

precinct like this, man is not crowded so close to his fellows as to lose his domestic sanctity and reserve. Out on these hillsides, or river valleys, or lake shores, such homes are and can be places where the family ideal can take root and grow; where the old-time dream of self-rule and freedom, which made Britain so great, can, if ever again, be fostered and nourished. If we enter such a home, we will expect to see the interior like the outside, simple but dignified; and somewhere within an open fireside, where childhood might gather, where youth could dream, and old age recover older memories.

In such a house one might expect to find a few books and pictures of the old classic school, the former in a well-read row; for a few good books, representing the wit, wisdom and virtue of the kings of mankind are worth a thousand of the meretricious volumes which disgrace and degrade the present day. What delightful memories are his who can recall boyhood by such a hearth, in such a house, when the autumn or winter-night wind went roaring up the old chimney-flue, mingling with the creaking of great branches outside in the bleak gale, while in the candle or firelight he went voyaging, in delightful imagination, with the immortal Raleigh, or Captain Cook, or, perchance, dwelt in childhood's golden enchantment with the lonely Crusoe on his magic isle.

WILFRED CAMPBELL.

## The Quiet Hour.

### A CHAT ABOUT CHURCH-GOING.

And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, for to hear him.—St. Luke xxi.: 38.

"At Thy feet, O Christ, we lay  
Thine own gift of this new day:  
Doubt of what it holds in store  
Makes us crave Thine aid the more:  
Lest it prove a time of loss,  
Mark it, Saviour, with Thy Cross."

Don't you think that Bishop Thomson may be fully justified in his statement that one might safely write over hundreds 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 disease, nervous exhaustion—but, sifted to the bottom, the real fact is that the men kill themselves by not keeping Sunday—"business men, statesmen, lawyers, students are all getting in the habit of going out at a moment's warning, dropping dead as they stand, in a way that has never been known before."

It would be rather interesting to make an investigation of a thousand cases of sudden death in order to find out whether there was any plain connection between the breach of the Fourth Commandment and a weakened heart.

But I am not trying to give directions about the best way of building up a strong constitution—except by the way, as health of body is effected by a healthy condition of soul. I hardly think that many people would be induced to keep their Sunday holy, in the hope that their lives in this world might be lengthened thereby. But possibly many people are drifting almost imperceptibly into the lax observance of Sunday, which is now so prevalent, without intending to break God's law or fully considering the great loss they are sustaining by neglecting to obey His command.

Our common sense may rebel at the trivialities of the Jewish Sabbath, and we may feel amused at the strict rules which many Jews obey so rigidly to this day. I know Jews who will not light a match on the Sabbath, nor tear a scrap of paper, nor cut a piece of string on that day. I know hundreds of Jews who will not write a word on Saturday—unless the demand of business makes it necessary. But, because some people go to one extreme, is no reason why other people should rush to the opposite extreme and ignore the Fourth Commandment altogether.

God did not make man for the Sab-

bath—he is not to be bound hand and foot in order to make one day in seven stand out from the rest of the week. But "the Sabbath was made for man"—it is a direct loss to himself to neglect it. That might be reason enough for setting apart one day in seven as a rest-day—quite apart from religious motives—but let us take higher ground, as we should always do.

God has required of us one day in seven, as a token that all our days belong to Him, and should be consecrated to His service. It is the same with our money. We are required to pay tribute, not because only a tenth of our income belongs to God, but because it all belongs to Him, and we are only stewards, bound to lay it out to the best advantage, for His glory and the good of the world.

All our days should be spent for God, all our days should be holy-days, but experience should have convinced us that we cannot satisfactorily carry the Sunday spirit into the week days, unless we make a point of devoting at least one day more particularly to the service of

"I can read my Bible as well at home," is dying out. People are rather ashamed of such an evasion, when everyone knows that those who stay away from Divine service, without good and sufficient reason, very seldom read their Bibles at all.

But I think the root of this prevalent neglect of church-going is want of faith. If souls were not blind and deaf, there would be no room in our churches for the crowds that would flock there "early in the morning." If we have little faith, let us try to become like children again and make vivid use of our imagination. If we don't realize the living Presence of our Lord, let us try to "imagine" that He is there. Let us confess our sins, in real earnest, remembering that His ears are listening, that He is looking into our hearts to see if we really repent and really intend to fight against the old temptations during the coming week. Then let us drink in, with trembling gladness, His sweet and gracious words of absolution, addressed to all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe the glad tidings of forgiveness and sanctification. Let us sing our praises and thanks-

couraged to speak with confidence because the words are not theirs, but inspired by the Spirit of God. "It is not ye that speak," He says, "but the Spirit of My Father speaking in you."

The Spirit of God can reach a soul through any words, spoken by any person. Listen for His voice, and you will surely get the special message He intends for you, no matter how dull and uninteresting the sermon may appear to be. What a pity it would be if you went home as poor as you came, missing even the peace of Christ's own benediction on the kneeling congregation, went away "poor," when the treasury was wide open and you might have carried home rich jewels of pardon, strength, wisdom and peace, which would have transfigured every hour of the week. Our souls grow slowly, as our bodies do. Give them plenty of fresh air, good food, and the healthy exercise of loving acts of service, and they will grow stronger steadily, and develop a vigorous appetite for spiritual food. Then the bodies in which these healthy souls live will find their way to church "early in the morning," not only to "hear" Christ, but to receive Him in His wonderful sacrament, that He may abide in them and in their homes all the week, and they may abide in Him and in His House, while their bodies are busily attending to the ordinary work of everyday life.

When God speaks from Heaven, it is possible to hear the sound without perceiving the message, or knowing the source from whence it proceeds. When our Lord, a few days before His death, said: "Father, glorify Thy Name!" He heard the instant answer: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But, while some thought an angel had spoken, others, hearing the sound, said, "carelessly," "it was only thunder."

So it is in our public worship of God. Some can only hear the voices of men and the sound of the organ and choir, while others are listening to prophets and apostles, to the harps and voices of angels, and to One whose voice is sweet and thrilling "as the sound of many waters."

Some find that their words of prayer and praise are too weak and careless to be heard a yard away, while others know that each word goes straight to the heart of Him who sits upon the Throne, blending not only with the angelic hymn of "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY," but with the wonderful intercession of our Great Elder Brother at the right hand of the Father.

Go to church with ears and eyes and hearts ready to drink in the love of the Infinite God that is waiting to fill you with strength and gladness, and you will never find the church dull and the service long and tedious. But remember that "practice makes perfect." If you fail over and over again to realize the living, quickening Presence of God in His own House, don't imagine that He is necessarily absent. Others can find Him there, and so can you. Go regularly, go prayerfully, go hopefully, and you will some day find the great promise true:

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

"It is the house of prayer,  
Wherein Thy servants meet;  
And Thou, O LORD, art there  
Thy chosen flock to greet."

Why should we any longer sit at the feet of Christ "unknowing, blind, and unconsoling?" when we need only put out a hand in faith to touch the hem of His garment and be healed of the sin within us, and gain new strength for our daily work and daily battle, from living union with the Life of the world.

And may I ask one favor? When you kneel at the feet of Christ, will you sometimes pray for me? I need your prayers, not only for myself, but for you. If this Quiet Hour is to be of any real value, it can only be because God may be willing to convey His message through it. Surely the responsibility rests on you as well as on me. If it is failing in its object, may that not be partly your fault, because you never ask God's blessing on the words I am sending out each week? If "two of you" agree in making it helpful, we have the promise that the prayer will be answered; how much grander then will be the re-



Autumn.

God. Those who deliberately cut themselves off from the public worship of God's House, for months at a time, need not be surprised if their faith grows weak and their spiritual sight grows dim. Perhaps they say, sadly: "I wish I had my childhood's faith back again!" and all the time they are letting their souls grow thin and weak for want of regular spiritual food, and for want of prayer, which is to the soul what fresh air is to the body.

Look at the text we began with. Do you think any visitor to our churches, in city or country, would be apt to say that "all" the people are gathered in the House of God "early in the morning" to hear Him?

How many, who get up early every other day, think it almost a virtue to be lazy—really lazy—on Sunday morning. They will go to church in the evening—if they feel like it—but Sunday is a day of rest, and going to church is "tiresome," and the preacher is "prosy," and they "don't feel any better for going." The old excuse that used to be made:

givings heartily, not wondering whether the congregation is admiring the music, but trusting that God will find it sincere enough to be worth accepting. Let us listen to the words of prophet and apostle with respect and earnest attention, remembering that they are messages sent to us by God's ambassadors. And, when the wonderful words of Divine simplicity which are recorded in the gospels, fall on our ears, let us drink them in eagerly, knowing that He who spake as no other man has ever spoken is addressing them directly to us.

As for the sermon—what if the preacher is "prosy!" he does not stand altogether on his own merits. Read the tenth chapter of St. Luke's gospel and you will find that not only apostles, but all ambassadors sent out by Christ, represent Him. Those who refuse to receive them are warned of certain punishment, because—as He says—"He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." The messengers sent by Christ are en-