

whenever the observance is carried to such an excess that the day becomes an injury to peace or health or spiritual improvement, then it is certain that the observance is wrong. Man is forgotten in the day. There is danger always that an observance become a fetish, and that superstition require the same observance under all conditions, no matter what the result. Superstition makes of it a Car of Juggernaut, and insists on dragging it forward, no matter what victims lie in its path. But the sabbath was made for man, and not for its own exaltation. It must, therefore, bend to man's best good.

The two things specially given man by the Sabbath are rest and worship. Obligated as he is to work, he is liable to toil till the silver cord of life is snapped. Man is so made that he needs, not only the rest of sleep a certain number of hours in every twenty-four but for the same reason, and just as much, he needs cessation from his ordinary toil one day in every seven. This is a periodic law built into man's brain, muscle, and nerve.

The other need met by the Sabbath is worship. God is our Father and Preserver. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." To be separated from him is death. Our one need as sinners is to be reconciled to God. Our absolute need as men is to be in communion with God. Borne on the currents of the world's life, we drift away from God. But the Sabbath, if properly observed, brings us back again to God. Each quiet Sabbath, like a wise and loving nurse, arrests us in our wanderings, takes us to our Father and places us in his arms. A potent influence this, to build up in us that which is noble and true.

A subsidiary influence of the Sabbath, too often overlooked, is to develop a reverence for law. The Sabbath is essential to good government. It is a breakwater against sin. The rushing tides of passion gather momentum during the week, but sweeping against the Sabbath, break in pieces and lose their power. A universal habit in a nation to reverence the Sabbath awakens a strong respect for law in all its force. A positive enactment like the Sabbath, the necessity for which roots itself in the invisible, requiring every seventh day a cessation of ordinary methods and obedience to its own demands, is a magnificent influence to train men to good order in the state.

But Christ enunciates a second principle. It is that NECESSITY AND MERCY ARE THE ONLY EXCEPTIONS TO THE SABBATH LAW.

There are needs that must be met irrespective of the day. Whatever work can be done on another day, must be. Such work as cannot be avoided is legitimate. Christ gave two instances of what is necessary—the satisfying of physical needs and the performances of the duties of religion. But we must be careful to distinguish here between a necessity and a convenience. Christ makes an exception in favor of the former, but not of the latter.

Mercy, also, makes Sabbath work fitting. Christ did not reprove the Jews for relieving a dumb brute in distress. Much more did He justify a merciful deed to suffering humanity. Here was a man afflicted with a chronic trouble. He might have waited till the morrow; but Christ would not have him wait; He healed him then and there. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

The third great principle our Lord announced was this; that CHRIST IS THE LORD OF THE SABBATH.

He determines the form of Sabbath Observance. In other words we must have a Christian Sabbath. The Jews were not to impose their interpretations of the Sabbath on Christ. That were a gross impertinence. Christ is King among men, and He appoints everything for their best good. Since the Sabbath is for their benefit, therefore Christ has charge of it and is to direct them how to employ it.

All law finds its ground either in the divine character or in the needs of man. The Sabbath law is based on the latter, hence Christ may modify the observance of the day, within certain limits, according to the enlightenment of the age and the condition of the individual. The stakes are driven and the lines are drawn. Within these lines Christ is leading the world on to an intelligent and reasonable observance of the day best adapted to the modern needs of man.

The Elder in his Relation to Pastor and Congregation.

BY JOHN CAMERON IN KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY.

The ideal elder naturally strives to promote useful relations between minister and congregation. The elder knows, or ought to know, how the congregation feel towards their pastor, and their opinions on various matters. With such knowledge, he may sometimes help the pastor to avoid things which, though touching no matter of principle, might prove stumbling-blocks.

A wise pastor will remember the advice of Lord Bacon, and, instead of reducing consultation with the session to a minimum, will sometimes consult his associates when there

could be no valid ground of censure if he did not do so;



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for it is remarkable how often a free discussion, from varying points of view, presently makes that clear which before was doubtful. It is desirable that the session on all matters should be unanimous, the elders thus fully sharing with the minister the responsibility for the course adopted.

The elders can often stand between the minister and too frequent calls for outside service. In the matter of absence from one's own pulpit there is a golden mean. To the right extent, it is useful

and refreshing for the minister occasionally to go away, not to speak of benefits that may be carried to those to whom he goes. But there are ministers who cannot say "No," and whose time and services need to be protected by the friendly reluctance of his fellow members of the session.

Elders have opportunities to be useful to the minister in apprising him of signs of interest in divine things in individual cases. The minister may be the man to, clinch the impression.

One of the elder's clear duties is to encourage the minister. That minister who plods along, week in, week out, preaching, let us say, helpful sermons, and yet never encouraged by being informed by an elder that his sermons have been helpful, is defrauded of his due. The minister no less than others—no less than our Lord when upon earth—craves human sympathy. I should put it that sympathy is as necessary to the minister as light is to the plant. A minister is subjected to many solitudes, and a constant drain upon his own sympathies. How shall the right balance in the minister's life be kept up unless by the manifested sympathy of his people, and particularly of his associates at the session board? In what I have said I am not suggesting anything that savors of flattery. Flattery is not merely false, but also foolish, in that it deceives no one. I plead not for flattery, but for honest praise and encouragement.

In his relations to the congregation, the elder is apt to hear what the people are saying, and can sometimes surmise what they are thinking before they say anything. Sometimes they think appeals for money are too many and too strenuous. Sometimes they think he scolds too much—particularly those present for the sins of those absent. Sometimes, if he is working out a course of sermons, they may be ready for a little variety before he is. In all these things, judicious elders could often oil the bearings, and, with efforts scarcely beyond those afforded by good will and casual opportunity, make crooked paths straight, and reduce friction to a minimum.

Elders and managers alike should regard the general acceptability of the minister as part of the congregation's working stock-in-trade, and therefore as something to be promoted and increased. From this point of view, let us suppose something that is a little disagreeable needs to be done or set forth—necessary, but disagreeable. The elders or the elders and managers jointly, might chivalrously and wisely take the disagreeable duty, so far as it is possible, off the minister's shoulders altogether, assuming the responsibility themselves; for, let me repeat in closing, the wise congregation, the wise elder, the wise manager, will regard the general acceptability of the minister as a vital part of the congregation's working stock-in-trade.

Sweet Homes.

The happiest, sweetest, tenderest homes are not those where there has been no sorrow, but those which have been overshadowed with grief, and where Christ's comfort was accepted. The very memory of the sorrow is a gentle benediction that broods ever over the household, like the silence that comes after prayer. There is a blessing sent from God in every burden of sorrow. In