

The Puritan idea of the Sunday, so prevalent in Otago and Southland and other parts of New Zealand, has no warrant whatever either in the New Testament or in the history of the Church up to the days of the Reformation. Still more. The Puritan idea of the Sabbath was never known to the Jews. They are two things quite distinct and apart. Even the Pharisees did not prohibit a modicum of innocent recreation as such. 'The Puritan idea of a Christian Sabbath,' says a recent writer, 'was unknown to the first Reformers.' Even in Scotland we find the book of discipline drawn up by John Knox and five other ministers enforcing Sabbath observance; and in 1562 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland petitioned the Queen to punish Sabbath-breakers. In England the Puritanical or Judaizing doctrine was developed and systematised by a learned Puritan clergyman, Dr. Nicholas Bownd, of Norton, in Suffolk. The Westminster Confession of 1647 was the first Creed which embodied this view. In point of fact, some of the early Reformers were opposed to Sabbath observance as being Jewish, and abolished Sunday observance as being 'Popish.' Luther and Zwingli both denied the obligation of keeping the Sunday holy. The Second Helvetic Confession (that of 1566) even went so far as to declare that there is no moral obligation to keep any day in the week holy; and Beza condemns 'a Judaical rest' from work on the Lord's Day. John Calvin, the father of the Presbyterian creeds, was a most energetic anti-Sabbatarian. He devoted the Sunday to bowls and other games with his friends, and vigorously denounced 'the frivolities of false prophets who, in later times, have instilled Jewish ideas into the people. Those who thus adhere to the Jewish institution (said he) go thrice as far as the Jews themselves in the gross and carnal superstition of Sabbatism.' Tyndale and others argued that the Reformers could, if they pleased, alter the Sunday's observance to Monday or any other day they might choose. It is said that the Calvinists of Geneva once seriously entertained the idea of adopting Thursday—in opposition to the Catholic Sunday—as their day of rest. John Clayton, the intimate friend and mentor of John Wesley, wrote to the latter in July, 1733, that he kept both Saturday and Sunday.

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Tyndale, Cranmer, Frith, Hooper, and the early English Reformers generally, never entertained the rigid ideas introduced by the English Puritans at a later date. John Knox, the leading spirit of the Scottish Reformation, proved himself a genial host on Sundays in the house which he had plundered from the last Abbot of Dumfermline. He argued that his Master feasted on the Sabbath, and he did not fear to do the same thing on Sunday. He also wrote letters on the Lord's Day. Chambers says that 'plays (religious subjects) were performed (in Scotland) on Sundays, with the sanction of kirk-sessions as late as 1574.' The incorrect use of the word 'Sabbath' to designate Sunday was apparently unknown to Knox. It is, in fact, quite unknown outside English-speaking countries. In rural England and Wales until a comparatively recent period, sports and pastimes took place after divine service in the churchyards, where provision was made by the churchwardens for 'fives' and other games. Curious particulars in point are supplied in a book published by Mr. Elias Owen, M.A., F.S.A., a few years ago. Stricter ideas, however, prevailed at last. The old churchyard games disappeared. This epitaph may be said to have been written in the following quatrain, which was formerly to be seen on the wall of Llanfair churchyard, in Pembrokshire:—

'Whoever here on Sunday
Will practise playing ball,
It may be before Monday
The devil will have them all.'

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The Church has ever recognised really necessary labor as legitimate on Sundays. So, in their own personal and domestic practice do our Puritan friends. The Church, moreover, never looked with unfriendly eye on a moderate amount of innocent amusement once the great object of

the Sunday rest had been secured—namely, its due and proper sanctification. Amusements that unfit the mind for religious duties are, naturally, unlawful on the Sunday; so is any such excess in amusement as would interfere with the increased prayer, good reading, instruction, etc., without which the day is not properly sanctified. 'A man is in a bad way,' says a recent writer, 'if he makes a practice of hearing a Low Mass, and spending the rest of the Sunday in frivolous recreation.' These things are worth bearing in mind. Our rigid Sabbatarian friends are certainly illogical, their zeal indiscreet; but their failing in this matter has a decided leaning towards virtue's side, though it is unlikely ever to topple over. We may learn a little from them. But we do not want to turn our homes once a week into so many prisons, nor the day of joy into one of long-faced misery. At the same time we do well to remember the Sunday, that it is the Lord's Day, and 'in a reasonable and cheerful way to keep it holy.'

DIocese OF DUNEDIN

On Sunday next and following days his Lordship the Bishop will hold a visitation at Naseby and Ranfurly, and on Sunday, October 18, he will solemnly bless and open the new church at Clyde. Bishop Verdon will hold a visitation on Sunday, October 25, and following days at Ophir and St. Bathans.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday from last Mass until Vespers. In the afternoon there was a procession of the children of the parish schools from St. Joseph's and the Christian Brothers' schools to the Cathedral, where the rosary was recited.

The session for the current year was brought to a close by the members of the South Dunedin Social and Literary Institute on Monday night by a social gathering and euvre party, when there was a large attendance, and a very pleasant evening was spent.

The annual gymnastic competitions in connection with the Christian Brothers' school, Dunedin, took place in the school gymnasium on Tuesday evening, October 6. A large number of the parents, relatives, and friends of the competitors, including the local clergy, were present. In the junior grade 26 competed. Exercises were set in marching, floor work, dumb-bells, pole climbing, vaulting horse, and jumping. The silver medal for first place was awarded to Christopher Marlow, 96 points. W. Hefernan and C. Hill tied for second place, each scoring 89 points; Joseph and John Mackenzie tied for third honors with a total of 85 points each. A special prize was set apart for excellence in dumb-bells, marching, and floor exercises, in which Joseph Mackenzie and P. Hefernan were equal. The senior grade contest brought out seven competitors. The exercises set were of a more advanced description than those of the junior grade, and included horizontal and parallel bars, and the ladder. John Bryant had no difficulty in winning the medal with 171 points. Joseph Swanson and Munro tied for second place with 148. James Collins, the winner of the senior medal last year, came next with 130 points. Messrs Deehan and Drumm acted as judges, and instructor J. C. Smith set the exercises. During the evening two elocutionary contests were decided—the school representatives to the Dunedin Competition being the contestants. The winners were W. Mulrooney and R. Burke. Mr. James Hill acted as judge. Items were also given by Messrs C. Fottrell, P. Wilson, H. Hungerford, W. O'Connor, and D. Fogarty. The Misses E. Smith and C. Hughes acted as accompanists.

Persons about to purchase farm implements, which are manufactured of the best material and by expert workmen should call at Messrs. Cooper and Duncan's factory, Christchurch, or at the firm's various branches in Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru, Ashburton, and Palmerston North, where they will have an opportunity of inspecting a splendid stock of all the requisites for a farm...

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