

**SERMONS ON THE SABBATH-
DAY, ON THE CHARACTER OF
THE WARRIOR, AND ON THE
INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY**

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Sermons on the Sabbath-Day, on the Character of the Warrior, and on the Interpretation of
History by Frederick Denison Maurice

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BY

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M.A.

CHAPLAIN OF LINCOLN'S INN,

AND PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.



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PREFACE.

A CLERGYMAN, I conceive, has no right to avail himself of any temporary excitement, except for the purpose of enforcing or elucidating some permanent principle; he has no right to pass by any which he believes may minister to that end. To preach upon the 'Crystal Palace question' for the sake of adding one voice more to those who defend or who attack the measure which the directors of the Company have proposed, would have seemed to me a grievous abuse of my office and of the Sabbath-day. To use the controversy which that question has awakened as a means of urging my hearers to a more serious examination of the nature of the institution which they and their fathers have observed—to make the charges which are brought against others a reason for

asking ourselves how far our customary notions and practice are in accordance with its character and its object—seemed to me a duty which I could not safely neglect. It is a very painful thing to find ourselves at variance with those whose judgment and sincerity we wish to revere; but if we find from Scripture that the opinions which the religious public, in different periods, have formed on this subject, involve very serious moral and theological errors, the fear of differing with the good men around us is over-balanced by the greater fear of being at issue with the authority of the Lord of the Sabbath-day,—of Him by whose sentence they and we must be judged. If one person is led by the Sermons I am putting forth on this subject, to reverence a day which he has been used to dislike or to scorn, and to receive it and the book which testifies of it as the pledge of God's love for him and for the world, I shall have abundant compensation for any hard words which I may hear from those whose favourable opinion I should rejoice to win, if it could be

obtained by some smaller sacrifice than that of truth and honesty.

The more serious excitement produced by the funeral of the Duke of Wellington should not, I think, be suffered to evaporate in a vague feeling about the vanity or fragility of human greatness. I have endeavoured to show, in the sermon preached the Sunday after that event, that the greatness we deplore was not vain but substantial, and that the national unity which for that one day was realized, ought not to be fragile, since all morality and faith will perish when it perishes.

The fifth sermon in the volume was one of a course of weekly lectures delivered at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields during the Great Exhibition of 1851. The subjects were selected, with much judgment, by the Vicar, for the purpose of connecting the thoughts respecting human skill and the fellowship of different nations which the Exhibition awakened, with the laws of God's universe, and with those which bind races and men together. The one upon which I preached

was destined for a gentleman whose accurate and comprehensive knowledge of history would have enabled him to do it signal justice. When I was invited to be his substitute, I despaired of giving students the kind of help which they might have expected from him. I contented myself with pointing out a few difficulties which, judging from my own experience, I thought were likely to distress them, and with explaining how I believed the Divine book had anticipated and resolved them.

London, December, 1852.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

THE OLD TESTAMENT SABBATH.

EXODUS, xx. 9—11.

	PAGE
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Sabbath day! wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it	1

SERMON II.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SABBATH.

HEBREWS iv. 11.

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief	28
---	----

SERMON III.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

MATT. xli. 7.

But if ye had known what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' ye would not have condemned the guiltless	52
---	----