

of sacred poetry suited to the varying moods of the Church's year; but we fail to avail ourselves of the wealth of our resources, because we allow our reading to be regulated by the Julian Calendar, and not by the principle of fitness and appropriateness. The present system of recital has lasted long enough, and to many it will appear that the change here advocated is an improvement.

And if it be said that we may talk of change, but that no change is possible, if it be urged that the Church is powerless to adapt her services to the needs of successive ages; then, if we are thus trammelled and fettered, there is the more cause for those who have her interests at heart to throw themselves into the movement for Church Reform, whose object is to restore to the Church her legitimate rights and duties.

Freedom to regulate her services—with due regard to ancient tradition and custom—ought to be the prerogative of a National Church, and for this we should aim, though it may have to be acquired at a great price.



“No, not for an hour.”

BY THE REV. CANON RANSFORD, M.A.

SUCH was St. Paul's answer to certain false brethren who were plotting against the truth of the Gospel. Give way to them? No, not for an hour. And such is my answer to all and sundry who would deprive me of the liberty which I have in Christ Jesus, and in His Church. Give place to them? Let them have their way, just for the sake of peace? “No, not for an hour.”

And the question is one of hours, of the twenty-four hours of the day, and of how many of them I will allow to be dragged away from the highest service of God. As I understand my redemption by Christ, and the consecration of my Baptism, and the surrender of my Confirmation, I am altogether Christ's,

body, soul, and spirit ; and as there is no faculty of my being but is rightly His, so is there no hour of my life, nor of any day of my life, upon which there ought not to rest the sign of the Cross. No pursuit is lawful for me upon which I cannot expect God's blessing. It is not to say that part of my life is to be religious and part secular ; it is “my life,” the whole of it, that I am to “live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.”

Then there can be no hour of the whole day unfit for communion with God. It would be wicked for me, who am a minister of Christ, to tell my people that some hours of the day are unfit for the service of Christ, and may not be consecrated to Him. My duty and my endeavour ought to be just the very opposite : to raise them to their glorious privilege of spending every moment in His service, and to urge them never to allow themselves to be dragged down from that level.

Of late years there has been a strong movement on the part of a certain school in the Church, which is designed to limit the privilege and freedom of Christians in respect of the hours proper for the administration and reception of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What is called “Early Communion” is the only Communion that is approved, and what is called “Evening Communion” is strongly condemned, so strongly, indeed, that it is called “blasphemy.” I have heard it so called by the late Dr. F. G. Lee ; I have seen it so described in the Intercessions-List of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. These were the words : “That the blasphemy of Evening Communion at St. Jude's, Dulwich Road, may cease.” I was at the time vicar of that church, and my attention was drawn to them by a member of my congregation, who was also a member of the C.B.S., and who had, indeed, as I fancy, procured their insertion.

Now, it is necessary to note that by Evening Communion is meant Communion at any hour between noon and midnight. So that to give up “Evening” Communion means that at one swoop twelve hours out of the twenty-four are taken. And, as most people, all ordinary people, indeed, are in bed from mid-

night to 6 a.m., six hours more disappear, and there remain only six in which the Sacrament may be celebrated. But how many people rise at such an hour as to make a 6 a.m. Communion possible? And how many are able, even if willing, to fast (and fasting Communion is what the promoters of this movement really aim at) until 10 a.m.? The practical outcome of the movement, if successful, would be that a bare residuum of some four hours at most out of the twenty-four would be left to the would-be communicant; and no fewer than twenty (or five-sixths of his whole day) declared to be unfit for use and consecration in this act of Communion with his Saviour and his God.

Is it any wonder that, in response to such a preposterous and irreligious claim, I answer in the very words of the Apostle, "Give place to it? No, not for an hour"? I claim the whole day, every hour of the twenty-four, as rightly mine for this high and holy use. As I have no right to impose restrictions on my brother's liberty, so he has none to impose restrictions on mine. If he find 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. the best for him, let him use either hour; if I find 2 p.m. or 8 p.m. the best for me, I will use either.

Now, many who are for infringing our liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, and for bringing us into the bondage of these "canonical" hours, are most learned and excellent men, and occupy very high places.

Bishop Gore of Birmingham throws the whole weight of his distinguished personality into the scale against liberty, and actually goes so far as to declare that "if he were an incumbent he would not use Evening Communion, even if his Bishop were to urge him to do so"; and further, that "Christians ought to set their faces steadily against this practice."

Bishop Browne of Bristol, not an extreme High Churchman at all, but one who tries to be fair to all, has said that one mark of an ideal diocese would be that there should be in it "no Evening Communion"; and, with few exceptions, the Episcopal Bench is against it.

So serious is all this that men's consciences are disturbed,

and not a few simple-minded Christians are seriously hindered. A few examples of this may be given.

We, who assert our right to celebrate at any hour, find it hard to get curates. Young clergymen tell us plainly that if they come to parishes where Evening Communion is used, Bishops look askance on them, and they lose episcopal favour.

Two invalid ladies, too infirm to venture out of doors before breakfast, told me that, in the place where they were living, never once for three months had they been given the chance of attending Holy Communion.

A “press-man,” a friend of mine and a devout Christian, begins his work sometimes at 10 p.m. on Saturday, and reaching home on the Sunday morning about nine o’clock so tired as to require immediate rest, gets no chance of Holy Communion, except by going some distance from his own parish church to another, where there is an Evening Celebration.

Asked to administer the Holy Communion to a dying woman, I arranged to do so at 4 p.m., because she was at her best at that hour, her mind clearest, and her vitality greatest. All the morning she lay exhausted after the struggle and weariness of the night. Her son, who really loved his mother, would not communicate with her because it was past midday, and he had been taught that it would be wrong to communicate at such an hour.

Now, if John Keble in 1865 deprecated the disparaging tone used in speaking of Midday Communions (with small consideration for the aged and infirm and others), and if John Mason Neale, during his last illness, declared that it was harmful to try and enforce Fasting Communion, what would they say now, when one commonly hears that “Fasting Communion is the rule of the Catholic Church”; and when, in order to prevent persons communicating, many High Churchmen insist, with regard to the Midday Communion, on the punctilious observance of that rubric which says that intending communicants are to send in their names to the incumbent at least some time the day before?

My own conscience, however, is not in the least disturbed ; and I cannot be wrong, surely, in refusing to be more influenced by the utterances of a score of Bishops than Bishop Gore says he would be by the injunctions of one. Twenty times nothing is nothing. It is, indeed, quite reassuring in these days when Bishops are claiming the "Jus liturgicum," to be told by one of themselves what is tantamount to this, that it matters not whether it is granted or not, because, after all, we are all good Protestants, with the full right of private judgment. But what, under such circumstances, will become of Church order ?

And now for my reasons for refusing to give up one hour of the twenty-four as unfit for Holy Communion.

1. Not only has Evening Communion the sanction of our Lord and His Apostles, and of the Primitive Church, but in the New Testament we never read of any Communion but in the evening. A supper, it was instituted after sundown and after a meal. It was when the day was far spent that the Risen Saviour made Himself known to the disciples at Emmaus "in breaking of bread." St. Paul's famous Communion at Troas was held at night ; and to say that Evening Communion is irreverent or blasphemous is, if not to charge those offences upon the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, at least preposterous.

2. Our Blessed Lord died at the ninth hour, *i.e.*, 3 p.m. To commemorate or "proclaim" His death at the actual hour of that death is to accentuate the commemoration as such, and is well within the scope of the Apostolic Canon, "as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death." But to affix a limit, and to say, "as oft as ye eat and drink before noon, or before any hour, or before eating," is to make the commandment of God of none effect by our tradition.

3. Hours are a matter of longitude, and are regulated by Greenwich time, mid-European time, and so on. I cannot comprehend why a religious privilege is to be allowed to one and forbidden to another, because he happens to live a few degrees to the eastward and for him the sun has passed the

meridian. I cannot comprehend why it should be right to do in Paris what it is wrong to do at the same instant in Vienna.

4. The atmosphere of the Church of Christ is one of freedom. “Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” liberty of the sort proclaimed by the Incarnate Word, the Chief Bishop, when He said, “The hour is come, yea, now is, when neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father.” By parity of reasoning we may surely say, “neither at one hour nor another.” Holy Communion is commonly called “the chief act of worship”; it is so called, if I remember aright, by Bishop Gore in his first pastoral charge; it is, at any rate, *the* ordinance of worship appointed by Christ. It is an act of praise, a Eucharist; and what is there, in the Being of God, or in the constitution of man, that is to interfere with man’s offering to God this worship at any hour of the twenty-four? The Roman Church maintains a ceaseless adoration of the Sacrament itself. Is God less worthy than the Sacrament? In heaven they rest not day nor night from worship. Why are we to be limited in our highest worship to some five or six hours of the twenty-four?

5. The Holy Communion is a means of grace; High Churchmen call it “the chief means of grace.” At the Lord’s Table we come to the Cross of Christ, yea, to Christ Himself; we realize His grace and power to save. We taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven. We, who come worthily, eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood. Our souls are thereby strengthened and refreshed. Why, then, are we to be debarred from the use of this means of grace during so large a portion of every day? Is the devil busy only between 7 a.m. and noon? Does temptation never assail, sorrow never come, between noon and midnight? Why, I repeat, are we weak, tempted, sorrow-laden sinners to be starved of this nourishment and strength for three-fourths of our life?

6. To consider the matter as one of deep spiritual experience. Christ is to be preached in season and out of season; at all times and in all places souls are to be won for

Him. He, lifted up, no matter where or when, is to draw men to Himself. True it is that evening services were almost unknown one hundred years ago; but the introduction of gas and electricity has changed all that. In thousands of parishes the largest congregations gather of an evening. In Parochial Missions it is invariably so. And at these services dead souls are quickened, sinners are saved, men lay hold of the promises, they receive Christ. And if Christ, then I ask in the name of God, why not the Sacrament? Is the Sacrament more solemn, more glorious, more worthy than Christ? the sign more than the thing signified? If I, called to see a sick parishioner, in afternoon or evening, may preach Christ to him, and he may receive Him then, am I to be forbidden to administer the Lord's Supper to him then? Would the Bishop of Bristol call that an ideal Diocese in which no preaching of Christ should obtain between noon and midnight, or between noon and 7 a.m. next day? or the Bishop of Birmingham say that Christians ought to set their faces steadily against the practice of preaching Christ in the evening?

The position taken in this sixth consideration is, I am bold to say, impregnable, unshakable. A very High Churchman confessed at a Rochester Diocesan Conference that it is so, and declared he could not say anything against it *provided* only that the Sacrament was received "fasting."

7. One more argument may be borrowed from the episcopal use, now gradually strengthening, of administering the rite of Confirmation at even a late hour of the evening. Nothing is more common at a Confirmation than to hear a Bishop tell the candidates that "this is the most solemn moment" of their life. Bishop Gore, confirming at Sparkbrook, told the candidates that "the Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of hands. As surely as you feel the pressure of my hands on your head, so surely you receive the Holy Ghost." And Bishop Gott, of Truro, tells candidates continually that in Confirmation he "bestows upon them the Holy Ghost."

Without entering into the question as to whether such

language is permissible, I ask why such a solemn rite as Confirmation, a rite only administered once in a lifetime, may be conveniently administered in the afternoon or evening, and yet the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may not be administered at any time but between 7 a.m. and noon? I ask again, Why the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity may be “received” at any hour, and the Second Person may not?

I may conclude by telling something of my own experience. It was forty-two years ago last Advent that I was ordained by Bishop Sumner, of Winchester, who cordially approved of Evening Communion. During the whole of that time I have exercised my undoubted right to administer this Sacrament at any hour of the day or night. I am quite sure that I have never witnessed any noticeable irreverence at Evening Celebrations. (I have known of late arrivals, to be numbered by scores and scores, at Early Communion.) I am quite sure that many of the most devout and spiritually-minded members of my congregation prefer Evening Communion to any other. From my experience I have no hesitation in saying that Bishop Talbot's suggestion (in his first charge?), that it is specially necessary to read the Ten Commandments at an Evening Celebration, because they who come then will need specially to hear them, is based on lack of experience.

I am quite sure that to stop Evening Communion would be to debar thousands of earnest, devout Christians from their undoubted right to come to the table of their Lord, and to say that it is laziness which prevents any person from coming to an Early Communion is untrue. How can the mother of some five or six children, with one baby at least to wash and dress, and a breakfast to prepare, get out before 8 a.m.? The Sunday dinner is the one hot dinner of the week for her husband, and has to be cooked. But after 6 or 7 p.m., the children in bed, the mother may get away for a quiet hour. Who would dare to deny her the privilege of kneeling at the Lord's Table if she claims it? The Sunday-school teacher, again, hard-worked all the week, who has a mile or more to walk to Church or Sunday-

school, may well manage morning school at 10 a.m., and service at 11, afternoon school at 3, and service with Holy Communion at 6 or 7. But how can he possibly get to an Early Celebration at 8, and be back again to school at 10? To forbid an Afternoon or Evening Celebration to such a man or woman is to lay an intolerable and wholly unnecessary burden on them.

I am quite sure that insistence on Early Communion as *the* religious duty of the Lord's Day, beside which nothing is of any importance, has been and is an important factor in the prevalent desecration of that day. Tens of thousands of our young people feel that attendance at an 8 a.m. Celebration frees them from all further obligation. That done, they think that they may spend or waste the rest of the day according to their worldly and frivolous fancies.

Possibly the most solemn Communion at which I ever administered was celebrated under the following circumstances: the wife and mother of a Christian household was stricken with mortal sickness. Word was sent to me, with a request that I should hold myself in readiness for a summons at any hour. The boys were scattered far and wide, one in the North, another in the West. They were telegraphed for, and came in hot haste. At 10 p.m. I received the summons, "Come at once." I went; I found "a simple altar by the bed, for High Communion meetly spread." I celebrated. Round the bed knelt husband, and sons, and daughters, to all of whom I ministered. The mother prayed, oh, so fervently! She lifted her hands in intercession and blessing; a very mother in Israel. As we knelt, the clock on the mantelpiece chimed eleven, and before morning dawned the ransomed spirit was at rest.

Dare anyone deny me the privilege of administering the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood to such people at such a time? Dare anyone bid me tarry till midnight sound, and with it the chance go?

Well, if any dare deny me such privilege, bid me so tarry, my answer must be, "No, not for an hour."

Very, very sorrowfully, with infinite regret, this must be

my answer. I verily believe that we who are called Low Churchmen desire heartily to be loyal to those in authority over us. But when it is a question of the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus and of the truth of the Gospel, we dare not give way, "No, not for an hour."



Literary Notes.

PROFESSOR WILLISTON WALKER has written a volume on John Calvin, which is to be the ninth volume in Messrs. Putnam's "Heroes of the Reformation" series, the last two issues of which were Professor Pollard's "Cranmer," and Dr. Cowan's "John Knox." The full title of Professor Walker's volume is "Calvin: the Organizer of Reformed Protestantism, 1509-1564." The author holds the chair of Ecclesiastical History at Yale, which is known as the "Titus Stout Professorship." It is said that, notwithstanding the prominence of Calvin, no biography of him has appeared in English for well-nigh fifty years. This new biography has been in preparation for a number of years, and it is anticipated that it will be found accurate, comprehensive, and agreeably written. Professor Walker has not attempted to exhaust the subject, for that would be impossible within the limits of the volume, but he has attempted to bring out, as clearly as it is possible, the interesting points in Calvin's life, especially those particular phases of his life which have been under discussion some time since—namely, the conversion of Calvin and his relations to Servetus. The volume will be well illustrated, while the various pictures have been selected with care, and endeavour to give the geographical setting in which Calvin's life was passed. The attitude of Protestants towards Calvin has changed much in the last fifty years, and documents discovered of recent years afford the biographer some new facts.



Although Mr. Birrell probably has more work to do at the present time than most men, it is surely interesting to learn that he is to edit a volume of "Browning's Poems," to which he will contribute an introduction, for a new series which the well-known firm of Edinburgh publishers, T. C. and E. C. Jack, are inaugurating. This new library should prove a very attractive one, inasmuch as each of the volumes are to have introductions by critics of high standing. The editor of the series—which is to be called the "Golden Poets"—is that indefatigable and hard-working Scotsman, Mr. Oliphant Smeaton. The following volumes have already been arranged for: "Spenser," edited by Mr. W. B. Yeats; "Whitter," by Mr. A. C. Benson; "Coleridge," by Professor Dowden; "Longfellow," by Professor Saintsbury; "Wordsworth," by Professor Dixon; "Herrick," by Canon Beeching; "Byron," by Mr. Whibley; "Keats," by Mr. Arthur Symons; and "Shelley," by