

together, because it is the day of the Lord's resurrection." This shows on what day Christians meet to worship God. This cannot be said of a company of worshipers in Healdsburg and other places at present.

Pliny, who was persecuting the Christians in Asia Minor under authority from Trajan, wrote about the year 106 A. D. to the emperor, telling him how the people met on a certain day to worship and attend to a kind of feast, in memory of Him whom they worshiped. The letter is very interesting and agrees with the testimony of Justin and others.

Andrews, the historian of the Seventh Day Adventists, says, "It does not appear that Justin and others at Rome, who held with him in doctrine, paid the slightest regard to the ancient Sabbath." He speaks of it as abolished — pp. xxxiii, 36. The American Encyclopaedia says of Justin, "He was one of the earliest and most learned writers of the Christian church." Neander says, "Churches consisting of Jewish converts, although they received the festival of Sunday, retained also that of the Sabbath for three centuries."

Mosheim says, "The seventh day of the week was also observed, not by Christians in general, but by such churches as were principally composed of Jewish converts."

I quote from a recent writer the following: "While there was some difference of opinion about the duty to keep the Sabbath, there was none as to the observance of Sunday. Not one line of discussion, objection, protest, or even doubt as to the duty of observing Sunday, can be found in all the writings of the first three centuries, whether by orthodox or heretic, Catholic or Greek, Jew or Gentile, eastern or western Christians. All agreed in honoring Sunday, whatever else they disagreed about. I know this is so, for I have read every line they wrote on the subject." Even Elder Andrews, while writing in defence of Sabbath keeping, says: "These fathers who hallowed the Sabbath do generally associate with it the festival called by them the Lord's Day."

These Ante-Nicene fathers are very definite in their teaching as to the day to be sacredly observed. Barnabas writes, "We joyfully celebrate the eighth day in memory of the resurrection." Ignatius says, "He would have us honor this day of the resurrection, as the first and most excellent of the days." Now let us read Acts xx: 7. "And on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." So says Paul to the Corinthian church, "On the first day of the week, let each of you lay by him in store as the Lord has prospered him." These show that it was the day of meeting, breaking bread, and providing for the poor under apostolic teaching.

But we often hear the question, "If the day is of divine appointment, why is there no definite command for its observance?" But was there no law or command or teaching for the guidance of the church in those days? In Heb. ii: 4, Paul says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," yet you can find no law for sin offerings for twenty-five hundred years after that time. Did Abel do an act in faith without any law of sacrifice? You may say, "The law must have been given which requires the act." Very well. So when we find men keeping Sunday in the presence and with the sanction of inspired men, we say they must have been divinely directed in this observance. We must always remember that an apostolic precedent has all the force of a divine command. I believe, however, that we will better keep, better understand, and better enjoy the Lord's Day if we view it from a higher eminence than that of command, which may be the reason why so little is directly commanded respecting it. It is to us the day of faith rather than of law; the

day of glad associations and precious memories. Faith takes us to Joseph's tomb and shows us the opened sepulchre and our risen Lord, and while we gaze we are reminded that

Death and the grave unite their force  
To hold our Lord in vain;  
The sleeping conqueror arose,  
And burst their feeble chain.

Tame indeed would be any statutes in giving significance to a day forever hallowed by the grand event which has brought life and immortality to light. But on the Lord's Day he sent down the promise of His Father to give life to the church and inspiration to its ministry. On the Lord's Day, the great facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ were first preached to astonished men and women. On that day the church became a living body and thousands with glad hearts came to the obedience of the faith. With all these precious memories clustering around this sacred day, were there no other authority, these are enough to make precious and significant our holy day.

I will not consider Sunday from a political standpoint. But while it can never become to the unbeliever what it is to the Christian, there are weighty reasons I think, why it should be to this nation and to all nations a universal day of rest.

But how should it be kept by the church of God? It cannot properly be made a day of business, labor or pleasure, because

1. Its nature, design and significance forbids that. While the regulations and restrictions of the Sabbath do not apply to it, it is evident that its advantages are found in its religious observances. The associations of the day are purely of a religious character. In order that our minds and hearts may be in unison with these, our thoughts, words and deeds must be spiritual. In an important sense we must "Be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

2. It becomes to the Christian his day of rest. He has no other. The Sabbath has passed away but of the Lord's day he can sing:

Sweet is the day of sacred rest,  
No mortal cares shall seize my breast;  
O may my heart in tune be found,  
Like David's harp of solemn sound.

3. The Lord's Day has always, since its first observance, been the day of religious assemblies. The meeting together of the membership of the church has always been an important factor in its life and growth. Should the church cease to hallow the day that has been from apostolic times, the day of public worship, she will soon cease to continue "Steadfast in the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers."

### THE RELIGIOUS MULE.

Be not as the . . . mule. Psa. 32:9.

What depth of feeling and bitter experience this expresses! The mule is the incarnation of obstinacy. Standing with his fore-feet wide and firmly planted on the ground, his long ears laid back close to his neck, his tough hide, and long, awkward head, he is a picture of firmness. You doubtless imagine that David was thinking of one of those balky brutes on his father's farm when he wrote the text. Far more likely he was thinking of Joab—in comparison with whom the most obstinate of these early acquaintances was pliability itself.

There are mules and mules. All have the same character; but there is a diversity of outward forms. Some are horizontal, other are perpendicular. Some walk on four feet, and some on two. Usually, however, they do not walk at all, but stand very still.

Not a few these animals are found browsing on the tender grass within the enclosure of the Christian church. They are easily discovered. In fact there is no need to discover them, for they soon make their presence felt. The mule, whatever may be his outward form, is an obstructionist. He is tenacious of his own opinions. He will have his own way, or he will stand still, and make everything and everybody stand still with him, if possible.

Lucky enough if he does not let fly with his heels, and pulverize all objects within reach.

Obstinate? An obstructionist? O, no! he does not intend to be either. He is very "conscientious." And unfortunately he has adopted that familiar definition of "conscientious," namely, "Something within me which 'I won't.'" There is nothing light or frivolous about him. He makes everything a matter of conscience; and when others differ from him, it is always because they are less earnest and conscientious than himself.

When his mind is made up, he is immovable. Argument and persuasion are alike wasted upon him. He usually plants his feet firmly on one or two scripture texts which seem to substantiate his position; and from these he will not budge an inch. You may quote a dozen in refutation, but he will throw them all aside, and stand on those he has chosen. It is indeed fortunate when the rest of the team can move on, and leave him standing there alone in his glory, like Lot's wife on the shore of the Dead Sea. Too often he gets between the shafts; and then, when he comes to a standstill, the rest must halt with him till he is ready to move on, or is taken to his reward. Many a church in our land to-day is standing absolutely still, and has made no progress for years, simply because there is a mule somewhere in the team; perhaps he is in the pulpit, perhaps in the pews.

We can all of us assume this character on occasion. It is one of the strongest points in favor of Professor Darwin's theory, that there seems to be in almost every member of the human family some remaining trace of the ancestral mule. Nothing is more easy than to persuade ourselves that any point which we desire to carry is a matter of conscience. "I feel impelled to do thus or so, therefore, I ought," is a common syllogism. We often mistake obstinacy—in ourselves—for moral courage, proper firmness, decision of character, or some other commendable quality—so nearly are vices related to virtues. When unwelcome advice is offered to us, we thrust it aside, and imagine ourselves to be miniature Martin Luthers, determined to enter Worms though there were as many devils as tiles upon the housetops. Or we fancy that we are but repeating the "Get thee behind me, Satan," of the Master. Very frequently we should find a more accurate likeness in Rehoboam, who forsook the counsel of the old men, the wisest and safest advisers in the realm.

Decision of character and firmness of purpose are very desirable qualities in the Christian. The church of the present day needs men with independent minds and strong, straight backbone, men who dare to say "No" clearly and earnestly. She needs men like Joshua and Daniel and Paul, who can withstand temptation, and even the false persuasion of friends. But we must beware, lest with the backbone we develop a tail and long ears.

"Be not as the . . . mule."—Rev. George H. Hubbard, in *Sunday School Times*.

### IF WE KNEW.

Could we but draw back the curtains  
That surround each other's lives,  
See the naked heart and spirit,  
Know what spur the action gives,  
Often we should find it better,  
Purer than we judge we should;  
We should love each other better,  
If we only understood.

Could we judge all deeds by motives,  
See the good and bad within,  
Often we should love the sinner  
All the while we loathe the sin.  
Could we know the powers working  
To overthrow integrity,  
We should judge each other's errors  
With more patient charity.

If we know the cares and trials,  
Knew the efforts all in vain,  
And the bitter disappointment—  
Understood the loss and gain—  
Would the grim external roughness  
Seem, I wonder, just the same?  
Should we help where now we hinder?  
Should we pity where we blame?

Ah! we judge each other harshly,  
Knowing not life's hidden force;  
Knowing not the fount of action  
If less turbid at its source.  
Seeing not amid the evil  
All the golden grains of good,  
Oh! we'd love each other better,  
If we only understood.