

THE ETHICS OF THE SABBATH

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649291731

The ethics of the sabbath by David Pirret

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DAVID PIRRET

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OF THE SABBATH**

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BY DAVID PIRRET.

**Ὁς φρονίμως λέγων κτίσται ἑμαῖς ὁ φησὶ.—ΓΑ. 1.*

Quid enim laboro. nisi ut veritas in te, quæstiois ex;heatur?—CICERO.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

MDCCLV.

P R E F A C E.

THE main subject of the following discussion is the obligation of the Sabbath. The argument is drawn from the dictates of conscience, and not from the statements of Scripture, or the results of experience. This forms the distinctive peculiarity of the present work. Some may be tempted to pronounce it impossible to prove the obligation of the Sabbath on natural principles. Let me ask the reader to suspend his judgment till he knows precisely *how much* is intended to be proved, and *how* this is attempted to be done.

The inquiry naturally assumes a philosophical, rather than a popular character. My aim throughout has been not so much to make a readable book, as to present sound argument in perspicuous language.

The critical remarks introduced in the first chapter seemed necessary to justify the present attempt ; and they may be useful in calling attention to what I cannot help regarding as serious defects in most of the treatises on this subject hitherto published. The different steps of the main argument are considered in the five following chapters. In the two concluding ones, various questions are discussed which occupy at present a considerable share of public attention. On some of the points, more especially on some of those noticed in the last chapter, it would be unreasonable to expect entire unanimity, even among the friends of the Sabbath. I have freely stated what appears to me to be truth, without seeking to make my statements harmonize with any particular theory, or please any particular party. In so far as they are *true*, let them be received ; in so far as they are *not* true, let them be rejected. The position, that Government has no *right* to open on the Sabbath such places of recreation as the Crystal Palace, I hold to be conclusively established.

The discussion is necessarily of a controversial character, yet it is so only in part. The greater portion of it will be found to be constructive, rather than de-

structive. Few objections have been noticed, except such as required to be removed, in order to the validity of the argument. If the reasoning be sound, a great host of objections are deprived of all force, and need no refutation. It has been my endeavour to treat the opinions of others respectfully, to meet their arguments fairly, and to exclude all invective and mere declamation. How far I have succeeded, the reader must determine.

The ground is, to a certain extent, new and untrodden. I do not presume to think that I have escaped error at every point, though I am fully persuaded of the truth of all the *essential* points. The work will not be fruitless, if it correct any of the false notions so prevalent with respect to the Sabbath, or direct the attention of its defenders to a branch of evidence hitherto very much neglected.

D. P.

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