

The Quiet Hour

GOD'S HOLY DAY

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.—Isa. 58: 13, 14.

"A Sunday well spent
Brings a week of content,
And hope for the toils of to-morrow,
But a Sunday profaned,
Whatso'er may be gained,
Is a certain precursor of sorrow."

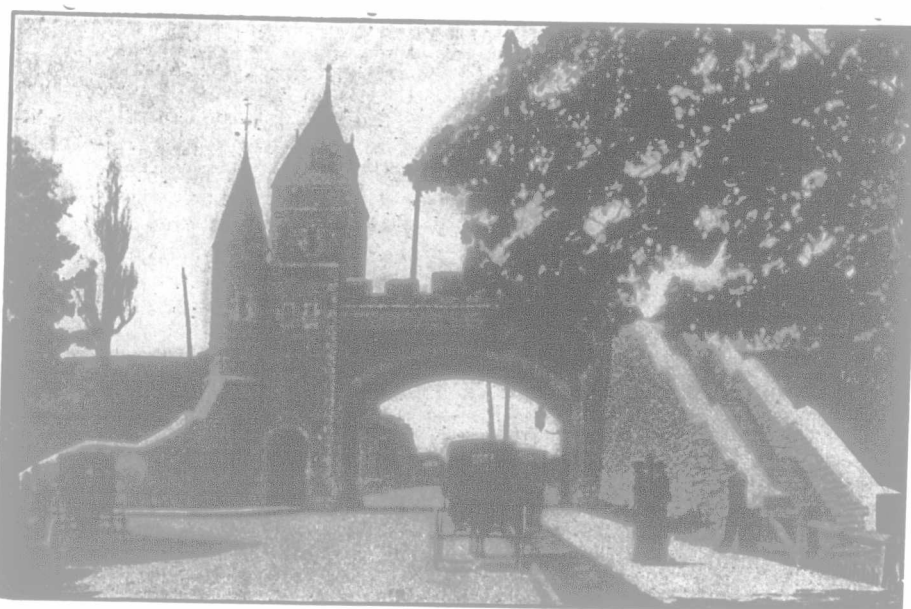
The word "Sabbath" means "rest," and though we have by almost common consent the rest-day from Saturday to Sunday, in weekly commemoration of our Lord's resurrection, the command to "keep holy" the rest-day still holds its place in the heart of the Decalogue. It is a strange fact that in these days, when Christians are growing very lax and careless in their Sunday-keeping, the Jews are in many places seriously considering the advisability of changing their Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. Many of them already have their Sabbath schools on Sunday, and it would certainly be more convenient to keep their places of business open on Saturday in countries where they are forced by law to close them on Sunday. Already they date their correspondence as a Christian is glad to do, counting from the Birth of that wondrous Babe in Bethlehem, and more and more they are yielding to His authority.

But, when I speak of God's holy day I am not suggesting that we should adopt the rigid rules of the Jewish Sabbath. I know plenty of Jewish children who would think they had committed a great sin if they lighted a match or cut a scrap of paper or wrote a word on Saturday. We don't wish to return to the days when a man was punished for kissing his wife on Sunday. Our Lord has told us that man was not made for the Sabbath; but He also said that the Sabbath was made for man, and if men foolishly fling it away, as a worn-out observance, they must suffer great loss. Nehemiah dealt very severely with the traders who were determined to buy and sell seven days in a week. He not only shut them out of Jerusalem, but would not even allow them to lodge outside the walls of the city on the Sabbath. He like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, told the people that trouble and captivity had been their punishment because they did not hallow the Sabbath day, but profaned it. And Isaiah gives the other side, telling of the pleasures and honor which shall be given to him who honors the Lord on His holy day.

There are two very good reasons for keeping one day of the week holy—holy in a special manner, I mean, for, of course, all our days should be holy. One reason is because it is our duty to God, and the other reason is because it is our duty to ourselves. The Fourth Commandment is the link which joins together our duty towards God and our duty towards man. We owe one-seventh of our time to God. He has claimed that as our King all our time and all our money belong to God, but He has given back to us for common use six-sevenths of our time, and nine-tenths of our money, reserving the remainder, not because He needs it, but because we should soon grow hard and forgetful, and unspiritual

without this constant reminder of Him.

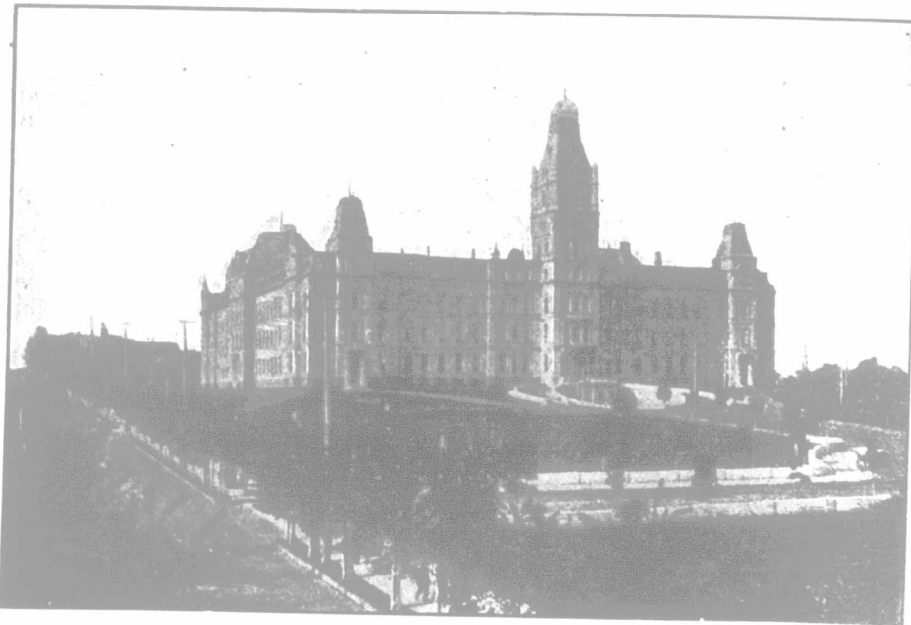
And man certainly needs the Sabbath for his own sake—it is his due. If he deprives himself of it, he is deliberately starving the higher part of his own nature. God gives us this great and necessary gift of a day each week, as He gives us the miracle of sleep, which starts us fresh with new life every morning. Our bodies need a rest and change from the steady pressure of week-day business. Our minds need the refreshment of absorbing a different kind of ideas. Our spirits need to be revived and quickened by closer



THE ST. LOUIS GATE, QUEBEC CITY.

communion with God and our fellow Christians. That is why the day should, if possible, be begun by meeting our Lord and His disciples at His own Holy Table. There He presses His own life into our souls, and we can reach out in conscious fellowship with Him, and with the other members of His body. There we can touch the hand of a friend who is out of sight, but very near. He may be on the other side of the world, or on the other side of death. What matter! As we touch the hand of the Lord Jesus we can feel

Christ if we seek to be made whole. Long ago the multitudes were thronging and pressing Him, but only the woman who reached out consciously to touch the hem of His garment was helped by the close contact. If we heard that on a certain day our Lord would visibly be present, ready to cheer and counsel and heal all the weary and heavy-laden, that church would be filled to overflowing. I am afraid we don't quite believe His promise to be in the midst of every little group of worshipping disciples. We enter the



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within His tender clasp the pressure of another loved hand. We go out feeling that we have been holding high and holy communion within the "upper room."

"Why don't the men go to church?" is constantly being asked to-day. It is a sad question, for the loss to themselves when they drop the habit of church-going is very great. Those who meet God in His own house on Sunday start the week with a fresh supply of strength and vigor—physical, mental

and spiritual. Bishop Thomson says you may safely write over thousands of graves this epitaph: "He kept no Sunday." He says that strong men are cut down in their prime, and the doctors give a dozen names for the cause of their untimely death—softening of the brain, paralysis, heart failure, nervous exhaustion—but, sifted to the bottom, the real fact is that the men kill themselves by breaking Sunday. "Business men, statesmen, lawyers, students, are all getting into the habit of going out at a moment's warning, dropping dead as they stand, in a way that has never been known before."

But it is not enough to go to church. We might do that, week after week, for a lifetime, and yet always fail to come away refreshed and strengthened. We must meet God, we must touch the garment of

Personality is marvellous in its mighty power. One man can inspire many thousands with his leaping ambitions and noble ideals. These are catching; they spring from heart to heart like a flame. Think, then, how inspiring we should find it if we really made the most of our opportunities of intercourse with Him who is the grand inspiration of the world! We can always get what we earnestly seek. Those who really hunger and thirst after righteousness will have their hunger satisfied. If a man should set his heart on outward prosperity, and care little for growth in holiness, he must make a disastrous failure of his life if he should achieve that mistaken ambition. To gain the whole world, and stunt and starve one's spirit, is to fail miserably. Where there's a will there's a way. If we care to cultivate fellowship with God we can do it, and our souls will insensibly grow stronger and more radiant because, constantly looking into His face, we cannot help reflecting His beauty more and more. Let us spend God's holy day with God, then we can store up sunshine which will brighten the whole week with a hidden spring of gladness. Then we shall understand the answer of Kingsley when asked the secret of his strong joyous life. He said, "I had a Friend."

HOPE.

THE ISLE OF MY DREAMS

There lies a beautiful isle,
Far out on a golden sea,
Where ever is peace and love,
Pure pleasures and harmony.

The blooming mists of autumn,
The freshening showers of Spring,
Clad hills and dales with verdure,
Where sweet birds forever sing.

The soft mists, on far mountains,
Are tinged with roseate hue,
The palm trees, by the waters,
Beggemmed with golden dew.

No care or trouble cometh,
To this isle of sweet repose,
For love is there triumphant,
Where the fragrant lily blows.

There, gently past mossy banks,
O'er deep beds of golden sand,
Ever the sunlit streamlets flow,
To gladden the thirsty land.

Oh! Thou dear and dreamy isle,
Far out on the Southern Sea,
How oft in the still night,
My thoughts wing back to thee.

I long for thy loved repose,
For thy vales of fond delight,
Where no waves of discord come
For there all is pure and bright.

And for ever the Angel's song
Chimes from the heavenly blue,
Of "Peace and Good will to Men,"
Where all hearts are leal and true.

But, Oh! I have lost that Isle,
Far out on the Southern Sea,
In dreams of the night it fitted
away,

And has never returned to me.
—Robert Stark.

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

"Somewhere," he mused, "its dear
enchancements wait,
That land, so heavenly sweet;
Yet all the paths we follow, soon or
late,
End in the desert's heat.

And still it lures us to the eager
quest,
And calls us day by day—
"But I," she said, "let babe upon
her breast,
"But I have found the way."

"Some time," he sighed, "when
I find the way, I'll go—
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