

**A MANUAL ON THE CHRISTIAN
SABBATH, EMBRACING, A
CONSIDERATION OF ITS
PERPETUAL OBLIGATION, CHANGE
OF DAY, UTILITY, AND DUTIES**

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A manual on the Christian Sabbath, embracing, a consideration of its perpetual obligation, change of day, utility, and duties by John Holmes Agnew

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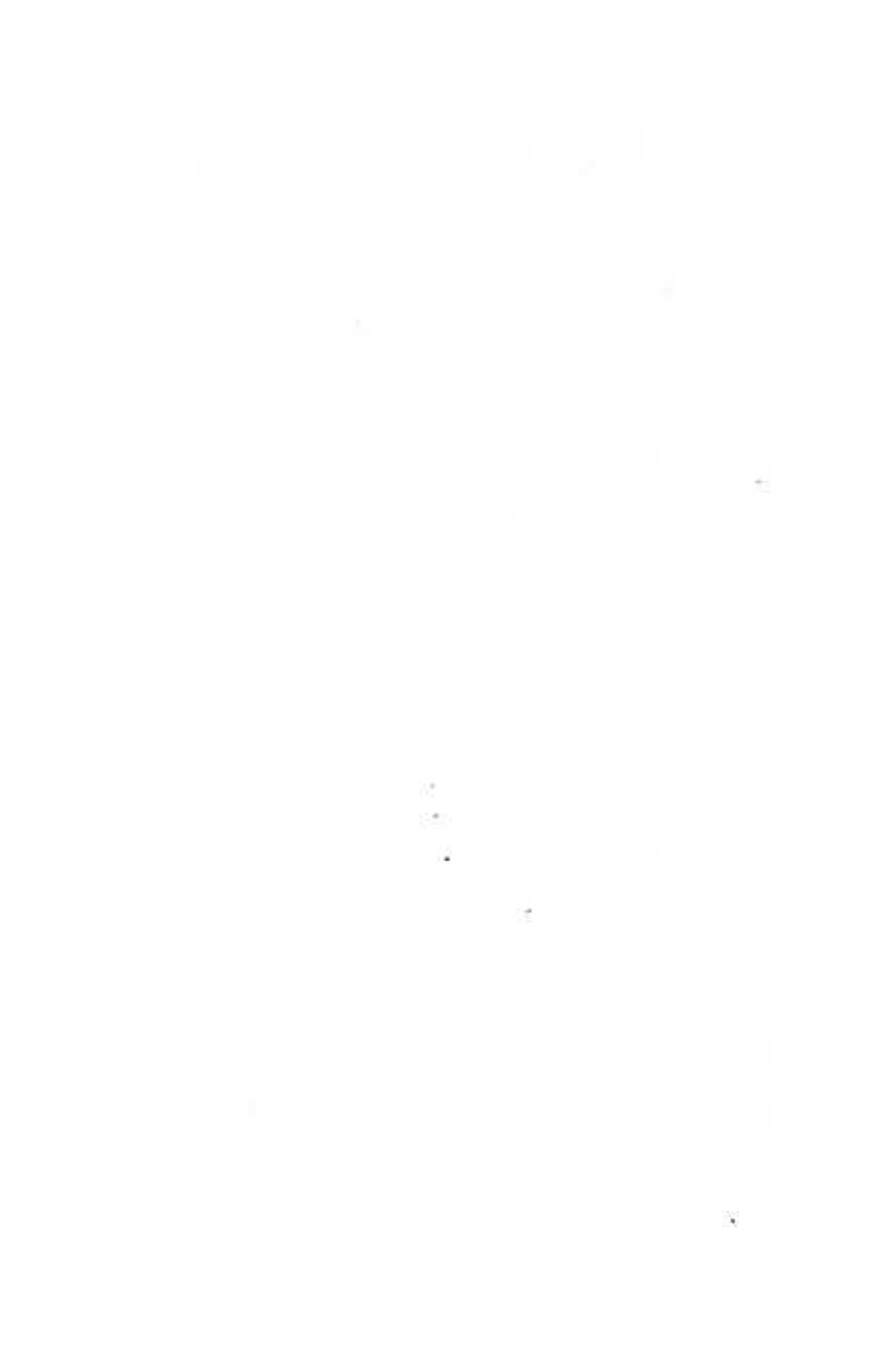
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JOHN HOLMES AGNEW

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A CONSIDERATION OF ITS PERPETUAL OBLIGATION,
CHANGE OF DAY, UTILITY, AND DUTIES,

BY JOHN HOLMES AGNEW,

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WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND CHURCH GOVERN-
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AT PRINCETON, N. J.

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-