

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

By Rev. Fredrick B. DuVal, D.D.

The subject of Sabbath Observance has occupied no little share of public attention in Winnipeg for some time past, and has led to much bitter discussion. It is refreshing, therefore, to listen to quiet common-sense and broad-minded views on the question by a man who has become recognized and esteemed throughout the Canadian West for his logical conclusions on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the general public.

In Knox Church, on a recent Sabbath morning, Dr. DuVal said:

"I wish to speak of the Sabbath and its preservation by law. I take no text from the Scripture because there are some who ever rebel against the idea of pressing upon them any tradition of other times or peoples. I desire, therefore, to put the Sabbath upon its own inherent merits. There should be no prejudice against it because it comes to us from another age or nation, any more than against the common law of England. They are both the people's heritage, having sprung from the customs that were practised by their forefathers. No statesman ever questions how much of a custom or law was Saxon or Celt, Norman or Danish, Christian or Pagan. Whatever the people were, their customs were their life, and the unfathomed fountain of their laws. If the Sabbath sprang from Christian sentiment it was because the people were Christian. Would we have respected the rest day more if we had gotten it from the worshippers of Saturn or Woden, rather than from those who chose the day that commemorates the most wonderful confirmation of grace in human salvation? Be it understood we do not retain this day arbitrarily any more than we retain the common law arbitrarily or gold from guinea, but because of its own inherent value; upon the same principle we retain the ordinance of marriage, handed to us from our forefathers.

Now, wherein lies this inherent good? First, in that it secures the rest necessary to recuperate the wearied body. It is almost an insult to an intelligent audience to reiterate arguments upon this point. Dr. Paul Niemeyer, professor of hygiene in the university of Leipzig, declares it to be as necessary as infection in case of epidemic, or vaccination in case of smallpox. The same great authority goes on to say: "Sunday rest is

The First Precept of Hygiene.

Its observance or non-observance affords the means of gauging a people's common-sense, and the degree of its advancement in civilization, and when men run contrary to this settled wisdom, the law of creation resident in the nature of things generally brings them to condign punishment."

"This matter was amply tested during the French revolution, when the people affected to disregard all divine law, and with other things did away with the Sabbath. But it was found that even the beasts could not stand the strain. The wise men of the Sorebonne were appealed to, to investigate the reason of such mortality. Their reply was that they needed rest. The government then appointed one day in ten, but this was found inadequate, and by every test the general consensus of physiologists and political economists concludes one day in seven is a proper amount of rest to be given. But the inherent good of such a period of rest in the second place lies in the fact that it is needful for man's higher intellectual-moral nature. Man

is more than a horse. It will not do to think that the physical health of the community is the only valid reason for observing Sabbath rest. If the avoirdupois is the only thing the state can aim at by law let it be known that a pig can put on more pounds in ten months than a man in ten years. Does the state sustain public education for bodily health alone?

Physical Needs Not All.

You must ever measure men through the intellectual-moral diameter. The highest well-being of man comes through the enlightening, refining and ennobling of his feelings, and the state's well-being is the sum total of the enlightened, refined, and ennobled feelings of its people.

"The Sabbath, therefore, must not halt with mere cessation of physical toil. Man must be lifted out of the dust and grind of life to something better. Society and the state are constituted to help men to realize their noble possibilities.

Now the existence of the state implies law to execute its purposes, and why? Because there are many who do not recognize what is needful for the highest good of the people, and others who, through selfish lusts, do not care for the good of the people. Therefore, the body politic must pick out what is right and good and proper to be done, and make the law regulative of all.

Sunday "Liberty."

"Individuals should not, therefore, consult too much their own convenience. They must ask to what end everything logically leads. If some people demand the liberty of having cigars and fruit stands open on the Sabbath, the grocer who sells the same goods has a similar right. But this logically leads on to common trade, and takes away the right of numberless clerks to Sabbath rest. We must draw the line at regular meals, and if gentlemen do not provide their cigars on Saturday let them be served as dessert on Sunday. Only let us agree with the Duke of Argyll that the perfection of law is only the perfection of liberty. For a holiday unprotected by law is a breeder of all kinds of vice.

Experience in Other Places.

"Germany, with open saloons on Sunday, found 53 per cent. of its crime committed between Saturday night and Monday morning. Ireland decreased its arrests 53 per cent. by closing its saloons on Sunday, could reduce its police force on that day from 78 to 26 men. Columbus, Ohio, with closed saloons on Sunday, reduced arrests from 25 to 3.

"The holidays need, therefore, to be guarded by the strong arm of the law or they fail to fulfil the purpose intended.

"It is sheer nonsense to talk of our trying to make people religious by law. The real end at which we aim is the highest well-being of the people. Whatever aids, that should be allowed; whatever injuries, that should be disallowed. The law is not intended to interfere with personal liberty in so far as that does not injure the body politic. You can eat, or drink, run or walk or dance, or sing or read or pray, or teach or do deeds of charity, or anything you please that is not evil. But the law prohibits unnecessary labor or trade on this day because it leads to increasing injury. The law does not ask you to go to church, it simply gives the other man liberty to go if he wishes to, and when you are able to certify that the church is an injury to the public life, I'll be the first to say 'Close it up.'

Object of Christian Church.

"On the contrary, it cannot be denied that the whole object of the church is to clean up human lives and inspire its people to ameliorate the condition of those ruined by saloons and other institutions and dissipations.

"International law, the world around, makes a difference between the destructive forces on the field of contest and the Red Cross Society, whose object is to ameliorate suffering. The state, therefore, has the discriminative right to legalize hospitals, asylums, churches, and other institutions whose sole object is the amelioration of human conditions. As the Master said: 'It is law ful to do good on the Sabbath day.' That the church and all good people strive to keep the day as holy as possible ought to be a matter of gratitude to every reasonable mind because the very foundations of law that secures protection to every man, rest upon the reverence of a people for what is right and good. If the people are permitted to grow lustful, selfish, and self-indulgent, they will soon lose respect for the rights of their fellows and finally cease to respect themselves.

"Anyone who has visited places where no respect is paid to the Sabbath knows how coarse, degraded and criminal people become. We must struggle here in Canada as we are seeking to lay trusted foundations for our posterity to rest upon, to shield our children so far as possible, from the practical evils that we have seen to be consequent upon a degraded Sabbath day. Whether you are a professing Christian or not you are bound to confess that the highest good of society depends upon the cultivation of high and holy ideals among men, and this a well-kept Sabbath is intended to do."

THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS.

Editor Dominion Presbyterian: We in Canada are sorry for the children of New Zealand, who are denied the Bible in their schools. But, after all, how much letter off are the children of our own Dominion? Elicit what they know of the Bible from the first half dozen young people of high school age you meet, and I shall be pleasantly disappointed if you do not discover some appalling ignorance. A smattering of Bible names and subjects they probably have, but in such a confused state that it seems only to make their ignorance more surprising. In order to keep up the credit of the school, children study longer hours than the average adult devotes to manual labor, with the result that there is no leisure for more than "reading (skimming) a chapter" at bedtime, which coming on a brain overwrought, either is forgotten or remains an unassimilated mass of facts and names.

Of course there is the Lord's Day. But the tired child then rises for breakfast before church, then dinner, followed by "looking over" the lesson until Sunday school. Later a little time for singing or light conversation, then church again, and to bed. The lesson and possibly the sermons—is largely made up of legend and myth—in what Dr. Annandale (Imperial Dictionary) terms the "lower sense" of that word, in which the hearer is led to doubt the sufficiency, the accuracy, possibly the inspiration of the Scriptures.

I had thought, Mr. Eldor, of pursuing this subject further. But perhaps I have written enough to lead others, more capable, to think of these things, suggest and apply the remedy.

ULSTER PAT.

Some plants, such as the mimosa, grow fifteen times higher under red glass than under blue.