

Pastor and People.

SURSUM CORDA.

BY JOHN MACLEOD, D.D.

"Lift up your hearts:" I hear the summons pealing
Forth from the golden Altar where He stands;
Our great High Priest, the Father's love revealing.

In priestly act, with pleading, outspread hands.

"Lift up your hearts:" with hearts to heaven soaring,
I hear the Church shout forth her glad reply,

"We lift them up unto the Lord adoring,
Our God and Thine, through Thee, we glorify."

"Lift up your hearts." Alas, O Lord, I cannot
Lift up aright my burdened heart to Thee.
Thou knowest, Lord, the care that presses on it,
The chains that bind it, struggling to be free.

O Love divine! Thy promise comes to cheer me;
O Voice of Pity! blessing and thrice blest,
"Come unto Me, ye laden hearts and weary,
Take up My yoke, trust Me, I pledge you rest."

I dare not waver, by such grace invited,
I yield to Thee my heart, I close the stile,
Lift Thou my heart until, with Thine united,
I taste anew the joy of endless life.

—Good Words.

WE SHALL REAP AS WE SOW.

While the new days come and the old days go,
What words and deeds shall our records show?
What worthy aims have been nobly sought?
What works of love have our efforts wrought?

What darkened souls have we shown the light?
What wandering feet have we guided right;
What broken hearts have we bound and healed?
What sacred truths have our lives revealed?

What seeds of good have been daily cast
To whiten the harvest fields at last?
We shall find our own, we shall reap as we sow,
While the new days come and the old days go.

—Selected.

THE LORD'S DAY.

[The following pen and ink sketch of one so well known and loved in Canada as is the Rev. Dr. Gibson, and of his teaching on a subject at the present time claiming so much attention amongst us, will be welcome to all our readers. It appears in the *Presbyterian* of London, England, and is one of a series of "Pulpit Sketches," by "A Wandering Worshipper."—EDITOR.]

Shower and sunshine, sunshine and shower, alternately prevailed as I made my way to the Presbyterian Church, St. John's Wood, London, on Sunday morning last. But inside this large and somewhat old-fashioned edifice all was sunshine without a cloud. I found a big congregation, bright singing, a sunny service, and a particularly bright and stirring sermon. Dr. Monro Gibson is known to most Presbyterians as minister of probably the greatest, wealthiest, and most attached congregation in the English Presbyterian Church. His genial but somewhat portly presence is also pretty familiar on public platforms and in pulpits throughout the length and breadth of the land. But, on the whole, I think he is seen at his best when speaking in his own church face to face with his own devoted flock. There he is thoroughly at home, and all the vivacity, latent drollery, lambent humour, incisive rhetoric, and flashes of genuine poetic fire which so characterise him, come freely and most naturally into play. Light, life, love are words which I found myself almost unconsciously associating with Dr. Gibson, as I listened so appreciatively on Sunday morning to his voice, both in reading the Scriptures, in offering prayer, and in the delivery of his sermon. Dr. Gibson has full share of that "touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin," and there is a warmth, a tenderness, a loving kindness, lit by the love of God about the man which irresistibly stir and stimulate the hearts of the congregation, and effectually prepare the soil for the reception of many a thought that breathes and many a word that burns when he launches into his sermon. Now and again, too, he strikes a note of

truest pathos, and in a tone of voice which has a singular knack of thrilling the mind and taking its root in the inner soul. There is the spirit of an old Covenant in the eloquent minister of St. John's Wood, but this does not mean that Dr. Gibson is in any way mentally cornered in the past. On the contrary, in his own pulpit, as well as on outside platforms, he is noted for the broad and liberal outlook which he maintains on all the problems of the day, and his pre-eminent position has recently been acknowledged by his election to the presidency of the council of the Free Churches.

What I am here concerned with, however, is the impression his preaching made on the mind of "A Wandering Worshipper" on Sunday last. I was fortunate in this, that I heard the doctor deliver what may be called a "special" sermon on Lord's Day observance. It was a subject which called forth the preacher's best and subtlest qualities. I had occasion to note that the Doctor is a man who loves theology much but the simple Gospel of Christ more, who lives and moves and has his being in that brighter Puritanism which neither seeks nor finds gloom in religion, but rest rather, with refreshment, inspiration, hope, and a joyous outlook on "the wide horizon, the glorious scenery, the living waters, and the green pastures of the great Kingdom of God." I found also a man who had a wise and statesman-like grip of this question of the Lord's Day, one who saw its primary meaning and significance as a God-given day of rest, and in that respect the natural birthright and inheritance of every son of man. Dr. Gibson does not forget that the first sermon of our Lord in the little Synagogue at Nazareth contained "the Gospel of Gospels for the poor," and his own sermon was an eloquent and luminous defence of the sacred principle of Lord's Day rest (in its broader light, of one day's rest in seven for every worker), delivered most of all, as it appeared to me, in the interests of the many toilers of our day from whom this birthright has been unrighteously filched.

Dr. Gibson's text was Luke iv. 16: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." "As His custom was"—that was the motto of the sermon, and Dr. Gibson began by remarking that he had been specially requested to speak on the observance of the Lord's Day. On a previous occasion he had attempted to set forth our Lord's teaching on that subject; that morning he would give special prominence to His example. Jesus maintained the habit of observing the Sabbath and attending the synagogue. The latter must needs have been a great trial. His whole nature must have revolted against the silly, orthodox observances of His day. There were thirty-nine articles defining these observances, and the articles, frivolous enough in themselves, and dealing with such petty matters as whether it was lawful or not to tie or untie knots on the Sabbath day, were rendered still more ridiculous by the current Rabbinical teachings and explanations given in connection with them. Yet Jesus, recognizing the Eternal law which prescribed one day's rest in seven, observed with all His heart the Sabbath day as God's gift to man for the refreshment of his body and his spirit. He attended the synagogue, and He did his duties in it, even though the "reading" He heard was probably "as poor amongst them as amongst us," and the Rabbinical explanations were well nigh intolerable. What a rebuke to many fastidious people in this day of ours! The example of Jesus teaches the high value we should set on the day of rest and the opportunities it gives of Divine worship.

Some say that Jesus was always on the liberal side regarding Sabbath questions. That was quite true. But what was the broad and liberal side? Was it to turn the Sabbath into a day of amusement? Not one whit. Was it only for the Jews? No; for He taught "the Sabbath

was made for man." The trouble He took to reform it proves that He regarded it as a permanent institution.

One had very little patience with the view that the Sabbath is abolished because it is not kept on the seventh day. That was the true Rabbinical spirit. The gift of God was one day's rest in seven, and it mattered not which day it was. But it seemed peculiar, and was a subject for regret that the beautiful name "Sabbath" had been discarded in England for the heathen name "Sunday." On the other hand, it seemed a natural development of the spirit that the seventh day should give place to the first day of the week, and that this should be kept in memory of the Lord's Resurrection. The Sabbath should not be regarded as a day of vexatious restrictions. It was not a case of giving up one day to God; it was the loving gift from God to man of one day's rest in seven. "Six days shalt thou labor" was the order in the Fourth Commandment. "If you are not bound to do it for daily bread, then you must do it for something else." Six days shalt thou labor. But, blessed be God, on the seventh day man was set free! This was specially intended as a boon to the toiler. On the seventh day an opportunity was given of weaving into the dull web of his earthly life the glowing colors of heaven. The sacredness of the day was distinctly safeguarded. In large cities there could not be an absolute cessation of all kinds of work on the Lord's Day, but these should be so carried out as to deprive no man of one day's rest in seven. The work also should be minimised, both in our households and in the demands which were made on public servants. If London could do without a postal service on Sunday could not the country do so also? Then as to travelling facilities. Was it necessary to compass London at all parts and at all times on the Sabbath day? Were these facilities minimised as they ought to be? Was not the tendency always to the breaking down of limitations? At any rate, the work involved should be so restricted as to be a burden to none, even if it meant lower dividends or a higher passenger fare. But rest was not all.

Our Lord taught that the Sabbath was "made for man" as a day for refreshment—a day that would open up to us a new world, the wide realm of the unseen and the eternal. Not that the gate of heaven was ever shut, but in days of toil it was only brief glimpses we got of it. On the seventh day we put aside our worldly work to lie down in the green pastures and beside the still waters to which the Good Shepherd was always willing to lead. One touch of faith, and the palace of the King with all its treasures was disclosed. Alas! that so many should miss it, that so many ears should be totally deaf to the music of heaven. See how eager our Lord was. It would probably have been much more genial to His human spirit to have left the quibblings of the synagogue, and climbed the quiet hill, there to hold communion with God; but instead of that He joined the little band of worshippers. He read the texts. He preached His Gospels of Gospels for the poor, a Gospel that had to do with the life that now is and the life that is to come. Daily bread, decent houses wholesome recreations, opportunities for culture were all parts of the Gospel for the poor; but in addition to these let no one keep from them the Gospel of the Eternal. Do not give them on Sunday a stale repetition of all the doings and thoughts of the week. Let their eyes be opened to see the light of the Lord—the light that never was on sea or shore; let their ears be opened to the music of the glory of God!

In a closing passage of singular beauty and eloquence Dr. Gibson drew a picture of a Parisian Sunday in contrast with one presented by a group of Sabbath worshippers on a Scottish hillside, and asked his hearers to "look on this picture, and on that." Altogether a great sermon, finely conceived, beautifully expressed, and delivered with rare force and pathos.

BE TEACHABLE.

Teachableness is one of the first characteristics of honesty. There is no religious honesty that is not adorned by the spirit of docility. If you are self-trustful, if you walk by your own lights, if you contend, even silently and passively, that it lies within the compass of your power to find out everything for yourself, then you are not a scholar in the school of Christ; you are stubborn, you are dogmatical, and, as such, you deprive yourself of all the gifts of Providence.

How few people are teachable! So many of us go to the Bible and find proofs of what we already believe. Is this not extremely true? Whatever your form of church government is, you go to the Bible and find a text to vindicate it. Whatever your particular theology is, you open the Scriptures with the express purpose of finding in it a proof that you are right. This is not the spirit of Christ. The true believer goes with an unprejudiced mind, truly humble, honestly desirous of knowing what is true. No matter who lives or dies, who goes up or goes down, what is truth must be, and ever is, the supreme inquiry of honest and teachable spirits.

Would that we could all come to the Bible afresh, divesting the mind of everything we ever heard, and reading the Scriptures through from end to end, turning over every page with the breath of this prayer—"Spirit Divine, show me what is truth." Every man would then have the Bible dwelling richly in him, nor as a series of separate and isolated texts, but as a spirit, a genius, a revelation, a guardian angel.—Dr. Joseph Parker.

DR. CUYLER'S TESTIMONY.

The following testimony of the Rev. Dr. Cuyler to the inestimable value of a Christian mother's example and instruction, to the value of our Presbyterian Standards and of being thoroughly grounded in them; to the value of an immovable faith in the fulness, sufficiency and divine authority of God's Word deserves special attention at this time, and all the more, because it is given in the light of fifty years spent in the Christian ministry and after having been put to the test of such a lengthened experience. "Fervently do I thank my God for that faithful widowed mother, who dedicated me to this ministry in my cradle, and who was more than pastor or church or Sabbath school to me in my childhood. Fervently do I thank God for having been rooted and grounded in the sound theology formulated in the Westminster Confession. That anchor have been dragged. Fervently, too, do I thank God for giving me such a sublimely glorious Gospel to preach, such an all-sufficient doctrine of atoning blood to proclaim, such precious promises of His Holy Spirit's presence, and such verifications of this self-evidencing book. No gales of any so-called 'higher criticism' have ever blown high enough to rattle a single feather of my faith in the perfect inspiration, the perfect infallibility and the perfect authority of the only Bible which our heavenly Father has given to His children. Devout scholarship, however searching and fearless, from Martin Luther to McLaren and Bishop Lightfoot, has never dislodged a single stone in the massive and magnificent bulwark which Moses began to build, and which the Seer of Patmos completed. As for the arrogant, irreverent and bitterly hostile criticism which has taken on such airs, much of it is sheer conjecture, much of it is self-contradictory, much of it is refuted hypothesis; and when all these have been subtracted there is not enough left to stop the hole which a mouse nibbles in your wainscot."

If our churches were more concerned about their spiritualities than their temporalities, the latter would generally take care of themselves. The tithes will be brought into the storehouse when the heart is made to glow with the love of Christ.