

revelation to man. St. Paul refers all the outward and physical manifestations of *κένωσις* to the mental attitude of our Lord. "Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus." We have striven to do likewise, and now it only remains, from the same standpoint, to examine two great questions which are pertinent to the correlation of the two natures of Jesus Christ—namely, the question of His relation to evil and that of His moral and mental development.

(To be continued.)



The Church and Recreation.

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THIS is a very significant title, and will not meet with universal approval. In some minds the words will clash and produce a hopeless discord. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that it is a wise connection, and that the consideration of "recreation" is the right and the duty of the Church. The work of the Church is the salvation of man—of the whole man; and anything which can make our Church members good workmen, and can minister to the success of our task, is not only worthy of our interest, but ought to have it.

Let me treat the subject from two standpoints :

1. I would say that it behoves Christians for their own sake to give due attention to the question of "recreation," and there are two main reasons for such a contention: That the body, with its appetites and evil passions, may be kept in subjection, and may in no wise gain the mastery over us. I have the greatest possible sympathy with those who, in hours and efforts of devotion, are ever seeking the recreation of the soul, and are making strenuous exertions to become more and more Spirit-filled. But it is fatal to this for us to forget what a potent factor the body is, and what a heavy penalty we pay if we ill-treat it or ignore it. The awakened Christian is one who

both checks his carnal nature and develops all true spiritual powers. The Apostle Paul was not ignorant of this very thing, for, whilst he makes clear profession of much self-denial for the sake of others, he does not forget to speak about it also as for his own sake. "Do not think," says he in 1 Cor. ix., "that I do not require this for myself. You know how strictly they discipline themselves who contend for the prize in the great national games of Greece. Such is *my* practice, not less eager or less severe, and the enemy I contend with is my own body, which bears proof of my self-denial, for I beat it black and blue." Now, it is unto such a high end that recreation is essential for every man, be he Christian or be he not. Apart from it, there can hardly be a sovereign self-control—the mastery over the instincts, faculties, and appetites of human nature; apart from it few men can perfect their characters, and become (as Dante says) "kings and priests over themselves." The finest man is not the mere athlete, but the man who knows himself through and through, and who has come with care and discretion to govern every part of his complex being. Professor Huxley's description of the self-disciplined man is very apt. He says he is "one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience"; and much of that training is given and is gained in the school of physical culture.

The second reason may best be stated in St. Paul's words to Timothy (2 Tim. iii. 17): "The man of God should be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If we accept this dictum, it must needs be that we seek recreation—*i.e.*, that which revives and refreshes, that which makes us feel like new creatures. I would go as far as to say that innocent and seasonable amusement and recreation are integral parts of our religion, because they correspond to a need which God has created in human nature, and because they are the proper means to employ of acquiring that physical and mental strength and fitness which makes us powerful in the service of the King.

I read some time ago in a Manchester evening paper that a novel method of creating greater interest in the work of the Sunday-school had been hit upon by the committee of the Union Street Wesleyan Sunday-schools, Rochdale. A bowling-green for the young men, and a tennis-court for both sexes, were to be constructed at Foxholes, where a nice patch of level ground had been leased for ten years. One rather gasps at having such an addition to one's cares and responsibilities; but better so than to be surrounded by a company of pallid friends, whose chief characteristic is their want of colour and of brightness. And we must not forget that the charge is too often levelled against us that we are either very dull, very bad-tempered and cantankerous, or that ever since we became Christians and Christian workers we have developed a liver, have become generally sickly, and are unfit for the many responsibilities which we would fain assume. Sometimes there is grave truth in those remarks, and our Master and His holy cause are sadly discredited. Either we have allowed heat to outrun light, and through an excess of zeal the *mind* has not been rested by receiving a sufficient change in its diet; or, through some slackness and indiscretion, the laws of our physical nature have been outraged or overlooked, "which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body" (Col. ii. 23), but they do not tend to edification, nor promote anyone's welfare.

Hence, I firmly believe that the Church must ever be a good patron of recreation; it is essential if we are to be first-class Christians, with sound bodies, sane brains, and stout hearts. In these days of passion and of heat, when feelings run high and nerves are unstrung, we need much prayer in order to possess our souls in patience; and we need much care lest the body be overcome and our entire usefulness be suspended, or our work be hopelessly disorganized, by a breakdown of the human system.

2. I would now wish to point out the advisability of the Church keeping her eye upon this subject, and, as far as possible,

keeping her hand upon the recreations of the people and controlling or regulating them. I am one of those who entertain large ideas about the Church in the world, and am most ambitious that in all things she should have the pre-eminence. We are surely in the world to act as a deterrent against sin, and to be advisers of our fellow-men; to watch every department of life and every departure of life with an eye brimful of jealousy for the Master's honour. We are set on the hill to guard, as it were, the holy city, and to show men their dangers and the way out. Hence we are, or ought to be, the most patriotic body existent, and the "saviours" of men from a large variety of enemies that threaten to spoil them in one way or another. Now, on this principle it seems to me to come well within our province to handle the subject of recreation as a regular duty, because of the prominence which the subject has now assumed; yea, as patriots, we should do it for the sake of our country; as Christians, for the sake of our race. And if we do it, there are two main directions which our counsel will naturally assume. In the first place, to insist on the due observance of the laws of our nature, and on the use of recreation by everyone for himself or herself. Being what we are, physical development is a question of great and of permanent importance, whether we think of this life or of the life to come. I have been contending for recreation that we may have good material to work with for our God. I would contend just as strongly for recreation that we may have good material to work upon. And, although it is true that athletics will not make a village or a town moral, they do, at any rate, tend to produce a healthy condition of things, which, in its turn, tends for a higher moral condition than can ever be achieved by undeveloped muscles, and stunted growth, and bad habits of living, which often attend both. Moreover, a very large amount of disease is incurred owing to the physical weakness and general want of stamina of those whom it attacks, and, as I need hardly add, no good, satisfactory, mental effort is possible where there is unhealthiness of the body.

It is not necessary to be a Christian to believe these

facts ; the secular section among us are as convinced of them as we are. And the fact that a Royal Commission has recently considered the question of the physical deterioration of the English race, and has issued its report, is sufficient evidence that the question is regarded as a burning one. We clergy are called upon to face every kind of difficulty in the homes and the habits of the people ; and we sometimes feel that our energies are wasted, because the people are such a poor lot. Am I right in thinking that in many cases there would be less drinking, less indifference, less dullness, more eagerness, more avidity, more humanity, if the whole man was kept in better condition, if body and mind were up to form ? The too common position was well described by Ian Maclaren in a sermon preached not many years ago, when he gave it as his opinion that a large number of Englishmen were getting into the habit of taking their exercise and their pleasures vicariously. He said : " We see a crowd of narrow-chested, sickly-faced lads smoking, spitting and swearing, making their way out of the city to watch a football match. It is one thing to play football ; it is another thing to go out to watch men who have been taken away from honest work and who are paid to play before them ; and to go, too, with the deliberate intention, if the police be not strong enough to overpower them, of creating a riot if the side they favour is defeated. It is one thing to delight in riding, and to love horses (and it would have been much better for us in the Boer War if more of our young men had known how to sit properly in the saddle and how to manage a horse)—it is one thing, I say, for a young man to delight in riding, but it is quite another thing for him to bet on the performance of a dwarfed, deformed being, who has possibly been bribed to lose the race !"

Against such passive recreation let the Church ever set her face ; and let her, in the interests of all that is manly, noble, and divine, educate the people to better things—to a sensible activity which is calculated to produce good citizens and good Christians.

In the next place, it is ours to insist on the right use of

recreation by everyone for himself or for herself ; for, whilst there are crowds amongst us who fail to use their powers of recreation, there are crowds ten or twentyfold greater who abuse the whole thing, and give it a place of honour and importance which is most detrimental—which is most expensive to the rest of life. The craze for amusement and recreation among the general public has now assumed such proportions that one is entitled to call it “the worship of games and of pleasure.” We only have to read the London papers to realize the truth of it. One of them, speaking of a football match, said : “There was something appalling in the closely-packed mass of some 100,000 human beings with upturned faces that surrounded the football ground at the Crystal Palace on Saturday afternoon. All the morning crowds had been pouring along the railway, vehicles of every description lined the roads, and long after the kick-off at 3.30 heavy trains from the city were still disgorging their human burdens at the Palace station.”

And why this invasion of London? To witness the Cup Final between Aston Villa and Newcastle United.

Again, to be more general. Let me remind you of the remarkable statement of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer when introducing his Budget in 1905. To account for the increase of temperance he said : “I think the mass of our people are beginning to find other ways of expending some portion of the time and money which used previously to be spent in the public-house. No change has been more remarkable in the habits of the people than the growing attendance in the last fifteen years at outdoor games and sport, and large places of public entertainment like theatres, music-halls, and so forth, which, though not conducted on strictly temperance lines, do not lend themselves to the consumption of drink, or offer it as their chief attraction. Again, the extension of cheap railway fares and the enormous growth in cheap excursions absorb a further portion of the money which used formerly to be spent on drink.”

To some this sounds well; to others it will appear quite harmless; and yet keen observers quickly scent danger in it all, and we ministers have to lament its grievous effects—its baneful, fatal influence.

Yes, the bad results are of many kinds. I will only mention two, both of which are intimately related to the work and the cause of the Church.

The first is that it absorbs the whole man—gains such a mastery and dominion over him as to exclude other and higher interests and topics. It makes men soulless; it erects a strong barrier between men's minds and things divine. Their zeal for it consumes them, and they have no time or thought or strength for τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Every faithful watchman has noticed this, and men are beginning to raise their voices against it all over the land. In multitudes of lives the feverish devotion to sport chokes and kills higher interests and nobler passions, and makes men the slaves of their own recreations and altogether unready to pay any heed to the voice of God, to take any share in the business of God.

Do we marvel, then, that an anxious patriot said, not long since, that if the next generation takes as much interest in football as their fathers do, they will require bigger boots and very much smaller hats?

Nay, can we not appreciate the remark of a minister in Glasgow, who was told by a well-known Mission worker that he was bringing a lecturer from London to address young men on his experience as an agnostic and how God saved him, but who made answer: "You are wrong; far better get a lecturer that tells how God saved him from the snare of athletics"?

Verily the Church must take up this question, speak out about it, condemn the present extravagance—"the intoxication of recreation"—and show a more excellent way. By doing so we are not necessarily imposing a high standard; we can put it, in the first instance, on the grounds of common-sense and ordinary reason, as did the heathen Plato in the Third Book of his

Republic, where he has for ever characterized the mistake of a narrow and exclusive athleticism, in which excellent means are just spoilt by the lack of an adequate end.

Likewise let the Church be instant in proclaiming to all men that recreation has its place, but it is not the first place, and it must not be treated as part and parcel of the chief end of man.

The second evil which I would name is the spoiling of the Sunday, and the spoiling of it in two ways: (*a*) By making us late in our habits on Saturday; by rendering us so tired, so stiff, so sleepy on the Sunday, that the house of God is barred, and the worship of God is a weariness. (*b*) By making too many crave for Sunday recreation, and thus endangering that all-blessed institution, the Day of Rest. A wider provision for public amusement and recreation means inevitably in the long run more work for those who already have much work to do. Let working men and women remember this; it is a question which touches them more than any other; and it is at the peril of all that is highest and best in life that we violate that great law of God—the Fourth Commandment.

These are grave dangers. I am sure there is no need for me to do more than mention them; but they are so real and so grave and so very present with us that not only will the Church fail in her duty generally, but she will be wanting in ordinary wisdom and prudence if she does not strain her nerves to stem the tide, and lead men along a better and a safer channel.

There are other dangers that have come over the country through the passion for pleasure and recreation—as, for example, the growing aversion from work on the part of many in all classes; the sad decline in the old habits of industry, self-control, discipline, and rigorous devotion to duty. Men, having their minds in the playing field, cannot rest or sit still until their bodies are there also.

Again, I might touch upon the vexed question of amusements, which some might say come reasonably under the head of “recreation,” and which, for many years past, have been such a questionable concomitant of Church life and work, and which

are rarely admitted or introduced to our parochial spheres without the sacrifice of something or somebody better.

But enough! If we can help and encourage one another to deal wisely with the specific point of the recreations of the people we shall do well. I would appeal to my brethren in the ministry to think about it, for, as Archdeacon Wilson says in his Pastoral Lectures, "As pastors we are pastors of body and mind, therefore 'Nihil humani a te alienum puta.'"

And yet, I would pray my clerical brethren not to go to the mad extreme of condemnation, as if recreation were not a general necessity—nay, there need be nothing unchristian or irreligious in it. To discuss it, to meditate on it may frequently be for our good, as Bishop Paget says in his sermon on Phil. iv. 8: "The mind may well be busy in its leisure about any honourable strength or skill that can win men's praise: the doing well in any worthy and unselfish rivalry—it may be intellectual or it may be athletic. 'If there be any excellence, or if there be any praise, think on these things.'"

Nevertheless, let us do our duty boldly, attacking the evil that is marring the good, imbuing men more and more with the mind of Christ so that the fever state of recreation will die out naturally, and offering them something better than the best that they have ever had, and leading them gently to employ their powers in that kingdom and sphere which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.



"*Ex Oriente Lux.*"

BY THE REV. G. E. WHITE, D.D.

THE present writer has neither the wish nor the wit to discuss the ruling criticism of the Old Testament, but the interpretation of those Scriptures of which our Lord said, "they are they that testify of Me," must be of perennial interest to Christians; and the recent remark of an earnest able critic,