

The "April fool" of our school children, and all manner of practical joking by sending dupes on bootless errands, are common, and sometimes carried to great lengths. The women enjoy themselves in this way with one another, at certain seasons, with great gusto. Chess we might almost characterize as a national game, and gambling, that worst of all the vices of the ill-regulated, are common noontide recreations. Story telling is reduced to a fine art, and professors of buffoonery and tricks are attached to the houses of distinguished persons. Some of their readily improvised 'ales, both for wit and pathos, are quite charming and ingenious.

The evenings "at home" of a well-to-do Hindoo are usually spent amidst fumes of tobacco and opium, while he listens to tales of love and adventure—often not too reputable—or watching the swaying figures of the Nautch girls as they gesticulate and pose to the sound of stringed instruments and tinkling bells. The women also enjoy the spectacle, although not directly seated in the presence of the men.

There is a beautiful custom prevailing in Hindustan by which when a husband goes on a journey, to be absent for any length of time, the wife lays aside her jewels and ornaments in tender compliment. When he to whom she loves to appear charming is no longer present, she cares little to be pleasing in the eyes of others. Such is the custom and the sentiment now crystallized into a rigid etiquette almost universally observed.

### THE SABBATH QUESTION.

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(Continued.)

(4) There is an *intellectual* reason for the observance of the Sabbath. Its proper observance confers certain intellectual benefits which should not be lost sight of. It affords an opportunity for mental rest. It does not do this by causing us to abstain from the exercise of our mental faculties. This is not what we mean by mental rest, nor would such be rest for the mind. The mind finds rest in activity, or in a change of the subject of its thoughts. It might be retorted, especially by those engaged during the week in intellectual pursuits, "Have we not enough to occupy our minds during the week, without having it engaged on the Sabbath? Would it not be better for the mind to remain passive, to cease exercising its faculties on that day by not opening a book or listening to a sermon, or engaging in any conversation which would require the least mental exercise?" Yes, we reply, better, if the mind could rest by so doing, and the purpose for which the Sabbath was instituted be realized. But neither could be secured. The mind rests, not by the cessation of its activities, but by change of subject. And hence it follows, that no matter how severely intellectual your pursuits or occupations during the week, the change of subject which the Sabbath brings, secures rest. The mind when we attend church or Sabbath school, or read our Bible or any good book, is directed to a different subject from that which occupied it during the week, and in the very variety secures the rest it needs. And for those, again, whose occupations or pursuits are not so intellectual, there is afforded an opportunity for cultivating and enlarging the mind apart altogether from the more important spiritual benefits which accrue. By taking part in the Sabbath school or attending the service knowledge is acquired, and a wholesome intellectual culture secured; for the Church is an educator, an *intellectual* as well as a moral power, and no person can attend her services from Sabbath to Sabbath, and hear the most important themes affecting man's life here and hereafter discussed, without receiving a mental quickening as well as a moral stimulus.

(5) There is, again, a *moral* reason for observing the Sabbath. We need one day a week, at least, for moral instruction. There are duties towards our God, our neighbours and ourselves, which we must know if we would properly perform them. Now, for knowing these duties, the Sabbath affords a fitting opportunity. Besides, life is becoming more complex, and its duties more manifold. In order to achieve success, now-a-days, in any calling or pursuit, one must give his whole time and attention to it. Men engaged in the various avocations during the week, demanding from them all the time and energy they can muster, have not much time, even if they had the inclination, for dwelling upon these ethical questions, which concern

them as moral beings, and which are so closely interwoven with their present and future weal. The Sabbath affords them an opportunity of hearing such questions discussed, their moral duties in the several relations of life pointed out, and the great principles of morality set forth. In this way their moral nature is expanded, conscience educated, and moral instruction, in a great variety of subjects, imparted and impressed.

(6) We have, once more, a *spiritual* reason for the observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was instituted not only for man's physical and mental, but also for his moral and spiritual well-being. Our physical nature allies us to the lower forms of life beneath us, but our spiritual to God Himself. In our moral and spiritual capacities and powers we see the crowning glory of man. If, therefore, we need a day for the invigoration of the body, much more do we need one for the cultivation and development of the highest form of life possible to us here. Every reason, therefore, advanced in favour of a day of physical rest, tells with a tenfold force in favour of a day for moral and spiritual rest. The Bible has instruction for the mind, but it has also food for the soul. It addresses itself to us, *par excellence*, as spiritual beings—as beings formed in the image of God, and freighted with immortal destinies. It teaches us our duty to Him, to our neighbour and ourselves, and reveals a way of escape from the power as well as the penalty of sin. It is, therefore, a wise provision that we pause one day amid the hurry and bustle of the week, and direct our thoughts towards those truths which concern us as spiritual beings, born to live forever in a state of joy or sorrow, the varied duties which devolve upon us, the motives which should influence us to act, the proper view to take of this present life, and its connection with the life to come. But the soul rests not simply by feeding upon spiritual truth, but by having its devotional feelings excited and exercised. It finds its true rest in worship, adoration and love. As the body finds rest by cessation from labour, or the mind by changing the subject of its thoughts, so the soul rests by having its feelings of worship and adoration drawn out and centred upon their proper objects, and *this* the Sabbath effectually secures. We have the strongest possible reasons, therefore, for its observance. By means of it every part of our complex nature is benefited; our physical, mental and moral well-being promoted; and blessings, which we cannot fully estimate, conferred upon our race and world.

But we pass on to consider how we are to observe the Sabbath, and no more important practical question could we ask. The reasons we have mentioned *why* we should observe it, will aid us in ascertaining *how* we should do so.

(1) We should observe it as a day of *rest*. All labour should cease, naught should disturb its hallowed calm. It should be a day of rest for the body. A day when the jaded limbs, exhausted by the toil of the week, may be restored, and fresh vigour gained for another week's labour. The workingman needs this kind of rest most. He, other things being equal, needs the Sabbath more as a day of *bodily* rest. The several parts of our complex nature are so closely interwoven with each other, that what affects the physical, affects also the mental, as well as the moral and spiritual part. They act and react upon each other. If the body is jaded or weak, it will affect, directly or indirectly, the conceptions of the mind, and also the emotions of the soul. Hence it follows that the workingman, all those who are engaged during the week in manual labour, need especially rest for the body, ere their mental or moral natures can be benefited by the Sabbath. It should be a day of *mental* rest, a day in which the intellectual pursuits which engrossed our attention during the week, shall be laid aside, and our thoughts directed into different channels, and in the very change find rest and refreshment. In this way all those who during the week are engaged in occupations more or less intellectual or sedentary—the lawyer in his office, the merchant in his counting-room, the teacher at his desk, the writer in his study—all may welcome the Sabbath as a day which offers them the relaxation which they need. It should be a day of *spiritual* rest, a day of cheerful worship in which the soul shall enjoy sweet commune with its God, and in which its feelings and affections shall be drawn out and developed, its aspirations ennobled, and all its powers strengthened by their healthy and appropriate exercise.

(2) It should, again, be a day of *cheerfulness*. Gloom should be banished from our hearts and homes on this day of hallowed memories. It commemorates one of the most joyful events which has ever transpired in our world's chequered history, and if we would worthily observe it, we must do so in a spirit of cheerfulness. We should not simply rest, but rejoice. As we meet together to pay worship to our risen Lord, the light of a heavenly joy should illumine our hearts and gladden our faces. Every word we speak and deed we do should betoken the gladness with which we welcome its dawn. There are some places, we regret, in which the day is not thus observed, and where the extreme Puritanic mode still prevails. There the day is anticipated, especially by the children, with feelings of repulsion. A solemn gloom pervades the household, and by the long faces and forbidding looks manifested, Christianity is made to wear a repulsive aspect, and a stumbling-block thus thrown in the way of many who otherwise might be now over to Christ. Our Christianity should ever send forth a bright and cheery light. We should by word and deed seek to leave the impression that Christ and His Gospel do not deprive us of one innocent joy of life, that they have come to sweeten and beautify our human life, to intensify and purify our joys, to transmute our very trials into blessings, and to make us happier as well as better men and women. And on the Sabbath this should most appear. On this day we should wear our brightest looks and carry our gladdest hearts, and as the first ray of light greets us, ushering in this day of blessed associations, our hearts should swell with feelings of love, gratitude and joy.

(To be continued.)

165s.

Two hundred years ago were the "killing times" in Scotland. These were truly "times that tried men's souls." Scotch Presbyterians should ever keep them in remembrance. A word or two about some of those who, this year 200 years ago, suffered death "for Christ's crown and covenant," seems to me very suitable at the present moment.

The most famous of them was Donald Cargill. He, with Richard Cameron and others, drew up the Sanquhar Declaration, which disowned the authority of Charles II. It was so called because it was published at the Cross of Sanquhar, June 22nd, 1680, just one month before the battle of Airmoss, at which Richard Cameron fell. In September following, at a place called Torwood, he excommunicated the king and the chief of his fellow persecutors.

Five thousand merks (about \$15,000) were offered for his apprehension. At Dunsyre Common he preached his last sermon, only three days before he fell into the hands of his enemies. His text was Isaiah xxvi 20, 21, "Come My people, enter thou into thy chambers," etc. At Covington Mill, Lanarkshire, he was taken by one James Irvine, of Bonshaw, who said, "Blessed Bonshaw, and blessed day that ever I was born, that has found such a prize—five thousand merks for apprehending Cargill this morning." Poor man! he did not enjoy the price of blood long. Next year, he was run through by a comrade in a quarrel, and died with a most fearful curse on himself on his lips. Cargill was taken to Glasgow, and next to Edinburgh. At the latter place he was condemned to be hanged by the casting vote of the infamous Chancellor of the Council, the Earl of Rothes, one of those excommunicated at Torwood. He suffered on the 27th of July, 1681. On the scaffold he sung from the sixteenth to the end of the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm. He then addressed the onlookers. While he was doing so, the drums were beaten from time to time to prevent him from being heard. As he was about to go up the ladder, he said that he did so with less fear than he ever did when he went into the pulpit. His last words were: "Farewell all relatives and friends in Christ; farewell acquaintances and earthly enjoyments; farewell reading and preaching, praying and believing, wanderings, reproach, and sufferings. Welcome Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; into Thy hands I commit my spirit." Then he was thrown off.

Several others were hanged along with Cargill, of whom the names of only two are given—Smith and Boig. The former died with his face on Cargill's breast. According to the sentences, the heads of Cargill, Smith, and Boig were stuck up on the Nether Bow, Edinburgh; and those of the others on the West Port, in the same city.