

### "Lord's Day Observance.

The subject for thought and discussion at the united Prayer Meeting of St. Matthew's and St. Andrew's Congregations, Halifax, on the third Wednesday of March was: How to observe the Sabbath so as to make it, as it is intended to be, a blessing and a privilege.

The Chairman gave out the subject for discussion, remarking that this Institution, which occupied so prominent a position alike in the Jewish and Christian Churches, was, undoubtedly, designed for a beneficent end—to be a joy to the Church—a blessing and not a yoke. Is it so? Do Christians generally draw from it what it is calculated to yield? Is it a joy and a blessing as held and observed by our Christian men and Churches? If not, then there is something wrong in our thought or action regarding it—it is not to us what it should be. The question, therefore, is—what is the right thought—what is the proper observance—which may make it a true blessing and privilege?

M. L. said he was afraid when the question was proposed that it was an unwise one, because the time allowed for each speaker was so limited that there was danger of being misapprehended. But it was one of so much importance that it was well to bring it prayerfully before the attention. Never was he more firmly convinced of the claims of the Sabbath as set forth in the eternal word:—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it *holy*." But the whole question turns on what we mean by the word "*holy*." From misunderstanding what a true sanctifying of the "Lord's day" meant,—though there was no appointment of the Church which was designed to be a greater blessing,—yet he was afraid there was none made a more powerful engine by the enemy for his own purposes. No one who has been trained in the old hard way, when the Sabbath was made to be the most irksome and disagreeable day of the week, when the children could not look forward to it as a joyful and happy day, but as a day of drill and worry, of hard lessons and dark looks, but understands how that is so. Those people who were ever ready to claim for themselves the championship of the Sabbath really made more Sabbath breakers than avowed assailants. Let children be taught to *like* the day—to understand that it is a day when their young hearts may be glad without sin, and that it is a day for special thanks to the good God and Father of all, and not merely for marshalling to Church, and learning long lessons,—and you'll find no as Sabbath breakers among these. It becomes to them a day of happy union—a peaceful joyous day and all their associations connected with it will be pleasant,—and when they go from the parental home they will find the *need* of it and not be glad to get rid of it. We ought to know what we mean when we speak of the Sabbath—we ought to know that it is *not* the

Jewish Sabbath which was one of form and letter, but it is a *free* day commemorating to us the glorious deliverance of the Resurrection. Here lies the root of the matter—keep it as the formal Jewish day and you restrict it from the freeness of the Christian spirit—you make it irksome to the young—but make it a day of happy enjoyable converse in the family as a Christian blessing and not as a Jewish form, and you bring it into harmony with the spirit of Christ's whole teaching.

G. said if we want practical subjects for discussion, here is one—look at it. What is the day which we call Sabbath? There are two ideas connected with the history of the word—the one Jewish, the other Christian. Some assert that there is no difference, but this is simply assertion. It is not true, for by no one is it now observed as it was by the Jews. They interpreted *literally*, as they were bound to do, thus:—"Thou shalt not do any work." But the Christian consciousness, under the reign of the spirit, has differently interpreted the aim of the day and its observance. The whole point is:—Is the Christian Sabbath to be observed in any set form? If it, is then what form? Which of the fifty forms presented us has Divine right: Sectarian, English, or Continental? We must look at facts. We have not the Sabbath but the Lord's day. Whenever *our* day is mentioned in Scripture it never has the Jewish name, and the "Lord's day" has a fullness of meaning which the other has not. The word Sabbath means "*rest*," but we have a higher idea before us than mere rest in our thought of the Lord's day, *i. e.* the day the Lord *rested*; and this leads us again to the significance of the day specially set apart for the worship of the Lord and feeding on Him. This is what the day is for, feeding on Him, meditating on Him, and in every way in which we possibly can, and not by any one set form or by any one routine, learning of Him. Again we are under Christianity not Judaism. The central idea of the letter was simply *Duty*—of the former freedom in the Spirit—what to the Jews was mere command which they were to obey, is to us privilege in which we ought to delight. The Sabbath among them took its character from the command,—the Lord's day among us takes its character from the freedom of Christian life. Some will observe it better than others, just as some have a higher Christian life than others. The way to make the latter observe it better is not by imposing it on them as a command to be observed in a particular way (which would be giving them a yoke and checking the naturalness of their own life,) but by raising them up to a higher spiritual being. The good Christian will observe the day so as to aid his christian life, and in so doing will never "*desecrate*" it. The former speaker referred to the evil influence on children often exercised by extreme views. We see the same gloomy ideas in grown up people too. The reason is they