

HOW TO SPEND THE DAY OF REST.

"The Sabbath was made for man," and it is instructive to observe, at the outset, how admirably the means are suited to the end, even from a theoretical point of view. The dual nature of man, as both physical and spiritual, has been fully consulted in providing rest for the body and quickening for the soul. This twofold adaptation of the Sabbath has been sinned against on both of its sides, but far oftener on the one which bears a religious aspect. So-called friends of the working man have catered for him in this matter as if he were a creature that possessed a body without a soul; and all this through a professed allegiance to the Scripture principle which asserts that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." As Hugh Miller well observed, "Their expert but unscientific gunnery take no account of the parabolic curve of man's spiritual nature." Both of these facts must be included in their full significance if the holy day is to be spent in conformity with the design of its Divine Author and the highest benefit of His rational creatures. The body and the soul are so intimately linked together that an injustice done to the one speedily reacts injuriously on the other. The physical organization stands in urgent need of rest after the laborious routine of the six days' work has come to an end. This necessity has not been left to man's own judgment to be dealt with on the principle of expediency, but it has been enjoined upon him with all the authority of a command from heaven, "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein." This is the letter of the law, but it is over-ruled by the spirit in exceptional cases which would operate oppressively on man, for whose advantage the Day of Rest was instituted. The first of these abatements contemplated works of piety. The Sabbath-day was the busiest of the seven in the Temple at Jerusalem, whence arose the saying that there was "no Sabbath in holy things." To be active after this manner, is to fulfil the end of the institution far better than when one rests according to the letter of the commandment. Works of necessity are also provided for in the fullest extent, so long as it is honestly borne in mind that these works are such as cannot be performed before the Sabbath arrives, nor postponed till after its close. Furthermore, the most ample allowance is made for works of mercy; and very especially, on the authority and example of our Lord Himself, is this permission extended to works of healing diseases and restoring the sick. Under one or other of these three classifications every work which is legitimate on the Sabbath-day will certainly fail, and what will not is as much prohibited to us as it was to the ancient Jews. One day in seven as a day of rest is highly necessary to man in his physical capacity, and whenever this arrangement has been tampered with, as in the case of the French Revolutionists who, in their folly, substituted a tenth instead of a seventh portion of time, the consequence has been to exalt the wisdom of God at the expense of the folly of man.

Not less is this purpose of rest frustrated when the seventh part of time is devoted to so-called physical recreation—the latest phase of which is to spend it toiling on a bicycle. Those who will not rest on the Sabbath-day according to the commandment are not at all the persons to observe it in its higher religious aspects, where the blessing peculiarly resides. Even those who strictly observe the Sabbath as a day of rest, and nothing more, lose its main advantage. Great as the need of rest may be, the necessity of spiritual quickening is still more urgent. This is the day on which the concerns of eternity are especially to be cared for. The spiritual exercises of the holy Sabbath are of a public and a private character. The former, as pertaining to the sanctuary service, legitimate themselves with Scriptural authority and example by a more direct lineage than is popularly supposed. Meetings for public worship have descended from "the holy convocation" which was enjoined on the Israelites; the psalms of David which were chanted in the Temple are still sung in our assemblies, and not least the ninety-second, which is entitled "a psalm or song for the Sabbath-day." To the same place men went up to

offer prayer to God, as is witnessed in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Reading and exposition of Scripture, as well as the more formal act of preaching, were exemplified under the authority of apostolic practice in the synagogues. These exercises, therefore, are not the enactments of human expediency, instituted for the purpose of arousing and sustaining the spiritual instinct in man, but have been laid on the Christian conscience as matters of Divine obligation. Nor do the duties—or rather let it be said the spiritual privileges—of the holy Sabbath end here. There are private as well as public observances which are characteristic of the day. Retirement from all other engagements, meditation in solitude on the duty events commemorated by the Sabbath, are not to be omitted by those who value growth in grace and seek to cherish a pious frame of mind. The works of God in creation—of which the Sabbath was first appointed to be a memorial—and the still more glorious work of redemption which the change from the seventh to the first day of the week was designed to commemorate—should hold a foremost place in the thoughts of the mind on this holy day. Those who have given themselves the most completely to these duties have been the foremost to testify to their blessed effects on their spiritual progress. The distinguished Judge Hale affirmed that he had ever found comfort, happiness and success attend him through the week in proportion as he had sanctified the Sabbath-day. By way of practical conclusion to this notice, it will not be out of place to append the eight rules which the great moralist, Dr. Samuel Johnson, prescribed to himself for his own guidance in the matter of Sabbath observance:—(1) That he would rise early on the Sabbath, and to that end would retire early on Saturday night. (2) That he would engage in some unusual devotion in the morning. (3) That he would examine the tenor of his life during the week that was gone, and mark his advancing in religion, or recession from it. (4) That he would read the Scriptures methodically, with such helps as were at hand. (5) That he would go to church twice. (6) That he would read books of divinity, either speculative or practical. (7) That he would instruct his family. (8) That he would wear off by meditation the worldly soil contracted during the week.

WHY I AM A PRESBYTERIAN.

BY REV. H. P. CARSON, D.D.

Being urged, not long since, to give before a large congregation in a sister church my reasons for being a Presbyterian, I consented to do so in the interests of true church unity and a broader Christian charity. After introductory remarks, I proceeded, limiting myself, however, to ten reasons, which were in outline, as follows:

1. Because I was born and grew up within the Presbyterian Church, my father being a ruling elder in the church. Birth, education and environment very largely determine church as well as political relations.

2. Because the Presbyterian Church by her provisions for the formal consecration of children in infant baptism, family worship and parental training in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, both secured me to her service and impressed me with her efficiency in securing the religious welfare of children.

3. Because the Presbyterian Church has helped and continues to help me to hear Christ only as my Saviour and Lord. Not but that other Churches may do likewise, for such is the true test of the worth of any Church, but the test of fitness for membership in the Presbyterian Church is only loyalty to Christ, as Saviour and Lord; not subscription to a creed but devotion to Christ according to His word.

4. Because the Presbyterian Church fosters an intelligent faith in Christ, urging each individual to think and decide for himself as she appeals to his reason and conscience. She provides amply for the better education of the membership, and requires that her ministers shall have completed a classical course in college and an approved course in theological training before being inducted into the ministry. She seeks to move men by intelligent conviction.

5. Because the Presbyterian Church clings so tena-