

for enjoying a holiday, and were bent upon making the Sabbath a day of pleasure. News-boys passed along the streets with the morning papers. From our window we observed him enter almost every door along the street—leave his newspaper, and pass on to the next door. In Scotland, we were accustomed to hear the voice of Psalm tunes break the stillness of the morning. Here, indeed, we also heard music—but it was the music of the week-day as well as the Sabbath—the singing of some popular air, and especially a song which, at that time, seemed to occupy fully the minds of the citizens of Boston, sung to the not very sacred words of “Tramp, tramp,” &c., &c. The shops, indeed, were very generally closed, and business suspended for the day, but everywhere there seemed to us to be an utter want of that feeling which the lofty expression, “the Lord’s Day,” is so well fitted to awaken. Perhaps we cannot express the feeling that reigned more fully than by saying that there seemed to exist no reverence for the Sabbath.

The thought very naturally arose, how great a change has two centuries wrought upon the religious views of the inhabitants of Boston! What would the Puritan fathers think of all this, were they allowed to revisit the city which they founded? Their descendants have certainly been progressive! They have successfully cast aside their youthful training and the early opinions and prejudices of their fathers. And another question, and a very serious one, also, arises. At the present rate of progress (?) where will the Sabbath be one century hence? Let the inhabitants of Boston succeed in getting rid of what they seem to regard as an antiquated notion and a Jewish observance—a Sabbath of rest “holy to the Lord and honourable”—let them succeed in the future as they have done in the past, and what will be the Sabbath of their children, one hundred years hence? It will certainly be difficult to recognize it among the seven days of the week, except, perhaps, as a day of greater worldly enjoyment. The Lord of the Sabbath only knoweth where this questionable kind of progress shall be arrested.

Yet this is the spirit of the Continental Sabbath, this also the ideal Sabbath of many in England, and the kind of Sabbath observance which not a few would wish to introduce into Scotland. We are told that places of amusement and recreation—parks and public gardens—ought to be opened for the working men, where they can enjoy themselves on the sacred day. The men who advocate such things consider themselves to be, and are sometimes called “the friends of the people.” They make fine platform speeches that sound well and seem to many quite philanthropic. Those who love the old Scottish Sabbath, and who look with abhorrence upon any infringement upon the sacred day, are considered as far “behind the age,” and as anything rather than friends of the people.

Now let us set aside entirely that view of the Sabbath (which we believe, however, to be the correct one,) viz: that it is a day appointed by God himself to be kept holy in all ages, a day in which we are not to think our own thoughts, speak our own words, or do our own actions, and let us ask which view seems best adapted for furthering the best interests of the people. Let us say that the Edinburgh Artisan spends his Sabbath in reading his Bible and attending the house of God, while the Boston Mechanic spends it in the country or on the Common. Which of them will begin the labours of the week with the greatest amount of vigor and freshness? We certainly believe that it is the man who on Sabbath read his Bible and offered up his prayers and dedicated the entire day to the worship of God. Coming in contact with his Bible and the great and elevating truths of Christianity, he has gained freshness and contentment and strength and reverence which no parks, however fresh or airy, and no public gardens, however beautiful, can give. In proportion as we secularize the Sabbath, life becomes hum-drum and monotonous. In proportion to the extent to which we bring the worldly spirit into the first day of the week, must we fall in piety, in peace and in true prosperity. The Boston workman is indeed, in some respects, in a most enviable position. His wages are good, and he can afford to dress respectably and to live comfortably. And in this respect “the friends of the people” in Britain may do positive good to the workmen. Let them by all means strive to raise the wages of the labourer, let them endeavor to have the working hours shortened, let them agitate for the building of better houses. All this is true philanthropy, but let them not deprive the workman of his greatest blessing, the Sabbath of the Lord—that day that fits him for the discharge of his duty here, and prepares him, under God’s blessing, for the enjoyment of an eternal Sabbath hereafter.

On Sabbath forenoon we sought out and found the place of worship where Dr. Blaikie meets with his congregation from Sabbath to Sabbath. The Dr. and his people have no Church—they meet in a Hall, or, as Dr. Blaikie puts it, “in their own upper room, and their own hired house.” They do so, however, rather from necessity than from choice, for although this mode of meeting may sound quite *Apostolic*, they are in the meantime *obliged* to adopt it, for a certain Church which they consider belongs to them has passed over into the hands of a Unitarian congregation. It was communion Sabbath in this congregation, and it was easy to see that there was at least one congregation in Boston that stood out firmly against all innovations. Here a table was spread and duly covered with a white cloth, as in the olden time. Nothing but the old Psalms of David were sung. We need scarcely say that there was no “organ.” The Dr. and