

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

The Fourth Commandment requires us to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Centuries ago, when God delivered this command by Moses to his people, it was considered divine authority. Is this God-given command any less obligatory to-day? We profess to be a Christian nation, yet we are reckless and inconsistent enough to usurp God's authority. It is a painful fact that the tendency of the times is to violate this same command and to desecrate and dishonor the holy day.

We are told to remember the seventh day. Surely we are reminded to do this when the glittering spire of handsome churches point heavenward, and silvery chimes peal forth a Sabbath welcome—but do we remember to keep it holy? Far from it, when we deliberately plan to ignore God's sacred time, and when for our own selfish gratification we make a common holiday of the Sabbath. Does Christ's example count for nothing? Why must we as his disciples grieve the heart of our blessed Master by sinful indulgence in worldly cares and pleasures which he has strictly forbidden? Our Puritan forefathers would scarcely recognize the Sabbath of to-day, and could but feel righteous indignation in the manner of observing it. They approved of and planned for the Sabbath, we are in attendance at the theater or are absorbed in whist until a late hour on Saturday night. What a fine preparation for the Sabbath! We have made a mistake in drifting so far away from the habits of our fathers in Israel. They were punctilious and conscientious in their attendance upon divine worship. We allow the most trivial excuses to detain us from church-going, and strange to say, even the weather affects our piety. They heartily enjoyed the privileges of worshipping God in his sanctuary. The nominal Christian frequently ignores it altogether, or attends only for appearance sake. They were unswerving in their loyalty to God, and rendered implicit obedience to the Fourth Commandment by their reverence and love for the holy day. We pass to the other extreme, and sin in willful disobedience, striving to please ourselves rather than God. We must have amusement and recreation on the Sabbath, so we find an entrance to the concert hall, the baseball ground, and the skating rink. We enjoy pleasure rides and the popular excursion, make the formal call and the family visits, we peruse the Sunday newspapers and indulge in light literature, perhaps we transact business and dispatch letters.

Is there any reverence in all this for God's holy hours? Sunday dissipation is not confined to city limits, it has spread slowly but surely until it has reached rural districts. Must we meet our business engagements early Monday morning, the quiet Sabbath hours are utilized to save time. Are the country roads blocked with huge drifts of snow, frequently a force of men are employed to open them to the public on Sunday, under the plea that the law requires it. Is there not a higher law which requires us to honor God's day, and prohibits all labor which might be better postponed? Does the ice crop threaten to be a failure, extra wages are offered as an inducement to work on Sunday.

We would be ashamed to be found lying, stealing or swearing, but will openly defy God and abuse his holy day. We frequently hear it pleaded "there is no other time." Away with the flimsy, trivial excuse! It is a meager, stereotyped apology.

What is the remedy for all this evil? We need to pray that the Lord will create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us, that we may spend the Sabbath to meet his approval, that our minds may be elevated from worldly cares and pleasures and fixed on Christ, that the blessed influence of Sunday may abide with us through all the week, helping us over the hard places of our every-day life. It is manifest that the world is full of half-hearted Christians who follow Jesus from afar off. We need more spirituality, more complete consecration to Christ on bended knee. If we love God we will revere and defend His holy day by our influence and example. *Christian Work.*

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST

Dr. Mair, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, closed the Assembly of this year with one of the finest addresses we have ever read, an address remarkable alike for its literary beauty, its depth of feeling, and its singularly high, strong, and spiritual tone, says the *British Weekly*. He took for his theme "The Head-

ship of Christ," and he carried his audience straight into the presence of the Lord of the Church. There was nothing better, he said, for the Church than that it should live in remembrance of the great truth of our Lord's headship and should quietly judge all its every-day work in the light of it. He applied the test of that great fact to the questions before the Church, questions of doctrine, of devotion, of sacramental grace, of priestly authority, of preaching, of pastoral work, of loyalty to the judgment of the Church, of the life of the Church. At almost every point we are in cordial agreement with Dr. Mair. He came at the close to consider the relations of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland to one another, and there can be nothing but praise for the spirit in which these were discussed, a spirit of charity, of yearning after peace, and of a true humility. Dr. Mair asked his opponents whether they could imagine that Christ set one Church to trouble another Church that held His truth and sought to do His will. He asked whether it was not the mind of Christ that confusion should be brought into order by peace and not by war. He called for a truce on both sides, urging that such a truce would save from much sin, solve difficult problems, and bring in a new and glorious day for all the churches. It is due to Dr. Mair and due to those who unfortunately find themselves at issue with him on the problem of re-construction to meet his argument and appeal, if possible, in his own spirit.

Nothing can be better, nothing can be more necessary than that Church-men in all their action should be able to make their appeal to Christ, to state their arguments to Him, to make sure that they are doing nothing in which they might not ask His aid. Many years ago Dr. Dale, speaking from the chair of the Congregational Union, did what Dr. Mair has now done. He carried the ecclesiastical argument to the Throne of Jesus Christ. He took, for example, the case of the Erastians who plead that the judges of the land can settle more reasonably the problems of doctrine and Church government than an excited ecclesiastical assembly can be expected to do. One of Dr. Mair's fellow Churchmen has described effectively enough the action of the judges in the "Essays and Reviews" case, and contrasted it with the noise and heat and ignorance and injustice of a Church Court taking the life of a supposed heretic. But such an argument means—and we have no doubt Dr. Mair will agree with us—the denial of our Lord's presence and our Lord's guidance in the Church redeemed by His blood. For let the argument be stated to Christ, and let us see how it will run. We cannot reproduce Dr. Dale's expressions, but it must run like this: "Thy servants in whom Thy Spirit dwells are ignorant, fanatical, and narrow. If it is left to them to decide what is Thy truth, they will act in blindness and tyranny. It will be well therefore, to refer questions which concern the character and discipline of Thy Church to those who, though they may not know Thee or own Thine authority, are yet familiar with justice, who love liberty better than Thy friends love it, and who will give a more righteous judgment than those who have obeyed Thy call." Is this an argument which any Christian believer will dare to state to the living Christ?

In the same manner it may be shown that a true recognition of the Headship of Christ paralyses the argument for an endowed and established Church. There are reasons, and they are very grave and weighty reasons, why the State should not establish and endow particular Churches. It may be argued, as we think unanswerably, that they are a plain violation of justice, that every citizen should be equal before the law, no matter what his religious belief is. There is the appeal to history, to the record of establishments, to the cruelties and crimes and social disorders that have resulted from them. But the real reason why they are still defended is that men somehow doubt whether the Church will be able to hold its ground against the disintegrating and destroying influences of the world unless the State comes in to prop the edifice that would rotter but for its aid. Let us state that argument to Christ: "Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood, and to whom Thou has committed the