shows a lack of love, unity, goodness and compassion. "Unconcern for the well-being of the body, of which they are members, is symptomatic of self-concern and egocentricity. Selfishness and divisiveness go hand in hand; for self love breeds the spirit of isolationism. He who does not love his fellow Christians fervently from the heart (1 Pet. 1:22) feels no compelling need to associate himself with them. Indeed, the genuineness of the Christian profession of a man in this state must be seriously suspect, for those who are one in Christ cannot help loving one another.... Such unconcern for one's fellow believers argues unconcern for Christ himself and portends the danger of apostasy" (Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], p. 415). Many professing Christians view Christ as a mere fire escape from hell. They regard the institutional church as an annoyance, as unhip, as too structured and orderly, etc. For some reason (probably the influence of the sixties youth culture and the charismatic movement) chaos, emotional outbursts, and unstructured spontaneity are seen as movements of the Holy Spirit. The reality is that they are usually reflections of sloppy, heretical theology and a dislike of authority.

¹² "By worship, is understood some tribute paid by the reasonable creature to God as the Great and Sovereign Lord Creator, whether it is immediately and directly paid and performed to Him, as prayer and praise, or for Him and at His command and for His honor, as preaching, hearing, and receiving of sacraments, which are worship when rightly gone about. In a word, we call that worship, more strictly and properly, which is a duty of the first table, and

authoritatively command family members to keep the Sabbath. “It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings” (Lev. 23:3). Family worship “is the daily joining of all that are united in a domestic relation, or who are dwelling together in the same house and family, in singing God’s praises, Acts ii. 47, reading his word, Deut. vi. 7, and praying unto him, Jer. x. 25.”¹³ Christians should engage in family worship every day, but on the sabbath day family devotions should be given greater prominence (note that in the ceremonial law God was given a double sacrifice on the Sabbath, Num. 28:9). On the Lord’s day family devotions should be engaged in with particular attention to the duties that were performed in public worship. Heads of households should engage their families in a discussion of the Scripture reading and sermon topic. A lively discussion of the Word publicly preached (with questions, answers, Bible reading, commentary reading, consideration of the Confession, and catechizing) will both sanctify the day and the believer’s heart. “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11). “The duties that are to be required on this day will require this; such as instructing one another, exhorting, admonishing, comforting, strengthening one another, and talking to, or conferring with one another, of the Word (Deut. 6:7-8).”¹⁴ Regarding sabbath sanctification, our attitude should be that of righteous Joshua who declared, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). Our desire should be that God would say of us as He did of Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD” (Gen. 18:19 KJV).

The master of the house has a responsibility to ensure that family members and visitors converse about God and His works.¹⁵ The fellowship of the day and all communing must be exercises of worship. “At meals, and in the interval of duties: our speech should be always, but especially on the Lord’s Day, seasoned with salt, Col. iv. 6.”¹⁶ This logically follows from the fact that we are not to do our own works or speak our own words on the Sabbath; thus, family and friends must converse about God and His works or remain silent. But the day of joy, rejoicing and celebration is not a day of silence.

3. Private Worship

The Lord’s day is also a day for private devotions or secret duties toward God. This includes “secret prayer, reading the scriptures, and other soul-edifying books, meditation upon divine subjects, and self-examination.”¹⁷ On the Sabbath our minds should be focused upon God and His works. On the first sabbath Adam’s attention was upon God and His miraculous work of creation. The Israelites looked back to the creation and their miraculous redemption from slavery

comes in as commanded in it for the honor of God, and not for our own or another’s external profit, which though commanded in the second table, cannot be so properly called worship, much less immediate worship. Thus, teaching others the duties of piety may be worship when teaching the duties of any other ordinary calling is not” (Durham in Coldwell, p. 10).

¹³ *Fisher’s Catechism*, p. 68.

¹⁴ Durham in Coldwell, p. 12.

¹⁵ “Our children, servants, strangers who are within our gates, are apt to profane the Sabbath; we are therefore to improve our power over them for God, in restraining them from sin, and in constraining them (as far as we can) to the holy observance of the rest of the Sabbath, lest God impute their sins to us, who had power (as Eli in the like case) to restrain them and did not; and so our families and consciences be stained with their guilt and blood” (Thomas Shepard, *Works* [Boston, 1853], 3:263).

¹⁶ *Fisher’s Catechism*, 2:69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

in Egypt. Their sabbath worship (which involved the shedding of the blood of clean animals by a priest) focused their attention on the perfect Redeemer to come. Christians celebrate and meditate on the completed, perfect redemption of Christ, which culminated in His resurrection from the dead. On the first day of the week we commemorate and meditate upon the whole, complete, perfect work of redemption. Jonathan Edwards writes,

We keep the day on which the work was finished, because it is in remembrance of the whole work. We should on this day contemplate the wonderful love of God and of Christ, as expressed in the work of redemption, and our remembrance of these things should be accompanied with suitable exercises of soul with respect to them. When we call to mind the love of Christ, it should be with a return of love on our part. When we commemorate this work, it should be with faith in the Saviour. And we should praise God and the Lamb for this work, for the divine glory and love manifested in it, in our private and public prayers, in talking of the wonderful works of God, and in singing divine songs.¹⁸

On the Lord's day we look back at God's creation and Christ's re-creation, His perfect work of redemption. We look upward to our triune God and focus on His infinite perfections and tender mercies toward us, unworthy sinners. We look forward to the second coming, the consummation and our eternal sabbath rest with Christ. We employ every aid possible in our spiritual exercises and holy meditations: the Holy Scriptures (first and foremost), prayer, the singing of psalms, public ordinances, the study of our Reformed catechisms and confessions, commentaries, theology books, tapes, etc. "And these duties are to be done with a special elevation of heart on the Sabbath-day; they ought to be performed with a frame suiting the Sabbath, Is. lviii. 13."¹⁹

The Lord's day is eminently a day of celebration, joy and gladness. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:22-24). The day that Christ rose from the dead is not to be a day of gloom and depression but a day of happiness and great exultation. God's people should call the sabbath a delight (Isa. 58:13). Yes, it is true that our Savior suffered great humiliation and died an agonizing death as a common criminal, but He rose again, totally victorious over sin, Satan and death. He is now reigning as the exalted Lord of heaven and earth. "Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer" (2 Cor. 5:16). The first day of the week is the day in which the church celebrates, rejoices and honors Jesus Christ in a special way. It is the *only* day set apart by Christ in which the church is to celebrate His work of redemption.

¹⁸ Edwards, 2:103.

¹⁹ Boston, 2:196. "Reading the holy Bible and other good books, repetition, catechizing, singing psalms, praying, praising, profitable discourse—these are the exercises which, if they meet with a heart piously and devoutly affected towards God, will furnish us with such a pleasing variety of good works to fill up those hours of the Lord's day which are not spent in public worship, or in works of necessity and mercy, and will turn so much to our advantage, that we shall complain of nothing so much as the speedy returns of the sabbath-evening, and the shadows thereof" (Henry, *Works*, 1:131).

4. The New Covenant Holy Day

There are two important principles to learn from the new covenant Lord's day. First, since "the Lord's day is given in memory of the *whole work of redemption*,"²⁰ the popular idea of celebrating Christ's life piecemeal is totally unscriptural. We are *not* to set aside special days for Christ's birth, circumcision, baptism, etc. This practice came into the Roman church in imitation of pagan emperor worship. If Christ had wanted the church to have intricate church calendars where His life was divided into several parts, each having its own holy day, then He surely would have authorized such—but He did not. "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it" (Dt. 12:32). Second, since the Lord's day is the *only* divinely authorized day wholly set apart for the celebration of Christ's work, all other "holy" days such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Whitsunday, etc., are forbidden. "All things in God's worship must have a warrant out of God's Word, must be commanded. It's not enough that it is not forbidden.... Now when a man shall put a religious respect upon a thing, by virtue of his own institution when he hath not a warrant from God; here's superstition! We must be *willing* worshippers, but not *will-worshippers*."²¹

God was very generous to His people in giving them 52 holy days a year. When men or churches add their own days (e.g., Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, etc.), they detract from, denigrate, and even set aside the Lord's day. Don't most professing Christians regard Christmas and Easter as more special than the Lord's day? They spend nearly the whole month of December in preparation for Christmas, decorating their homes, offices and churches; buying gifts, baking pies and cookies; practicing and memorizing Christmas carols; practicing for Christmas plays, Christmas carol recitals; etc. Yet many of these people do not give one minute of thought to Lord's-day preparation. Many Americans rarely attend public worship on the Lord's day, but would never miss the Christmas service. The typical American winks at sabbath breaking, fornication, adultery and drunkenness but considers Christians who do not celebrate Christmas to be deluded fanatics. Why do most Americans love Christmas yet hate the Lord's

²⁰ George Gillespie, *English Popish Ceremonies* (1637), p. 146. "It is not to be supposed that this day was universally observed by the church at random, or by accident, without some direction given them. For as the apostles were appointed to erect the gospel church, and, as God's ministers, to give laws to it, relating to the instituted worship which was to be performed in it, it is reasonable to suppose that they gave direction concerning the time in which public solemn worship should be performed. Now, whatever the apostles ordered the church to observe, in matters belonging to religious worship, they did it by divine direction; otherwise the rules they laid down for instituted worship could not be much depended on, and they would doubtless have been flamed, as not having fulfilled the commission which they received from Christ, to 'teach' the church 'to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.' Nor could the apostle have made this appeal to the church: 'I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God...'" (Ridgely, 2:349-50).

²¹ Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship* (London: Peter Cole, 1650), pp. 9-10, spelling modernized. If King Jereboam, who ordained his own feast day, his own holy places and his own offerings "in the month which *he had devised of his own heart*," was condemned by God for his innovations (1 Kgs. 12:32-33), then certainly we should avoid all such man-made "holy" days. "As under the Old Dispensation nothing connected with the worship or discipline of the Church of God was left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but everything was accurately prescribed by the authority of God, so, under the New, no voice is to be heard in the household of faith but the voice of the Son of God. The power of the church is purely ministerial and declarative. She is only to hold forth the doctrine, enforce the laws, and execute the government which Christ has given her. She is to add nothing of her own to, and to subtract nothing from, what her Lord has established. Discretionary power she does not possess" (James H. Thornwell, *Collected Writings* [Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1872], 2:163).

day? Because the Lord's day is the ordinance of God, while Christmas is the ordinance of man. James Bannerman writes,

In keeping the last day of the week as a day of religious observance, the Jews, by the very act, expressed their religious acknowledgement of God, who had appointed it, and did an act of worship to Him as its author, in the character of the one Creator who made the heavens and the earth. In keeping the first day of the week now, Christians, by the very act, recognize Christ as the author of it, and do homage to Him as the one Redeemer, who on that day rose from the dead, and secured the salvation of His people.... And who does not see, that upon the very same principle the observance of holidays appointed by the Church, as ordinary and stated parts of Divine worship, is an expression of religious homage to man, who is the author of the appointment—an unlawful acknowledgement of human or ecclesiastical authority in an act of worship. In keeping, after a religious sort, a day that has no authority but man's, we are paying a religious homage to that authority; we are bowing down, in the very act of our observance of the days as part of worship, not to Christ, who has not appointed it, but to the Church, which has. We are keeping the season holy, not to God, but to man.²²

Thus the world's love affair with Christmas is an implicit rejection of the crown rights of Jesus Christ. It is an acceptance of autonomous law, of human tradition, of will worship. We are to observe only those things commanded by Christ (including those doctrines and ordinances deduced by good and necessary consequence from Scripture).²³ "This is what the Apostles did. They taught the whole counsel of God (Ac. 20:27). It did not include Christmas, Good Friday, or Easter, because they were not part of the things commanded by Christ. So, the one who understands 'the true meaning of Christmas' (or Good Friday, or Easter) is precisely the one who realizes that they are human inventions. And in order to honor Christ as the only King and head of the church, such a person will not observe these man-made additions to what our Lord commanded. A person such as this may be out of step with a very popular custom. The important thing is that he will be in step with Christ and the Apostles."²⁴ Let us not detract from the honor

²² James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1974 [1869]), 1:416.

²³ "If we celebrate a holy day, we must prove from Scripture that God wants us to celebrate such a day. This scriptural law regarding worship is called the 'regulative principle of worship.' The regulative principle is taught throughout the Bible. In Genesis 4:3-5 we read that God *rejected* Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground but accepted Abel's offering of animal sacrifices. Why? Because even though offering fruit is nowhere prohibited, it was not commanded. Leviticus 10:1-2 records that God killed Nadab and Abihu because they offered strange fire, which God 'commanded them not.' The offering of strange fire is nowhere prohibited in Scripture, but it is not commanded. In 2 Samuel 6:3-7 we read of God's judgment on David's men who were moving the ark. Why were they judged? God was angry because they did not follow 'the due order...as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord' (1 Chr. 15:13-15). Jesus chided the Pharisees for adding to God's law: 'Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?' (Mt. 15:3). Jesus told the woman at the well that 'they that worship him [God] must worship him in spirit and in *truth*' (Jn. 4:24). Paul says that adding the commandments and doctrines of men to Christianity is '*self-imposed religion*, false humility' and is of '*no value* against the indulgence of the flesh' (Col. 2:20-23 NKJV). Jesus told the Pharisees who made up their own rules regarding worship, 'In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men' (Mt. 15:9). Sincerity is important, but sincerity must be in accord with divine revelation. Even in religious matters that may seem small or trivial to us, God commands that we act in accordance with His revealed will and not innovate according to our own will: 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it' (Dt. 12:30-32; cf. Dt. 4:2; Jer. 7:24, 31, 19:5; 1 Kgs. 12:32-33; Num. 15:39-40)" (Brian M. Schwertley, *Is Christmas Christian?* [Holt, MI: Reformation Forum, 1995], pp. 1-2).

²⁴ G.I. Williamson, *On the Observance of Sacred Days* (Havertown, PA: New Covenant Publishing Society, n.d.), pp. 9-10.

due to Christ and His day, but honor Him by keeping His day and by setting an example to the outside world.

5. Is the Puritan Sabbath Too Strict?

Many have argued that the view of the Christian sabbath presented in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms is unduly strict. The teaching that *all* our activities, conversation and thoughts throughout the *whole* day (except in cases of mercy and necessity) are to be focused upon God, His Word and works is considered a Puritan perversion of the day. The idea that the whole day is to be spent in spiritual exercises and devotion is considered unrealistic, impossible, extreme and too strict.²⁵ Thus, many in the Reformed community have lowered the standards of the fourth commandment in order to make it easier for professing Christians to obey. Such thinking and such a downgrading of the Christian sabbath are wrong for a number of reasons.

First, the high standards for sabbath sanctification set forth by the Puritans and pre-twentieth century Presbyterians are simply reflections of what the Bible teaches regarding the fourth commandment. A study of the Puritan and Presbyterian works on the Sabbath (until the infiltration of modernism and dispensationalism) reveals a striking uniformity of thought on the subject. The teaching of the Westminster Standards on the Sabbath was arrived at by the careful exegesis of Scripture; that exegesis was sound and has yet to be refuted. Second, the idea (common in our day) that the Puritan view of the Sabbath must be wrong because it is so difficult could easily be applied to any of God's commandments. For example, the seventh commandment requires sexual purity in thought, word and deed. A person who has one impure thought—even for a moment—is guilty of breaking this commandment. The fact that it is impossible perfectly to keep the seventh commandment this side of heaven (because of indwelling sin) does not give man the excuse to redefine the requirements of the command to make perfect obedience easier. Is this not precisely what the Pharisees did? Did they not externalize the commandments because of the impossibility of perfect inward obedience? The best way for Christians to achieve sabbath sanctification is *not* to downgrade the Sabbath by redefining it downward until it suits our sinful, selfish desires, but rather to upgrade our behavior and continually examine ourselves in the light of God's perfect law.

In many Reformed churches there is a purposeful avoidance of being specific regarding the requirements of the fourth commandment. This is usually the result of two serious problems within church leadership. The first is hypocrisy: men are being ordained to the ministry who do not hold to the strict sabbatarianism of the Westminster Standards.²⁶ The second is cowardice:

²⁵ “For example, the practice of sabbath keeping is one of the least popular (almost non-existent) practices in contemporary culture. Further, it is not accepted by the broader ‘evangelical’ community. Hence, it is not uncommon to hear the sabbath routinely spurned by candidates for ordination. This denial is regarded even more palatable if one makes a passing reference to Calvin, or the ‘continental view’ of the sabbath—even if the candidate has not the slightest idea of Calvin’s real views on the matter, or if the candidate’s practice bears no resemblance to the observation of the Lord’s Day among the Reformed churches on the continent of Europe” (Kevin Reed, “Introductory Essay” in Samuel Miller, *Doctrinal Integrity: The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions and Adherence to Our Doctrinal Standards* [Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage, 1989], p. xix). Reed unfortunately is referring to some of the smaller conservative Presbyterian bodies in this country.

²⁶ “As an accessory to subscription, ministers (and elders) in the Presbyterian church are required to take an ordination vow stating they ‘sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.’ This vow is designed to *underscore* the authority of the doctrinal

pastors avoid specifics and let each church member decide for himself what the Sabbath means. What would the church and society be like if everyone were permitted to define fornication, theft, murder or covetousness for themselves? Is it any wonder that we live in a time of great sabbath desecration?

Conclusion

It is not an accident that the great decline of Lord's-day observance has occurred at the same time that unbelief, apostasy and wickedness have permeated western culture.²⁷ The love of God and of His day go hand in hand. When the love and fear of God no longer exist, His day is not honored. "If we did indeed love God as we ought, with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and might, we would not say, when we have been attending upon him two or three hours in public worship, 'Now we have surely done enough for this day,' when we are invited, encouraged and appointed still to continue our communion with him,—still to feast upon his holy word, and repeat our addresses at the throne of his grace in our closets and families. Would we be so soon weary of an intimate conversation with a friend we love and take pleasure in? No; with such a friend we contrive how to prolong the time of converse, and when the hours of sitting together are expired, we stand together, and, as those that are loath to part, bid often farewell, are we add to this a walk together for further discourses; is this thy kindness to thy friend, and wilt thou say of communion with thy God, 'Behold what a weariness is it!' and contrive excuses to contract it, to break it off, or cut it short?"²⁸ May God increase our love toward Him and thus enable us to sanctify His day as we ought. "The stream of all religion runs either deep or shallow, according as the banks of the sabbath are kept up or neglected."²⁹

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standards, not relax them. Yet, in one of the most perverse subterfuges of modern ecclesiastical politics, this vow is often treated as a negation. It is regarded by some as an escape clause, as if its purpose was to enable church offices to assent to the confessional 'system' in general, without any implied commitment to any of the particulars. In this line of thinking, church officers are free to disregard individual articles of our creed at their pleasure, with impunity, so long as they pay lip-service to the 'system' contained therein. Thus, the ordination vow is turned upside down, and employed as an instrument of denial" (Ibid, p. xvii).

²⁷ One factor that is not the root of the problem but which certainly contributes to it is the rise of electronic technology and Americans' obsession with entertainment. In the nineteenth century it was not uncommon for families to sit around and read books, tell stories, sing songs, play instruments, etc. Thus, on the Sabbath there would be an avoidance of labor and a shift in the *type* of books read, stories told, songs sung, etc. But in modern culture most families sit around and watch television or listen to the stereo. Reading books and engaging in activities that are compatible with keeping the Lord's day (if the subject matter is appropriate) are foreign to most Americans to begin with. Therefore, sabbath-keeping seems all the more difficult and radical to modern people. Thus, modern Christians need to have a biblical view of entertainment (most don't) and need to be even more diligent in the path of sabbath sanctification.

²⁸ Henry, *Works*, 1:131.

²⁹ Ibid, 1:134.