divine authority: and that it really was ſo, will far­ther appear from the following conſiderations. It is certain that the apoſtles travelled over the greateſt part of the world, and planted churches in the remoteſt parts of it. It is certain alſo that they were all led by the ſame *Spirit;* and their deſire was, that unity and uniformity ſhould be obſerved in all the churches which they had founded. It is not therefore ſurpriſing that, in the primitive times, the ſame doc­trine, the ſame worſhip, the ſame rites and cuſtoms, ſhould prevail all over the Chriſtian world; nay, it would have been unaccountable had the caſe been otherwiſe. For this reaſon we may conclude that every cuſtom, univerſally obſerved in the early ages of the Chriſtian church, and not inſtituted by a general coun­cil, was of original appointment.

As the *Lord's day* is ſanctiſied, that is, *ſet apart* to Chriſtians for the worſhip and ſervice of God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, a little conſideration will eaſily diſcover how it ought to be obſerved. Although a day ſeparated from worldly buſineſs, yet it is in no ſenſe a day of idleneſs, but a ſeaſon appro­priated to the works of ſalvation and labours of charity.

In the primitive times this holy day was obſerved in the moſt ſolemn manner. From the monuments of thoſe early ages we learn, that it was ſpent in a due and confiant attendance on all the offices of divine wor­ſhip. On it they held their religious aſſemblies, in which the writings of the apoſtles and prophets were read to the people, and the doctrines of Chriſtianity further preſſed upon them by the exhortations of the clergy. Solemn prayers and praiſes were offered up to God, and hymns ſung in honour of Chriſt; the Lord’s ſupper was conſtantly celebrated; and collections were made for the maintenance of the clergy and the relief of the poor. On this day they abſtained, as much as they could, from bodily labour. They looked upon it as a day of joy and gladneſs; and therefore all faſting on it was prohibited, even during the ſeaſon of lent, their great annual faſt.— Such was the zeal of thoſe times, that nothing, no not the ſevereſt perſecutions, hindered them from celebrating holy offices on this day. They were often beset and betrayed, and as often ſlaughtered in conſequence of cruel edicts from emperors, thoſe very emperors for whoſe happineſs and proſperity they always offered up their fervent prayers. For this cause, when they could not meet in the daytime, they aſſembled in the morning before it was light; and when ſick, in exile, or in priſon, nothing troubled them more than that they could not attend the ſervice of the church. No trivial pretences were then admit­ted for any one’s abſence from public worſhip; for ſe- vere cenſures were paſſed upon all who were abſent without ſome urgent neceſſity. When the empire be­came Chriſtian, Conſtantine and his ſucceſſors made laws for the more ſolemn obſervation of the Lord’s day. They prohibited all proſecutions and pleadings and other juridical matters to be tranſacted on it, and alſo all unneceſſary labour; not that it was looked upon as a Jewiſh ſabbath, but becauſe theſe things were conſidered as inconſiſtent with the duties of the feſtival.

But although the primitive Chriſtians did not in­dulge themſelves in the practice of unneceſſary labour or trifling amuſements, yet they did not wholly abſtain from working, if great neceſſity required it. The council of *Laodicea* enjoined that men ſhould abſtain from work on the Lord’s day *iſ possible*; but if any were found to *judaize,* they were to be cenſured as great tranſgreſſors. So circumſpect were the primitive Chriſtians about their conduct on this feſtival, that on the one hand they avoided all things which tended to profane it, whilſt on the other they cenſured all thoſe who inſiſted it ſhould be obſerved with Phariſaical ri­gour.

The primary duty of the Lord’s day is *public worship.* The nature and deſign of the Chriſtian religion ſufficiently shows the neceſſity and importance of aſſembling for the duties of devotion. The whole ſcope of Chriſtianity is to bring us to an union with God, which cannot be obtained or preſerved without frequent communications with him; and the reaſons which ſhow religious intercourſe to be the indiſpenſable duty of Chriſtians in a private capacity, will bind it with equal or more force on them confidered as a commu­nity.

The advantages of public worſhip, when duly per­formed, are many and great. There are two, however, which deserve to be conſidered in a particular manner. It gives Chriſtians an opportunity of openly profeſſing their faith, and teſtifying their obedience to their Re­deemer in the wiſeſt and beſt manner; and in an age when atheiſm has ariſen to an alarming height, when the Son of God is crucified afreſh, and put to open ſhame, every man, who has any regard for religion, will cheerfully embrace all opportunities of declaring his abhorrence of the vicious courſes purſucd by thoſe degenerate apoſtates. He will with pleaſure lay hold on every occaſion to teſtiſy that he is neither afraid nor aſhamed to confeſs the truth; and will think it his in­diſpenſable duty openly to diſavow the fins of others, that he may not incur the guilt of partaking of them.

Public worſhip preſerves in the minds of men a ſenſe of religion, without which ſociety could not exiſt. Nothing can keep a body of men together and unite them in promoting the public good, but ſuch prin­ciples of action as may reach and govern the heart. But theſe can be derived only from a ſenſe of religi­ous duties, which can never be ſo ſtrongly impreſſed upon the mind as by a constant attendance up­on public worſhip. Nothing can be more weak than to neglect the public worſhip of God, under the pre­tence that we can employ ourſelves as acceptably to our Maker at home in our cloſets. Both kinds of wor­ſhip are indeed necessary; but one debt cannot be paid by the diſcharge of another. By public worſhip every man profeſſes his belief in that God whom he adores, and appeals to Him for his ſincerity, of which his neigh­bour cannot judge. By this appeal he endears himſelf more or leſs to others. It creates confidence; it roots in the heart benevolence, and all other Chriſtian vir­tues, which produce, in common life, the fruits of mu­tual love and general peace.

People in general are of opinion that the duties of the Lord’s day are over when public worſhip is end­ed. But they ſeem to forget for what purpoſes the day was ſet apart. It is not only appropriated to the duties of public worſhip, but alſo ſanctiſied to our im­provement in the knowledge of the doctrines of Chri­ſtianity. It is an inſtitution calculated to alleviate the condition of the laborious claſſes of mankind, and, in