

ART. III.—SUNDAY OBSERVANCE, AND ATTENDANCE
OF MEN AT CHURCH.

I HAVE been asked to write something about Sunday observance, and the attendance of men at church. I propose to treat these two subjects separately, and to devote half of my address to each.

I.

Why do we Christians consecrate one day in the week, and that the first ?

The principle of one day in seven being devoted to rest and worship was one of the cardinal parts of God's revelation of Himself to the Chosen People. So conspicuous was it in the Jewish system, so high did it come in the table of the Ten Commandments, that, although it was long before the Gentile Christians had any opportunity of maintaining it in its first aspect as a day of rest, from the beginning they observed the first day of the week as a day of special worship. As soon as they were free to do so, they began to observe it also as a day of rest.

The intention of our Lord's teaching was that the Gospel should be the spiritual development of the law. He came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it ; to crown and complete its provisions by giving them their true spiritual meaning. The Judaizing temper, as opposed to the mind of the Gospel, is shown, not by recognising that the various points of the Christian revelation were prefigured by the Law and the Prophets, but by insisting on retaining some Hebrew enactment in literal fact, instead of in spiritual interpretation. So important and predominant an institution as the Jewish Sabbath was sure to have its spiritual representation in the Christian system.

The establishment of this spiritual representation of the Sabbath Day was a gradual growth. There never was any formal transference of the severe rules of the one day to the natural and spontaneous happiness of the other. In primitive apostolical times there is the clearest evidence that, on the one hand, amongst the Christians who had been Jews there continued a lingering and legitimate devotion to the memories and associations of their childhood, at the very same time that, in consequence of the Resurrection of our Lord, they were beginning to have peculiar affection for the first day of the week ; and that, on the other hand, the Christians who had been Gentiles never thought of observing the seventh day at all, but in the times of their obscurity and oppression found all that they wanted in the religious meetings, the meeting

for the Breaking of Bread, the meeting for Edification, on the Lord's Day.

It was at the time when the Church was first recognised by the State, in the year A.D. 321, that the growing practice of all Christians of observing the First Day of the week as a Day of Rest, as well as a Day of Worship, received formal and legal sanction. The idea of labour was formally dissociated from the Lord's Day in that year by the famous Edict of Constantine. Its memorable words it may be worth while to quote once more, for we cannot be too warmly grateful for its sanction: "On the venerable Day of the Sun, let the magistrates and peoples residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in the work of cultivation may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so fitted for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of Heaven should be lost."

So at last the spiritual importance of the Fourth Commandment in securing to Christian people a Day of Rest and a Day of Worship was, by the practice of the Church and the law of the Emperor, enshrined in the economy of Christendom. It had come gradually, but it came surely. Just as the Christian ministry are chosen out, not on account of their own special merits, but because all the Lord's people are holy, and some must minister to them in holy things, so the First Day of the Week was adopted, not because all the days of our lives are not dedicated to God, but because by hallowing one day more, we may hallow the others better and more perfectly. We cannot but rejoice that, by analogy, something of the ancient Hebrew Day of Rest grew slowly in the conscience of the Christian Church as the Hebrew day receded. The Christians in early days had not been able to make regulations about work, for a very large proportion of the whole population, especially of the Christian population, were slaves. We need not be surprised to find that the early spirit of Sunday was not so much one of abstinence from work, as a readiness for spiritual activity. But the consciousness which gradually assimilated what was best in the Hebrew obedience to the Fourth Commandment recognised a truth of universal importance for Christians.

The language of the Fathers shows that this was the way in which they looked at it. Sunday is styled by them "a solemn and venerable day"; "the first and chief of days"; "the first-fruits of the week"; "better than all the festivals, new moons, or sabbaths of the Mosaic Law"; "higher than the highest, and to be held in admiration above all other days"; "the

Queen, the Princess (or, as an old translator quaintly expresses it), the Lady Paramount of days, clearly and pre-eminently the first"; "the day which the Lord hath made that we may rejoice and be glad in it, and which (to use the strong words of St. Augustine) if we are Christians we shall observe."

We in this country have the extraordinary privilege, which we do not sufficiently value because we are so accustomed to it, of living under laws the principles of which were settled when Secularism was unknown, and all the nation was united in at any rate respect for the Christian Faith. Amongst these principles we find that the observance of the First Day of the Week as a time for Rest and Worship is protected by the ancient laws of the land. On the First Day of the Week no places of public amusement may be opened for payment. Against all trading on the First Day of the Week that is not absolutely necessary there are enactments. The consequent quiet calm over both town and country must be recognised even by Secularists as an indisputable boon both to the minds and bodies of the people in contrast to the busy and pressing operations of other days.

There are three sets of people who chafe against the traditional observance of Sunday: the Secularists, the men and women of pleasure in all classes, and those who desire to import the Continental Sunday.

To the Secularists we would say that, as the majority of the people are still Christian, it is, on their own principles, no hardship that Christian institutions and customs should be maintained, so long as persons who do not agree with them should, except in regard to the few legal enactments, be able to spend their time as they please.

To the men and women of pleasure of all classes, who do not for the most part pretend to be Christians more than in name, even if they claim as much as that, we would put in the plea that, if their example of not observing the day was universally followed, the Day of Rest would cease as well as the Day of Worship. The broad principle of a nation calling itself Christian should, in this matter, be that it is best to employ no single person unnecessarily on the Day of Rest. At present, with many fashionable people the two correlative principles of Rest and Worship have become as unpopular as they were in the irreligious days of the last century. Sunday gives no break or respite to the gaieties of the week. Large formal parties for luncheon and dinner are becoming common in great houses, in utter disregard of the words of the Fourth Commandment, as given in Deuteronomy, "That thy servant may rest as well as thou." Though the London Parks are comparatively deserted by carriages, yet Sunday

driving, which fifteen years ago was almost unknown, is increasing. Sunday is a favourite day with fashionable people for railway travelling; they say that the train is there, and they may as well use it. The river Thames on Sunday in summer is as crowded as a fair. One club in London meets every Sunday evening for dancing, another for the performance of operatic music. These habits, if universally adopted, would endanger the Day of Rest as well as the Day of Worship. Worship is in the main only a consideration for those to whom it has a meaning. The Day of Rest is important for the vast majority of the people. We would ask the men and women of pleasure to be more merciful. Needing no Day of Rest themselves, let them have pity on those who do.

Thirdly, as to those who desire the Continental Sunday, and who consider that if Christian people go to one service they can spend the rest of the day in amusements, we would ask them to remember how different our days are from those of the mediæval Church—so crowded, so busy, so occupied. If meditation and heavenward aspirations were neglected now on Sunday, would the religious life be likely to flourish on the other days of the week? And was the religious life of the people in the Middle Ages all that could be desired? Are there not important Roman Catholic associations in Paris for restoring the sanctity of the Lord's Day? We would ask them to listen to the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 1888: "The due observance of Sunday as a day of rest, of worship, and of religious teaching, has a direct bearing on the moral well-being of the Christian community. We have observed of late a growing laxity, which threatens to impair its sacred character. We strongly deprecate this tendency. We call upon the leisurely classes not selfishly to withdraw from others the opportunities of rest and religion. We call upon master and employé jealously to guard the privileges of the servant and the workman. In the Lord's Day we have a priceless heritage. Whoever misuses it incurs a terrible responsibility."

To ourselves our Lord's example is the rule. Indicating the coming change of spirit, He declared that even of the Sabbath Day the Son of Man was Lord. In opposition to the exaggerated strictness of the Pharisees, He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. He did deeds of mercy, and authorized a man to do a deed of necessity. By going to eat with a Pharisee on the Sabbath Day, he encouraged innocent, quiet, friendly intercourse, so long as it gives as little trouble as possible to others. We shall desire, not to level the Lord's Day to the character of

the other days of the week, but to make it communicate its temper, sunshine, and elevation to all the rest. We may make for ourselves and our households whatever rules—after calm and sober thought—we find to be best. While asking others not to infringe the rest which has become a national heritage to our people, we shall see to it that we avoid the odious crime against Christianity of passing judgment and censure upon their freedom.

II.

I pass to the second part of my subject. Here I deny that men do not go to church so much as they used to do. It is a very difficult question to determine without statistics, but my belief is that a greater proportion of men go now than at any time, except periods of exceptional devotion, such as the days of the Primitive Church or the Puritan era. Although men are not naturally so devout as women, yet wherever they find teaching or services which thoroughly suit them, they attend in large numbers. At St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoons there is certainly a preponderance of men, and I think it is the same at Westminster Abbey. When the Bishop of St. Andrew's was Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, the attendance of men was very remarkable; so it was when Bishop Boyd-Carpenter of Ripon was Vicar of St. James's, Holloway, and of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate. So it is at Mr. Page Roberts's, at Mr. Haweis's, at Canon Eyton's, and at St. Alban's, Holborn. And the various Sunday Afternoon Men's Services which have become common in London are in several cases attended by large numbers. I should rather be inclined to put the question, Why do not more men go to church? Women do attend in many places in larger numbers than men. Is there anything in the present condition of things which indisposes men for church? Is there any defect in our system which keeps men away, or is there anything that we can do to interest them more?

A. I must confine myself to a few propositions: first as regards what are called the upper classes, and then as to the working-men. I dislike these distinctions, but they cannot be avoided.

1. Nothing appeals to men so much as a thoroughly consistent life and practice. A merely professional clergyman will not touch men's hearts; they will listen to a man whose whole life, down to the very smallest details, carries out the principles which he preaches.

2. Another quality which certainly attracts men to the clergy is *manliness*. The upright figure, the firm, clear speech, the decided action of Mr. Barrie's "Little Minister," for example, may be taken as the outward signs of the firm,

courageous, self-respecting character within. The womanlike man is a monstrosity, just as is the manlike woman.

3. *Affectation* is a hindrance to the interest of men in the Christian ministry. The conventional tone in church, the drawl or whine in reading Holy Scripture, the cultivation of an artificial look and attitude, in any section of the Church, is repulsive to men of sense.

4. If the clergy are to influence the laity more, they must *live in the spirit of prayer* themselves, and see that the men understand something of the meaning of it. One of the most efficient parts of Bishop Wilkinson's celebrated ministry in Belgravia was the weekly prayer-meeting in the church. He made the men feel that they had something to pray for, something to ask, something to expect. It gave a spirit of reality to all their services and work.

5. *The services should be suited to the tastes and feelings of men.* If a parish priest in either section of the Church acts against the general sense of his parishioners, he can hardly expect a full attendance of them. Through some method like a parish council many have found it possible to obtain the men's voice in the arrangements of the common worship, as to duration, style, character, and amount of music. They have also been invited to suggest topics for sermons, and to discuss them afterwards. Friction has thus been avoided, personal interest increased.

6. It cannot be denied that wherever the preaching is earnest, sympathetic, and interesting, men come in great numbers. If we could imagine all the clergy equal to Bishop Wilkinson or Archbishop Magee, the churches would be crowded with men. But on the other hand, as the case at present stands, preaching is sometimes decried and neglected. The theory that prevails amongst us is that preaching comes by nature. I have been an examining chaplain in the Diocese of London for nearly twenty years, and I have constantly asked the candidates for orders if they have had any training in preaching and reading, and the usual answer is "None." But though the heart is, of course, at the root of preaching, the mind has something to do with it as well. At present, no clergy in the world receive so little preparation as that which is required by the Church of England.

7. There remains the vast question of *Scepticism*. There is no doubt that the faith of many is at present unsettled by scientific and historical criticism. The clergy have the additional task in these days of combating the vague and ill-digested doubts that are current; and this they must do by personal intercourse and conversation, for which it is possible that not all are well equipped. We have, as St. Paul says, to

persuade men : to persuade them that Christ's message is the most reasonable solution of the riddle of existence.

B. I turn very briefly to the most important part of the subject, the working-men.

1. First, the clergy must make real friends of them : call on them when they are at home, not when they know they are out ; speak in a friendly and familiar way with the knots of men at the corners of the streets.

2. They should never allow business and committee-work to interfere with the duty of making personal acquaintance.

3. The working-men's tastes should be consulted as to the services.

4. The working-man is shy of church, and there must be somebody there to make him at home, and put him in a good place.

5. The sermons must be in the real vernacular, and short. Spurgeon had the secret of popular vocabulary.

6. It must be remembered that working-men are constantly shifting, and that they have little opportunity of getting accustomed to one church and one clergyman. There is a strong public opinion against church-going created in past generations in many places by long neglect, want of sympathy, and carelessness. There is a strong desire for mere repose on Sunday. And, again, they are surrounded all through the week by tremendous temptations to drink and gamble.

7. The thing that really suits them, and which will rapidly improve the regular church-going, is the Sunday afternoon working-men's service. Every Sunday afternoon when I am not at St. Paul's it is my privilege to be engaged in helping these. The most notable is the one at St. Peter's, Upper Holloway, founded by my friend Mr. Ditchfield, and carried on by an able and enthusiastic successor. Every Sunday afternoon at least 600 men attend the church. Everything in the parish has been kindled with life and vigour through this effort. Mr. Ditchfield is now in Bethnal Green, and has created a similar service there with equal results. The human essentials seem to be an earnest and zealous clergyman, a secretary, a committee, a nucleus, a band, short prayers, hearty and simple hymns, and earnest simple applications of the Gospel of Christ to everyday life.

I have no time for more. If, as we learn at our ordination, the responsibility lies with the Christian priesthood "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this evil world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever," then there is room for us to be less formal, less pedantic, less starched, less patronizing, more natural, more elastic, more manly, more

friendly, more sympathetic, more consistent, more real, more zealous. The Church and kingdom of Christ are ill understood by many. It is our privilege, by making the presentation of them intelligible and attractive, to remove hindrances from many an honest and manly soul.

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ART. IV.—THE CHURCH AND THE NAVVIES.

- Navvies and their Needs.* By the Rev. L. M. EVANS, B.A., late Rector of Leathley. With Appendix. (Reprinted from the *Quiver*, 1877.) Pp. 32. Printed by Andrew Churchman, 16, King Street, Hammer-smith.
- Little Rainbow.* A Tale. By Mrs. CHARLES GARNETT. Isbister, 1877.
- My Friends the Navvies.* By the same. (Reprinted from the *Sunday Magazine*.) Pp. 28. Leeds: J. W. Petty and Sons, 1882.
- The Bishop of Manchester on the Claims and Needs of Navvies, and the Work of the Navy Mission Society.* A Speech, December 11, 1890. Pp. 4.
- In a Hut.* Illustrated. Pp. 4. Navy Mission Society: Office of the Society, Church House, Westminster, S.W.
- The Story of our Mission.* By Mrs. CHARLES GARNETT. Pp. 22. Ramsbottom: J. T. Grime, 1897.
- Nineteenth Annual Report of the Navy Mission Society,* April, 1896, to April, 1897. Office of the Society.
- A Quarterly Letter to Men on Public Works.* Edited by Mrs. C. GARNETT. Navy Mission Society.

UNTIL comparatively lately little was known of the navvies. It would seem that Christian philanthropy was unaware that there existed in our midst a great body of men, shut off from all other classes in almost every conceivable way, and with needs, physical, social, and spiritual, that cried aloud for relief. For all practical purposes, the navvies were an unknown people. Sufficient information, however, has now been collected to show that they possess strong claims upon the Church and society; and this article aims at presenting its leading points in a condensed form, in the hope that further attention may be drawn to this unique class, and more be done to raise its condition. Such treatment leaves but little room for emotion, but the story is full of pathos, and those who can read the underlying meaning of facts and figures will discern what will stir to its depths the compassion of every feeling heart.

1. THE NAVVY CLASS.—The men originally employed in constructing canals and water-ways, it appears, were called "navigators," and, as the same class also undertook other public works, their name followed them, and, shortened into the familiar "navvy," has become the accepted designation of