

Observance of the Sabbath.

We are early taught in our progress in Masonry, that a good Craftsman will observe the Sabbath day. Our ancient brethren, we are told, worked six days, and rested on the seventh; the seventh day was therefore consecrated as a day of rest from their labors, thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to contemplate the glorious work of creation, and to adore their Divine Creator. It is not because any one day is more holy than another, or that we should reserve one day especially for the purpose of doing good. But rather, we ought to do good on every day, and every seventh we should consecrate to rest, and worship, particularly. That we should rest on the seventh day is demanded by the laws of nature, as well as by the Divine law, and no man can violate this law with impunity. We are taught our dependence upon our Creator, upon our first entrance into a Lodge of Masons, and to the Creator and Author of our existence, on whom we depend, and whom we trust we should devote one day in seven, at least, to His worship and the study of His laws and will. The Sabbath day, however, should not be hedged in with too puritanical ideas, and "Connecticut blue law." If on any day in the week, it is on Sunday we should be happy. We are no believers in a long-faced, gloomy religion, that looks upon God as our Father, and this bright and joyous world as the works of His hands, and for all of which He is entitled to one day of worship and praise and thanksgiving. The Sabbath is not, however, a day for riot, and wild licentiousness and revelry. This is not enjoyment, but rather a perversion of true enjoyment and happiness. Neither is the Sabbath a holiday. It is fully expressed in the term "Day of Rest."

It is a great fault in religious teachers, that instead of making religion attractive, beautiful and commendable to our reason and affections, as it should be, there is a disposition to shroud religion

in a gloomy, forbidden and repulsive garb, spreading the same gloomy mantle over our Sabbaths, until children, if not our own people come to abhor both as repulsive to every finer feeling of the soul. The Sabbath was not made as stocks to confine the people in as a punishment for their evil doing. The Sabbath was made for man, as a day of rest from his labors, and of rejoicing and thanksgiving and praise to the Creator for his manifold blessings. It is a day on which all of God's creatures should be happy, old and young, and not a day on which to be miserable above all the other days of the week.

When God commanded his people to do all their work in six days, and rest the seventh, he but reiterated one of his great laws of nature. It is absolutely necessary for man that he should rest one day in seven; and on that day he should throw off the cares of earth, business and labors of all kind, and consecrate the day to the Creator, in rational, innocent and religious exercises, in relaxation as well as worship and a hearty communion with nature, as well as with nature's God.

When mankind are educated, and civilized up to the proper standard, the Sabbath day will be observed as it should be, and as Jesus of Nazareth taught the people to observe it—in doing good—to the world and to themselves.

The Sabbath need not then be hedged in by statutory enactments, for a civilized and educated people will not indulge in "barbarous amusements."

No one can object to rational enjoyment—and we might go one step further and include innocent amusements. But anything that approaches the riotous, the barbarous, or the licentious, is neither rational nor innocent, but uncivilized and a perversion of the day. It is because the human family is still in a half civilized condition that law is necessary to restrain their evil dispositions and impulses. It is because of this want of perfect civilization that laws are necessary to keep in check the evil-disposed.