

THE SABBATH OF THE HEART.

BY GEORGE MATHEWSON, M.A., D.D.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work" (Gen. ii. 3).

Creation goes from the wing to the nest. It begins with the Spirit moving, and it ends with the Spirit resting. But observe, it is the rest of a *spirit*. What is the rest of a spirit? It is the opposite of a body's rest. The body rests when it has reached exhaustion; the spirit when it has reached satisfaction. The body reposes when it has closed its eyes on everything; the spirit reposes when it has opened its eyes on its own image. God could not rest until He beheld His likeness in the pool. Without that likeness the pool was stagnant, and stagnancy is not the spirit's rest. My heart can never find repose until it has found something like itself—something made in its own image. Then alone it meets with that delicious thing—reciprocity. Reciprocity is the Sabbath of the heart. It is a Sabbath-bell ringing across the snow. It tells me there is somewhere in the void a house of kindred sympathy where I can find communion, fellowship, response. When I want to rest in my body I wish no one to speak to me. But when I want to rest in my spirit I wish to be spoken to. It is a voice I crave for—the answer of a heart to my heart, the throb of a soul to my soul, the reply of a life to my life. My spirit shall rest when it finds its other self.

Oh, Thou Divine Man, I shall find it in Thee. Thou art that for which I have been waiting, without which I have been weak. It is my want of rest that has made my want of service; my spirit in its Gethsemane has been sleeping for sorrow. Thou comest to awake me out of sleep—to wake me by Thy rest. When I repose in Thee I shall repose in nothing else. The calm of my heart shall give it wings. There is no flight so high as that of the bird that has been in Thy bosom. Rest my heart, O Lord, that it may soar. It has no pinions out of Thy sunshine. It sings in Thy beams; it plays in Thy smile; it flutters in Thy nest; it flies in Thy pavilion; it leaps to Thy music; it stirs to Thy peace; it gathers endless strength when it makes an end in Thee. If I sleep in Thee, I shall do well.

THE SABBATH SIGN.

BY WILLIAM J. R. TAYLOR, D.D.

"Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctified them." "Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign between Me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." (Ezekiel xx. 12-20.) And again centuries earlier, God said to the Hebrews in the wilderness. "Ye shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you to observe it throughout your generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever." (Exodus xxxi. 16, 17.)

It is no fiery cross, no burning bush, no flaming mountain, no merely physical wonder, but a day, of twenty-four hours, a seventh day that comes and goes, with its unfailing dawn and sunset, its morning, noon and night—a sign that nothing in the heavens or earth can prevent or obstruct, and that is as certain and regular as the revolutions of the solar system. Upon this day, this first day of every week, the Creator of the worlds and of mankind has put His own eternal mark, and He has made it His own "sign" to the human race, a sign more enduring than the Star of Bethlehem, and as visible, audible, tangible as any other of His works that appeals to the senses and the souls of men.

This Sabbath sign stands for all the facts and truths contained in God's everlasting covenant. It is a sign of the wisdom that thinks for us, of the compassion that pities us, of the goodness that cares for us, of the loving kindness that crowns our days. It is God's sign of His rights in us and over us, and of our right to its rest and blessings. It is a sign of the worship that He requires, and of the homage we ought to render to Him as our Creator, our lawgiver, king and judge. It is His memorial of His own finished creation, and the glorious monument of our Saviour's resurrection from the dead.

The Sabbath is also a sign of man's absolute need of its blessings. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." It is the great unchanging, ever

recurring time-signal of man's need of the seventh day rest. "What statistician" (wrote the French philosopher, M. Proudhon) "could have discovered that in ordinary times the period of labor ought to be to the period of rest, in the ratio of six to one? Moses, then, having to regulate in a nation the labors and the days, the rests and the festivals, the toils of the body; and the exercises of the mind, the interests of hygiene and of morals, political economy and personal subsistence, had recourse to a science of numbers which embraced all space, duration, movements, spirits, bodies, the sacred and the profane. The certainty of the science is demonstrated by the result. Diminish the week by a single day, the labor is insufficient relatively to the repose: augment it in the same quantity, it becomes excessive. Establish every three days and a half, a half day of relaxation, you multiply by the breaking of that day's loss of time; and in shattering the natural unity of the day you break the numerical equilibrium of things. Accord on the other hand forty-eight hours of repose after twelve consecutive days of labor, you kill the man by inertia after having exhausted him by fatigue."

The eminent German philosopher, William von Humboldt, writing from his own personal observation, said: "When the Sabbath was abolished in France, every tenth day was ordered to be observed as Sunday, and people worked on for nine days in succession. It was soon found to be too great a strain, and many kept holiday on Sunday also, as far as the laws would allow, or two days out of ten; and then they had too much leisure. And, finally, they had to return to the only natural and true division of one day out of seven for rest."

Thus, by the tests of science and experience, this perpetual Sabbath sign carries upon its face and throughout its history the proofs of the eternal wisdom that ordained it, and of man's continual and absolute need of its temporal as well as its spiritual blessings.

Man needs it as a day of social order, of domestic happiness and of civil right and liberties. It is really the only stated and frequent day of personal, social and legal freedom from a multitude of labors and obligations which bind us on all other days. The laws and statutes which protect the civil Sabbath were made in the interests of the whole community, and to secure as much freedom from toil as possible, consistently with the necessary maintenance of human society and government. Of all these natural, legal and constitutional rights, God's weekly Sabbath is His unfailing sign to the human race. The Sabbath sign, like the rainbow, will not be put out even by another deluge of wickedness and judgments, should it burst upon the world.

But it is for its religious uses and blessings that the Sabbath is our most hopeful and precious sign.

Our common and statute laws and the general government and local constitutions of the Dominion recognize the Christian civil Sabbath as an institution to be respected, observed and protected for the safety of society and government, and to secure the rights of the people to worship God according to their own consciences.

But there would be no civil or legal Sabbath had there not been first the Christian Sabbath, the Sabbath of Sinai, and the Christian Sabbath. Its supreme significance is strictly and forever religious, spiritual, and of God Himself, for man, and for man always and everywhere,

"CROSSING THE BAR."

BY REV. WM. C. HUNTER

The sweetest songs are those we sing in the evening, when the day is done and the voices of the night call us home, where we are encircled with friends, where we are secure from molestation and free from care and toil. The songs of the day may be merry and loud, but the songs of the night are full of comfort and power; they bring the soul into contact with the unseen and eternal. Many songs are very dear to us because they have been sung so often at the closing scenes of those we love, who have gone before us to the "summer land." And as each new thought of the future life gives new courage to our faith and finds expression in the happy utterance of some poet, so too each bitter pang of heart-felt sadness must move the lofty soul to utter words of encouragement to the soul in view of its release, rest and reward.

One of the most recent songs which has found a place in "The Hymnal" is "Crossing the Bar". From beginning to end it is the calm, triumphant utterance of