

Leipzig, probably better known to English scholars than any other living theologian in Germany, thoroughly evangelical in his teaching, and beautiful and consistent in his life, recognizes the fact that Sabbath-keeping in England and America has been an undoubted blessing, but he urges no such observance on the part of his own countrymen. He holds that the Mosaic laws touching the Sabbath have been abolished. The loving Christian will, however, set apart Sunday, or a portion of it, to commemorate the great event of Christ's rising from the dead. But then, he would say, Saturday should be also in some degree holy; it commemorates God's rest from the work of creation, and the Saviour's rest in the grave. To him the one day can scarcely claim greater sanctity than the other. As we look for the fruit of the seed thus sown, we may well turn and question this view of the institution of the Sabbath. Pass a Sunday in any one of the cities of Germany, and the facts force themselves on the mind. A mere handful of people go to church, possibly three or four per cent. The day is in fact a holiday, except to the men and women connected with places of amusement and entertainment, and to a good many whose employers will not forgo the profits of this day of rest. The streets are crowded with pleasure seekers as on no other day. The mechanic or shop-keeper is taking his family for a walk in the park, where they sit in some beer-garden sipping their beer and listening to the special music furnished for the day. The theatres, too, are offering the choicest programme of the week. If a fair is to be held in the town, the opening day is Sunday, and even the pastors of churches are known to sometimes change the hour of worship that devout worshippers may witness the grand procession opening some festive week. Yes, these are the doings of thousands of church members, but then, church membership in Germany is mainly an affair of the intellect and carries with it few responsibilities. To the boy, it is a putting away of childhood; to the girl, the liberty to wear long dresses and enter society.

What of the Sunday as observed by the small circle of believing Christians? An incident from personal experience may best illustrate. In Berlin, I attended an ordinary Sunday evening meeting of the Y.M.C.A. of that city, one of the best of these associations in all Germany. After signing my name in the visitors' book I entered the room of meeting, already well filled with an audience, most of whom were young men. The exercises had not yet begun, and the members seated round small tables were engaged in cheerful conversation. Almost all were sipping huge glasses of their favorite beverage—beer; many were smoking; and some were deep in the mysteries of chess and draughts. Scripture motives decorated the walls, the uniformity being broken by one card over the desk, bearing the legend, "Smoking is not allowed during the service." Soon the President took the desk, and giving out a hymn it was sung as Germans only sing; prayer was offered, a selection from Scripture read, and an earnest evangelical discourse preached, based on a verse of the Bible. An interval then followed for social intercourse, such as had preceded these exercises. Other hymns were afterwards sung, and the meeting finally closed with prayer. It was a sight such as I had never expected to see, yet no spectator could detect any show of insincerity in the worship they offered, and no sense of incongruity ever suggested itself to them. At all events, one must acknowledge it was a vastly better way of passing the Sunday evening than going to the theatre, where otherwise these young men would likely have been found.