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THE C. E. TOPIC—Feb. 21.

SOME GOOD WAYS OF USING THE
SABBATH.

Mark 1:21-24.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

One of the noblest of the many noble stories told of Queen Victoria is the account of her refusal, in the face of the entreaties of an important government official, to examine certain state papers on the Lord's day.

One of the finest stories told of General Grant is his refusal when the President of France sent him a special invitation to witness certain Sunday races. Said the greatest soldier of his times: "It is not in accordance with the custom of my country or with the spirit of my religion to spend Sunday in that way."

One of the most instructive events in the grand life of John Quincy Adams was his refusal, when Minister to Holland, to attend the meetings of a certain learned society when they were transferred to the Sabbath. "You met on the Lord's day," he exclaimed, "and that is a day devoted to religious duties by me."

Queen, soldier, statesman—they are only a few among the myriads of great men and women who have sacredly set apart

One day with its searching light,
One day for the clearer sight,
One day for God and the right.

Mr. Moody strenuously advised workmen to follow these examples, and refuse to work on Sunday, even if big corporations require it. "The devil," he said, "will tell you that you will starve. Well, starve. It would be a grand thing to be a martyr in this age." As a matter of fact, however, the Sabbath-breaker is the one that starves; he starves his soul of spiritual food and his body of sorely needed rest.

Beecher compared our week days to a great valley of cares and sorrows into which we go down—down; but our Sabbaths should be made hills, "hills of light and joy in God's presence." From those summits we catch glimpses of the glory of heaven.

In spite of the differing circumstances, Christ's way of keeping the Sabbath is a precise model for us. He found rest in religious work, in helping men. That is always better than loafing in easy chairs. Those that are "too tired to go to church" are "too tired" for the most elevating and strengthening relaxation.

Christ's Sabbath was securely attached to organized religion, to the synagogue. He did not set up a "forest church" of his own. He went where men were that needed him and other men that would aid him to help the needy—and that was, and is, the church.

He taught the ignorant, he drove out unclean spirits, he visited the sick. We also may find some one that knows less than we about God, and teach him; some one harboring some devil of doubt, impatience, worry, wilful sin, and exorcise it; some one sad, worn, and weary, and cheer him up.

Christ was at it all day, far into the evening. Let us also make full days of Sunday, not stinting the measure of our service. Some one compares Sunday to two hours' additional leisure each day given to his workmen by a generous employer, that they may study arts that will enable them to take higher positions in his business. Shall they spend those hours in idleness or mischief?

So are our Sabbaths given us, a sacred trust from a loving God. Are we proving ourselves trustworthy?

CONSECRATION OF PERSONALITY.

H. E. T.

We may offer to God many gifts, but none of them bears comparison with the gift of ourselves. The one who created me, created also all the peculiar features of my personality, and he alone must be able to best train them and use them. How comforting and glorious is the thought, that this particular personality which we dedicate is dear to God. He does not command us to change it, or destroy it, but he himself enters into it to give it infinite development, and enable us to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In view of this, what folly it is for any one to attempt being other than himself, or to seek by outside aid and appliances to make his sacrifice more acceptable to God. Who would seek for a false eye, or an imitation ear, because thereby his body would appear at advantage; and likewise where shall we find the best gift to offer to our Master, save in that great gift of his to us, our own personality? And what is there that delights him more?

When the sinful woman showed, with tender touch and heartfelt tears, her deep love, the Pharisees were disgusted, but the Saviour commended her and contrasted their scanty love with her's, which was so spontaneous that it burst all conventional channels. They thought she ought to be some one else. He praised her because her gift was the expression of himself. Martha, at one time, thought her sister ought to be the object of rebuke, because the outgoing of duty was not kept within well-ordered courses, but the Master's word, "Martha, Martha," taught her that personality was a precious gift, no matter what expression it might take.

And the lesson for us all is, that no man offers a gift to God whose value compares with that of personality. For consider how much we all owe to those distinct personalities with which we have been brought in contact. How do we know what that great word "love" means until we see it alive in the life of our mother or friend. How much deeper becomes the meaning of purity, and liberty, and peace, and justice, when these beam forth in their glory from a loving soul?

The eternal God put a stamp of infinite value upon personality when he willed the "word" to be made "flesh," and that flesh dwelling among us has given us a knowledge of righteousness

and hope and duty and God and heaven, which could be ours in no other way.

High, indeed, is the worth of personality, for by that I am enabled to express in my own way God's thought and will; by that I open a channel through which God may give himself to me, and through me to the world. What wondrous possibilities open out before us when we consider a truth like this! Surely Moody spoke a true word when he said: "The world has yet to see the power of one man wholly consecrated to Christ." Therefore may our prayer be, not to be other than ourselves, but rather that we may give our personality with all its ransomed powers to him who alone can bring it to its highest and best.

Our consecrated personality is a reason for endeavor, because in Christ it finds its highest development; our consecrated personality is a reason for every man taking up his own work, because our personalities differ. And then consider that our personality partakes of God's own nature, for, as Godet says: "The life of God does not become merely an attribute of the man; through the Holy Spirit it becomes his nature, so that it can pass from the Spirit to his person, physical and bodily." Find sweet comfort, therefore, in this truth, that my distinct personality is known to God, and in its dedication it enters into blessed fellowship with the eternal. God knows us distinct from all others now, and so it will be at the last.

"Not sweeping up together,
In whirlwind or in cloud,
In the hush of summer weather,
Or when storms are thundering loud,
But one by one we go,
In the sweetness none may know."

LIFE.

Life is the journey of a day. We rise in the morning of youth, full of vigor, full of expectation; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gayety and with diligence, and travel on awhile in the straight road of piety toward the mansions of rest. In a short time we remit our fervor, and endeavor to find some mitigation of our duty, and some more easy means of obtaining the same end. We then relax our vigor and resolve to be terrified no longer with crimes at a distance, but rely upon our own constancy, and venture to approach what we resolve never to touch. We thus enter the bowers of ease and repose in the shades of security. Here the heart softens and vigilance subsides; we are then willing to inquire whether another advance cannot be made, and whether we may not, at least, turn our eyes upon the garden of pleasure. We approach them with scruple and hesitation; we enter them, but enter timorous and trembling, and always hope to pass through them without losing the road of virtue, which we, for a while, keep in our sight, and to which we propose to return. But temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance prepares us for another; we in time lose the happiness of innocence, by degrees we let fall the remembrance of our original intention, and quit the only adequate object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves in business, surround ourselves with luxury, and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy, till the darkness of old age begins to invade us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way. We then look back upon our way with sorrow, with repentance, and wish, but too often vainly wish, that we had not forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy

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they are, my son, who shall learn from thy example not to despair, but shall remember, that though the day is past, and their strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort to be made; that reformation is never hopeless, that he who implores strength and courage from above shall find danger and difficulty give away before him. Go now, my son, to thy repose; commit thyself to the care of Omnipotence; and when the morning calls again to toil, begin anew thy journey.— Samuel Johnson, from *The Rambler*.

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