

The Sunday Law.

The Signs of the Times, a S. D. Advent paper published in Oakland, Cal., is displeased with the California Sunday Law, and occupies near three broad columns of space in setting forth its objections and criticisms concerning the matter. We know but little about the fight over the Sunday Law in Cal. of which the *Times* speaks, and with this feature of the question, we are not specially concerned. But there are broad principles connected with the question about which we feel an interest and of which we profess to know something, and of these we have a right to speak. We would like to ask the editor of that paper if he believes that the Constitution of the State and of the United States should provide for one day in every week as a day of rest for both man and beast? Or does he believe that all laws regulating this matter should be wiped out from our statute books and thus break down all distinction between the days and allow the people of America to go pell-mell into vice and wickedness of every conceivable nature with no constraint whatever except what little influence the churches may be able to bring to bear against this great evil? If he accepts the former, it is only a question as to which day shall be selected. Does the *Times* believe that in matters civil, the majority shall rule? If so, then was it not preëminently proper that this nation shall select a day of rest that would meet the approval of the large majority of her subjects and most readily adapt itself to the great mass of her church-going people? If not, why not? Now this is just what has been done. Some other day could have been selected instead of the first day of the week; but since the great majority of church going citizens of this free nation are wont to worship on this day, it was right and proper that this day should be selected in preference to all others. It seems that the *Times* would be willing to have a Constitution providing a day of rest; but it thinks that day should be the seventh day of the week instead of the first. But this is not only selfish, but it contradicts one of the fundamental principles of this free government which declares that the people shall rule. "But the Sunday Law interferes with the religious principles of some people for which the Constitution of the United States expressly provides."

But would it be any better on the seventh day? Or do the S. D. Advents concede any religious privilege to their neighbors who are greatly in the majority? The *Times* very well knows that the Sunday Law, being a mere civil regulation, was not intended to interfere with the religious liberties of any one. If our friend wishes to keep the seventh day, he has a perfect right to do so, and the laws of the country instead of opposing him, will protect him in so doing. But the breaking of the law providing for the first day of the week is quite another question. Why then should he be displeased?

Selections and Comments.

CLOSE COMMUNION.—We take the following from the *Christian Index*:

We call attention, too, to the following concession of the N. Y. *Christian Advocate*, that when a denomination withholds the Lord's supper from Christians of other denominations, it is not withholding from them what they can "claim as a right" at its hands. Baptist strict communion, then, is simply an assertion of our own right of control, and invades and denies no rights of others.

But who gave you that right of control which you assert over other Christians? It did not come from Christ. If the Lord's table was set for Christians and all such were privileged and invited to partake of it as was evidently the fact in the day of the primitive churches, what Scriptural right has any body of Christians now to spread the Lord's supper and say to any other body of God's people, "you can not eat?" We should be close enough on one hand not to invite the world to commune with us, and loose enough on the other not to exclude those to whom the Savior has given the communion.

FOLLOWING CHRIST.—The *Pacific Methodist* gives us this item of editorial news:

It is said that Joseph Cook, while in San Francisco, was asked among other questions, "If Jesus was immersed, ought not his disciples to be immersed?" Mr. Cook said he would reserve an answer to that for a rainy day.

Strange any one who believes in doing what Jesus has commanded would think of asking such a question. It requires no philosopher to answer this.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.—There is much good sense in the following from the *Western Recorder*:

"Much has recently been said in these columns, as also in the columns of our contemporaries, as to the attendance of

children upon the services of the sanctuary, and it is quite evident, from the general drift of things that very much more needs to be said.

It has been seriously questioned by some of our best and most intelligent workers whether the Sunday-school, with the possible evils resulting from it, according to the place assigned, and the influence accorded it by popular opinion among religious agencies, is not an evil; and if so, whether it should not be abandoned. This, of course, is a very radical view of the matter, and so sweeping an admission we are by no means prepared to take. The Sunday-school may be made gradually helpful to the interests of the kingdom of Jesus; in the work of general Christian culture and in leading souls to Christ. That there are some alarming wrong tendencies in this work, that wrong ideas are to some extent prevalent which are a prophecy of evil rather than good, there is no doubt. But instead of striking out of existence that which under proper conditions, may be made a powerful instrument for good, the better course will be to strive to remedy the defects and make of it all that it may become."

There seems to be a general complaint among the denominations in reference to the Sunday-school work; and the columns of our own papers are not free from like expressions of complaint. This all indicates that there is something wrong. It seems to us that a large amount of the trouble lies in the fact that the original design of the Sunday-school has been lost sight of to such an extent that its work is allowed to get too much in the way of the positive institutions of Christ. We should remember that the Sunday-school, as now generally organized and conducted, is solely a human institution, and that its organized existence independent of the churches of Christ is without precedent or precept in the Bible. Hence, being a mere expedient, it can never take the place of the churches of Christ, nor do the work that is committed into the hands of the church. Yet the Sunday-school, or rather the churches of Christ doing the good work that the Sunday-school purports to do, may be a power in the land for the conversion of the people both old and young.

PRAYER ALONE.—The following editorial note we clip from the *Pacific*:

"We need to remind ourselves often that duty is not far to seek. It lies close about us. It is a mistake to seek it in the distance. A duty far off in space, is one also far off in time; and while we plan for it as among the possibilities of the future, we must live each day mainly for things that come right athwart our path. For us mortals (whatever may be true of the immortals) there is no passing from one point in space to another point in space without passing through the intermediate space. There is no reaching an end without the fit use of the necessary means. There is no

growth without the stimulus, labors and the materials of growth. Prayer is a fit means to every good end; but it is rarely, if ever, the sole means. It is commonly a stimulus, where labors and materials are also required. To expect any form of good by prayer alone, is a vanity, except as we use the fit means to the same end. Always one of the fittest means to an end is to make known our need and desire of the end, to earth, as well as heaven."

We fully indorse the above, and are truly glad to know that our Methodist friends grasp the Scriptural fact that prayer alone, like faith alone, is dead. Hence our Savior says: "Not every one who saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

MISSIONS.—Here is what C. H. Spurgeon has to say on interest in foreign missions. Would to God all Christian people could fully realize these facts:

There is nothing that so enlarges and expands the soul as an active interest in foreign missions. The idea compasses the globe, and lifts the thoughts out of the region of selfishness into that of universal benevolence; besides, the sanction and the command of Christ is its impelling impulse.

HEARING THE SERMON.—Some one has the following to say about listening to the sermon:

Many persons can't sit to hear a discourse if it be over thirty minutes, but can spend a whole day at the fair or half a night keeping late hours, or occasionally dance a whole night. The serious question with me is, how will they enjoy heaven, with no prospect of its ending?

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE EAST.—The *Foreign Missionary*, speaking of the late war between England and Egypt and its bearing on religious liberty in the East says:

Protestant British prestige stands higher than ever before. England rules 41,000,000 of Muslims in India, and now virtually adds 5,000,000 of Egyptians to her Mohammedan subjects, and the British flag in the East means religious liberty, judicial integrity, equitable taxation and protection to life and property.

The hand of God is clearly seen in this increase of protestant Anglo-Saxon influence in Egypt.

It is certainly a source of great joy to the Christian to be able to see the light of Divine Providence in all of this, opening up new fields of labor for the people of God. Let us be ready to go in and occupy. The *Missionary* adds:

It may be safely predicted, in view of the above statements that a new era of religious liberty is about to dawn in Egypt, and new doors for missionary labor be opened in all the adjacent provinces.