

## Miscellaneous.

## A PLEA FOR THE SABBATH.

The advocates of Sunday horse-cars usually represent their opponents as tyrannical Puritans, interfering arbitrarily with the rights and enjoyments of the people. Let us see if this representation is a just one. So far as we know, in this community at least, the workingman is understood to be entitled to his weekly day of rest. The farmer stops his plow, the mechanic his machine, the merchant and manufacturer shut up their factories and counting-houses, and in general, the attempt of an employer to get Sunday work out of his men would be treated as an insult. Are those employed on horse railroads to be regarded as an exception, and deprived of the opportunity of rest and relief which is granted to the meanest and poorest in other employments? What right has the community to single out these men and say to them, "You alone, of all the multitudes laboring among us, shall be compelled to work as hard or harder on Sundays than on other days?" If this is freedom and liberality, give us tyranny and Puritanism.

It is pleaded that Sunday cars are needed to take people to church. So far as this is true, it justifies only such a moderate amount of travel as would not materially inconvenience those employed. But it may well be doubted whether one-half or three-fourths of those who thus ride to church on Sundays would not be the better for walking instead, and still better for ceasing altogether to attend distant churches, and occupying more appropriate places nearer home.

"But is the poor man to be deprived of his cheap conveyance, which enables him to escape from the close and noisy streets of the town, to breathe the pure air, and to rejoice in the beauty and verdure of the country?"

Certainly not, *except on Sunday*. On that day the overworked men and cattle of the horse railroad need their rest, as he needs his, and he has no right to take it from them. Few indeed, in this true home of working men, are unable to command the means and the leisure every week to get out of town for a few hours, without choosing Sunday for the purpose. If not, let me suggest to them, to do as others do, live out of town altogether, and come to town daily to their work. If this does not give them all they want of horse-car travel, it will be surprising indeed.

"But why look so carefully after the interest of car drivers and conductors who make no objection themselves to Sunday work?" How do you know they do not object to it? Is there a decent working man anywhere who does not prefer Sunday rest to Sunday labor? If those employed on horse railroads have got to the point of not caring for this, they would indeed have become degraded. No; they may not complain, for that might lose them their places; but they really act under compulsion—the compulsion not of tyrannical Puritans, but of money-loving employers or a selfish public. Unless they fall below the average of the community, many of them must feel that their Sunday occupation is at least questionable, if not absolutely wrong. If so, what right have you to tempt them to violate their consciences, or to do habitually what their better feelings disapprove.

"But shall the rich man go about Sundays in his carriage, and the poor be shut out from his cheap conveyance?" And suppose a rich man violates the sanctity of the Sabbath; is that a reason for compelling many working men to do so? We cannot interfere with the rich man's carriage so long as he exercises only his rights of property, but we can interfere to prevent the abuse of the privileges granted to a corporation.

We may fairly assume that in this Christian country the Bible is received as the word of God, and that a large majority of the people admit it to be a wise and safe guide for their conduct, and are willing to protect those who believe and obey it. In fact, the establishment of a weekly day of rest is due solely to the Bible, and our laws not only recognize the right of all citizens to be released on that day from all labor themselves, but the right to be protected from disturbance or interference with their worship of God. The Bible tells us that for thousands of years the law of God has enjoined upon all men supreme love, reverence, and obedience to God, and sincere good will to all men, shown by kindness, due subordination and respect for the persons, the rights and the property of all. In the very centre of this perfect code, which all the philosophy of man has been unable to improve upon, occurs a positive and elaborate injunction to observe a weekly day of rest, on the express double ground of its original solemn consecration to the worship of God and its necessity for the laboring classes—that they man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.

Now, though many in this community are in the habit of disregarding, to a greater or less extent, this divine law, we may safely assert that a large majority are willing and even desirous that it should be recognized at least by their neighbors. You may be too indolent or too fond of amusement to go to church yourself, but you like to know that your wife and children are there. You would rather meet your clerk or bookkeeper on his way to meeting than on a pleasure excursion, so-called, with a cigar in his mouth, behind a fast horse, and beside a fast young friend, of either sex. You do not expect a laborer or mechanic or tradesman to treat you less honorably during the week because he has spent Sunday in endeavoring to regain the healthy tone of both body and mind. And however little you yourself, enjoying perhaps superior advantages of leisure and culture, may feel a need of the Sabbath for this purpose, you would not be willing to take the responsibility of depriving others of its aid.

These views are not only just, but they are confirmed by history and experience. It is the uniform testimony of originals that they began the downward path by breaking the Sabbath. The most irreligious philosophers admit that human nature requires the rest of one day in seven. The only attempt ever made (by infidel France) to substitute one day in ten, proved a fail-

ure; and even Theodore Parker has recorded his judgment that the Puritan Sabbath of New England, with all its evils, (as he regarded them,) is preferable to the Sunday of Paris.

In view of these facts and considerations, may we be permitted to ask the following questions:

1. Is it right to allow the public worship of God on the Sabbath to be interfered with by the perpetual rumbling of ears through our streets, and under the very windows of our churches, as well as by the additional disturbance and interruption to foot passengers thus created?

2. Are we willing to take the responsibility of holding out a constant temptation, especially to young men (who need all the help in virtue that a devoutly spent Sabbath can give them,) to leave the church and Sunday-school and go in search of such pleasure as Sunday parties, liquor and gambling haunts, or the theft of flowers and unripe fruit can procure them? We claim, and very justly, the right to prohibit even lawful traffic on that day, and unlawful traffic on all other days, on the ground of protection to public morality. Are we sure that we have a right to leave this temptation in everybody's way?

3. Are any of us willing to decide that, so far as we are concerned, there shall be no Sabbaths for hundreds or thousands of working men and animals? We cannot doubt that they would be all the better for the same weekly rest that we enjoy ourselves.

We cannot doubt that all the animals and many of the men would prefer it; and that those who would not, are the more to be pitied and the more in need of Sabbath instruction. We cannot doubt that it is, on the whole, safer to obey the law of God than to disregard it. We believe that, hereafter, our personal relations to that law and to the Lawgiver, will be of immense importance to each of us. *Are we willing now to throw our influence in the scale of antagonism to that law, and to take the responsibility of compelling them to spend the day of rest in unnecessary labor, and to forego all those helps of religious worship and instruction which we dare not forego ourselves, or allow our families and dependents to forego, and which in our hearts we believe to be indispensable to the safety and welfare of society? And when every one of us shall give account for himself to God, shall we find it enough to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—Boston Traveller.*

## THE REUNION QUESTION IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

In the late meeting of the English Synod of the U. P. Church, the subject of Reunion was handled in two carefully prepared and able papers. The first, by Rev. Wm. Graham was on "Tendencies to Reunion." We make a few extracts. He said:—

The doctrinal question is the only one that stands in the way. On the latter it is surely enough to affirm that the United Presbyterian Church in its present health, only braced by the stormy winds of controversy, be accepted as a proof that whatever be in it—and, after all, there is nothing but words—does not affect the health, except favorably, of any Christian, and even of any Calvinistic Church; and, moreover, the prospective union of the two great American Churches, which separated ostensibly on the same ground, is a proof that they do not think it well to use a result. Could the question of union be remitted to some of these select purged spirits before the throne, I think at one glance the Red-Sea-would divide and become dry land, and the wilderness of our barren disputes would at once be turned into a peaceful garden of the Lord. And the more we have of that spirit which was in them, the more shall we be endowed with the burning love that shall consume grudges and suspicions, and the brightening intellect that shall pierce through the very heart of truth, and therefore of union. It is, I believe, in some such way that our four points of difference are to be met. I do not know that they are best met by an attack in front. Perhaps a movement from a higher and more distant region would turn their ranks effectually. It is to us that the famous Venetian Quadrilateral. There they were, the four points keeping back the long-delayed desire of the nation for a united Italy. The brave men attacked them in front. They crossed the Mincio with flying banners; they reentered the Mincio with drooping banners, and the nation was baffled; indignant, almost despairing. But far away on other fields their enemy was weakened and defeated, and in that hour, when least expected, the Quadrilateral was let go. It may be so in our case. We may be perplexed and baffled by taking up our differences in detail; but let us weaken the spirit of division in other quarters and strengthen the hold of other and greater truths and influences, and then it shall come to pass that, as with the impregnable Italian fortresses, our quadrilateral will give way, our peace be furthered, and from side to side, our Church, from its Alps to its Adriatic, amidst tears of wonder and shouts of triumph, the union will be at last proclaimed.

Mr. Graham referred to "the men of Roman severity and antique Christian temper, who are very jealous of the rights of the smallest truths." Men who think they are like Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans standing in the narrow and rocky defile of Thermopylae, but that and then all the more guarding and securing most effectually the more fatherland of truth. Let us in these controversies remember that these men have their use, and their noble uses too; while, at the same time, you should never forget that God's word like God's world has mountain ranges of truth, which, more than others are essential to the existence and stability of the whole structure. Surely the truths which centre in the Divine person and atoning death of Christ, are those which mark and mould the whole; upon which rest, indeed, the only true, unions and formed—unions deep in their foundations and durable in their effects. The right state of the spiritual atmosphere is that in which the high in general yet clear light, partaking of the infinitude of the heavens, and the definiteness of the earth; but the moment the landscape draws so near and every leaf on the trees, we draw of grass, and that ere long, that a storm may burst upon us which will disturb or utterly drown the whole scene. We are in some danger that such a distempred state of atmosphere may be created. Let us, therefore, rather cultivate a broader and, as I think, a healthier point of view. There is need also of maintaining at the present time, calmness of temper; an entire blank in the memory of many past speeches would help this purpose. For past unionists, like great but respectable characters had better have short memories

Rev. Dr. King followed with a paper on the present position of the Union Question. We quote an important paragraph:—

Another subject of inquiry is doctrine. We had a solemn discussion in our body, and the Free Church is anxious to know that we came out of it without bringing heresy with us or leaving orthodoxy behind her. (A. A.) It was my lot to know intimately the leaders. In that debate to which such importance is attached. After having heard all they had to say in public and in private, I affirm that it was much more a complication of circumstances than any serious contrariety of views which set them at variance. (Applause.) The Synod was reluctantly dragged into the strife, and so far from evincing any propensity to innovate, its doctrinal action was strictly preservative. It maintained inviolate the doctrine of the Atonement, and all the special securities of God's chosen, while holding what all the fathers of the Secession held, and what constituted the life and soul of their preaching, that salvation, through the death of Christ, is to be proclaimed and proffered to every sinner of mankind. (Loud cheers.) Their latitudinarianism, if so it is to be called, lay in clinging to a free and bona fide offer of the Gospel and in disclaiming all interpretation of other articles which would reduce that offer to a contradiction and a nullity. That such was the amount of our finding has been seen and owned by the most eminent theologians of various religious connections. We have a commission to preach the Gospel to every creature. What we have refused to say in preaching it, is, that to multitudes so addressed, it has no relation. A solemn salvation to multitudes through the death of Christ, is, and having no reference to them! That would be another Gospel or no Gospel. If with such a message, we undertook a voyage of evangelization, we should be like to see in a ship with the bottom struck out of it—(Hear, hear)—and so deservedly sink with it in the mighty waters. (Applause.) I hope that on all sides this article will be respected, and that a Church so precious to the country as the Free Church will have as the brightest gem in its freedom the free offer of the Gospel. (Applause.)

## CREDULITY OF DEISM.

The Deist is obliged to admit that there is a book in existence, which purports to contain a revelation from God; and as the basis of its authority, a record of various miracles, professedly performed by Jesus Christ and his apostles. The Deist believes that these miracles were never performed; still he must admit, either that they were pretended to be performed, or they were not; and in either case he stands convicted of credulity. If he takes the ground that they were pretended to be performed, while yet it was a mere matter of imposture, he is obliged to believe that a multitude of the most competent witnesses, and among them the most malignant enemies, in circumstances the most favorable for detecting imposture; and for several years in succession, were actually deceived. If he says they were not pretended to be performed, he has to admit the anomaly in human experience, that such a record of them as the Bible contains, was made at the very time when the imposture, if it were one, was most open to detection; that it circulated first among the very persons who would have been most interested and most able to detect it, and yet never even pretended to call the facts in question. If he will have it that the record of these miracles was not made during the age in which they were professedly performed, but that it was palmed upon some succeeding age, still he is obliged to admit that the whole mass of historical testimony fixes the date of this record to nearly the time in which they were alleged to be performed; and more than that, that a record of facts purporting to have occurred under the observation of the people to whom the record was first given, could have been received by them as a true record, when, at the same time, no such facts had ever come within their knowledge.

Again: the Deist is obliged to admit that the Bible purports to contain various predictions of future events; and if he compares these predictions with the history of the world, or even with passing events as they fall under his own observation, he cannot resist the conviction that there is a most wonderful correspondence between them. Look, for instance, at the curse that was originally pronounced upon Ham, and see how it has been executed; to the very letter, in the doom of his posterity. Look at the predictions with which the Old Testament abounds, in respect to the progress of the Gospel, and the dispersion of the Jews, and their preservation among all nations as a distinct people, and see whether the history is not an exact counterpart of the prophecy. These are all facts which the Deist cannot deny, unless he shuts his eyes upon the light; and yet he believes that the prediction has no relation to the event, except as a fortunate conjecture. He is obliged, upon his own principles, to admit that men having no communion with divinity, have predicted the most improbable and distant events; and yet that circumstances have uniformly occurred in such a manner as to bring about the fulfillment of their predictions: Does this look as if he were free from credulity?

Again: if the Deist takes the Bible in hand, and seriously examines its contents, much as he may be disposed to cavil, he will find it difficult to resist the conviction that there is wonderful harmony in all its parts; that the prophecies and the histories, the doctrines and the precepts, the Old Testament and the New, all have the same object in view, and are tending toward the same grand result. If the Bible had been written by an individual within the compass of a single life, the harmony that exists between its different parts might have been accounted for with comparative ease; but when you take into view the fact that this book was written by various individuals, of different modes of education, of different habits, and countries, and ages, through a period of many centuries, the admission that there was no Divine inspiration, no harmonizing, infallible influence from on high, takes for granted a degree of credulity that cannot easily be surpassed. In believing this, the Deist believes contrary to all reason and evidence. To suppose that such a coincidence, in such circumstances, should be accidental, were nothing less than to attribute to accident the power of working miracles.

Again: the sober Deist cannot resist the conviction that the Gospel has been a blessing to the world, and that it has triumphed over obstacles which, to human view, seemed insuperable. Let him, for instance,

compare those countries in which the light of Christianity shines, with those from which it is excluded, and he will be compelled to admit that Christianity has done much to ameliorate the temporal condition of men. Let him contemplate the influence she has exerted in improving human governments; the provision she has made for the relief of human woe; the milder and better form into which she has cast the human character, and the joyful triumph with which she has inspired many a human being on the bed of death—let the Deist contemplate all this, and resist, if he can, the conviction that the Gospel has been a blessing to the world; that it has fallen in with man's best interests; and so far at least as the present life is concerned, is adapted to make him happy. But the Deist believes, after all, that this is a system of imposture—that Jesus Christ was not what he claimed to be—the Son of God; and, of course, all that he did, and all that his disciples did after him, was to be considered merely as the work of deceivers. What a credulous being must he be to believe that deceivers could conduct in such a manner as this; that they should have originated a plan which was itself nothing better than bare imposture, the natural and only tendency of which was to bless the world! Especially, how credulous to believe that God has smiled upon this imposture, and carried it forward by all the arrangements of his providence, until every thing indicates that its prevalence is to be universal.—*Rev. Dr. Sprague in Evang. Quarterly Review.*

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