

Sunday.

ONE Sunday evening recently the weather continued to be so perfect that it was not only possible but even pleasurable to dine out of doors. In the course of the meal our hostess startled us by exclaiming: "Look—balls of fire! What can it be?" We all watched the southern horizon, and after a time some of us saw what on the fifth of November we would unhesitatingly have described as rockets; the glowing balls rose up and then curved downwards, breaking into countless sparks quite in the accustomed manner. One of us said: "It is Mr. R——. He is sending up rockets to amuse his little boys." "What! on Sunday evening?" replied our hostess. "People don't send up rockets on Sunday." Those present agreed that it would be most unsuitable, although the hours for Church services had long passed. There was an instinctive feeling that fireworks on Sunday evening would be most incongruous, if not absolutely impossible.

After reading "Pastor Ovium" one does not feel isolated in one's concern about the comparatively large number of men who never darken the church door. One of these—a man who affirmed that, in some remote period and in another parish, he had been a constant attendant at Church services, and had only thrown up the practice in disgust when the ill-advised incumbent instituted a weekly collection—thought it his duty to speak to his clergyman because on several Sundays he had seen men going to work on their allotments, and he was confident that some of them were men who held their land in a field belonging to the Church. Certainly the practice is one to be discouraged, and the man spoke very decisively on the subject, and referred to the Fourth Commandment in a manner befitting one who would uphold the observance of the Lord's Day *positively* as well as negatively.

One of the questions which apparently had most interest for an Eton boy in his preparation for Confirmation was if he could

consistently play tennis on Sundays ; and there is no doubt that many people do from time to time inquire how they ought to observe the Lord's Day. May they play tennis, or golf, out of Church hours, and bridge in the evening ? Is it right to entertain ? To motor for the purpose of visiting one's friends ? What employment is legitimate ? and so forth.

It is not always easy to answer such questions off-hand. Circumstances alter cases so very much ; and, perhaps, greater latitude should be allowed the individual who fulfils the obligation of attendance at the chief service of the day, than one who habitually neglects the duty of worship. But the questions which are asked are distinct evidence that people need clear guidance on the subject of Sunday, and that there is still ample opportunity for inculcating the true spirit in which the day should be observed. Equally, it may be urged, there is ample indication that there is a general weakening of the sense of obligation in attending Divine Service, and this may well be due to a growing disregard of Sunday as a day of rest from ordinary avocations that time may be found for the performance of religious duty.

Now, our estimate of the proper observance of the Lord's Day must be largely dependent on the view we take of its origin and history ; and in the foremost place we are confronted by the question which is both ancient and modern, Is there any relation between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, and, if so, what is it ?

A good representative of those who positively affirm that Sunday is the Sabbath was Dr. Bownd, who lived in the sixteenth century. He published a book entitled, "Sabbathum Veteris et Novi Testamenti : or, The True Doctrine of the Sabbath held and practised of the Church of God, both before and under the Law, and in the time of the Gospel : Plainly laid forth and soundly proved by testimonies both of Holy Scripture and also of old and new Ecclesiastical writers, Fathers and Councils, and Laws of all sorts, both civil and common. Declaring first from what things God would have us straitly

to rest upon the Lord's Day, and then by what means we ought publicly and privately to sanctify the same. Together with sundry abuses of men in both these kinds, and how they ought to be reformed." The effect of this book, which was written by a clergyman of the Church of England, was most remarkable. We read that "The Lord's Day, especially in Corporations, began to be precisely kept, people becoming a law to themselves forbearing such sports as yet by statute permitted ; yea, many rejoicing at their own restraint herein. On this day the stoutest fencer laid down the buckler ; the most skilful archer unbent his bow, counting all shooting beside the mark ; May-games and morris-dances grew out of request, and good reason that bells should be silenced from jingling about men's legs, if their very ringing in steeples were adjudged unlawful. Some of them were ashamed of their former pleasures like children, which grown bigger blush themselves out of their rattles and whistles. Others forbore them for fear of their superiors ; and many left them off out of a politic compliance, lest otherwise they should be accounted licentious."

Bownd allowed the dressing of convenient meats on Sunday, and, it has been suggested, that the doctrine might gain more ready acceptance among the gentry, said : "Concerning the feasts of noblemen and great personages, or their ordinary diet upon this day (which in comparison may be called feasts), because they represent in some measure the majesty of God on the earth in carrying the image, as it were, of the magnificence and puissance of the Lord, in so much that they are called gods (Ps. lxxxii. 6), much is to be granted to them." But as an instance of judgments on Sabbath-breakers, he mentions the case of a certain nobleman who, for hunting upon the holy day, was punished by having a child with a head like a dog's, "that in this lamentable spectacle he might see his grievous sin in preferring his dogs and his delight in them before the service of God."

Similarly Dr. Peter Heylyn may be cited to represent the views of those who go to the opposite extreme. In his "His-

tory of the Sabbath," published in the seventeenth century, he asserted that nothing is to be found in Scripture concerning the keeping of the Lord's Day; that St. Paul's preaching at Troas on the first day of the week is no argument that the day was set apart by the Apostles for religious observance; that an examination of 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, Gal. iv. 10, and Col. ii. 16, supports the statement; that there is no evidence that the first day of the week was called the Lord's Day until the end of the first century. Therefore he assumed that the origin of the observance rests on Ecclesiastical authority, not on Scriptural warrant, and said: "In the institution of the Lord's Day, that which was principally aimed at was the performance of religious and Christian duties; hearing the Word, receiving of the Sacraments, praising the Lord for all His mercies, and praying to Him jointly with the congregation; for the continuance of the same rest and cessation from works of labour came not in till afterwards, and then but as an accessory to the former duties; and that not settled and established in a thousand years, as before was said, when all the proper and peculiar duties of the day had been at their perfection a long time before. So that if we regard either institution, or the authority by which they were so instituted, the end and purpose at which they principally aimed, or the proceedings in the settling and confirming them, the difference will be found so great, that of the Lord's Day no man can affirm, in sense and reason, that it is a Sabbath, or to be observed as the Sabbath was."

Hessey's Bampton Lectures have done much to mould doctrine on the subject since 1860. In the main, his line of argument may be classed on the same side as that of Dr. Heylyn; but he advanced on the statements of the latter by asserting, after a very full examination of patristic testimony: "The Lord's Day (a name which now comes out more prominently and is connected more explicitly with the Resurrection of our Lord than before) existed as a part and parcel of what was recognized as *Scriptural* (not merely as Ecclesiastical Christianity); that it was never confounded with the Sabbath,

but was carefully distinguished from it as an institution under the law of liberty, observed in a different way and with different feelings, and exempt from the severity of the provisions which were supposed to characterize the Sabbath." Unfortunately he does not appear quite consistent in his assertion of the Scriptural origin of the Lord's Day, because in another place he wrote : "As for the Lord's Day, it is not in any sense of the words a Sabbath or a successor to the Sabbath. It is a purely Ecclesiastical institution."

When, however, we turn to consider for ourselves which of these three lines of thought seems to possess greatest cogency, all are found deficient in one particular or another. Dr. Heylyn's treatment of the subject is impossible, because it bluntly denies any Scriptural warrant for the observance of the Lord's Day. Dr. Bownd's book, with a lengthy title, is more akin to Judaism than Christianity, in basing the chief authority for the observance of the Lord's Day on the Fourth Commandment rather than on Apostolic usage sanctifying the Weekly Festival of the Resurrection. Dr. Hessey is hardly convincing when he says, commenting on the words, "God blessed the Seventh Day and sanctified it" (Gen. ii. 3) : "We do read this. But what does it amount to? It is merely an announcement of what God did, not a setting forth to man of what man should do." Had his lectures been delivered in these days of advanced criticism, he would doubtless have dealt with the passage without unnecessarily straining the sense. Many hesitate to agree when they read his absolute statement, "The Fourth Commandment is not a moral precept." It is difficult to reconcile such an assertion with the duty of reciting the Fourth Commandment in the Liturgy. Is it there solely for its antiquarian interest ; or to give an example of life and instruction of manners, but not to establish any doctrine? Dr. Hessey, indeed, endeavoured to grapple with this difficulty when he wrote : "If you ask us, Why then has the Fourth Commandment been placed in the Liturgy in its purely Jewish form, and in what sense can you pray that you may keep it? a reply is ready : We pray that we may keep

that law so far as it contains the law of Nature and has been entertained in the Christian Church, as also that God may have mercy upon us for the neglect thereof in those Holy Days which, by the wisdom of the Church, have been set apart for God's public service."

The teaching of the Homily on the Time and Place of Prayer is much clearer: "God hath given express charge to all men that upon the Sabbath Day, which is now our Sunday, they should cease from all weekly and workday labour to the intent that like as God Himself wrought six days and rested the seventh, and blessed and sanctified it, and consecrated it to quietness and rest from labour, even so God's obedient people should use the Sunday holily and rest from their common and daily business, and also give themselves wholly to heavenly exercises of God's true religion and service." Many may find the statement of Thomas Aquinas concerning the Fourth Commandment more cogent than that of Dr. Hessey, "The commandment of sanctifying the Sabbath is partly moral: moral inasmuch as a man doth appoint a certain time of his life to attend upon heavenly things; for there is a natural inclination in man to depute a certain time for every necessary thing, as for the receiving of his meat, for sleep, and for other such things; and therefore he doth, according to the direction of natural reason, appoint a certain time for his spiritual refreshing whereby his soul is refreshed in God." When Dr. Hessey speaks of the Fourth Commandment, containing, at any rate to some extent, a law of nature, he virtually admits that the Commandment may be a moral precept, notwithstanding his assertion elsewhere that it is not. The case for the moral obligation of the precept is strengthened rather than diminished by the conjecture which Dr. Driver terms a plausible one, "That the Hebrew Sabbath (which was likewise primarily a day of restrictions) was derived ultimately from Babylonia."

If it is true that the people of Babylonia and other nations had by ancient custom days of restrictions, then the Fourth Commandment is another instance of God's selective action

in the history of mankind. That is to say that as Circumcision and Baptism were selected by Divine inspiration to be divested of former associations and sanctified for use in the Kingdom of God, so was the ordinance of the Sabbath Day, and this evidences its character as a moral precept of universal obligation. It is hardly necessary to discuss at length the origin of the observance of the first day rather than the seventh as best fulfilling the intention of the enactment. The Sabbath was inseparably associated with the rest after the work of Creation, and was primarily a day of rest from ordinary toil, and secondarily a day of worship. There can be no question about the connection of the Lord's Day with the Resurrection, which gave the seal to our Saviour's work of Redemption. Conscious of the great fact of Redemption, Christians knew there should be henceforth no opposition between their life in the world and their service of God. All days were hallowed for this, but owing to the exigencies of daily work all days could not be wholly set aside for religious observance. Here helpful guidance was found in the old Law; one day out of seven could at any rate be freed from secular requirements and used specially for worship, and the spirit governing the selection led to the observance of that day, which commemorated weekly the accomplishment of a work greater than that of Creation—Redemption from sin—and there was the fuller knowledge of the true principle by which it should be regulated, namely, that it is primarily a day for worship, and secondarily a day of rest from labour. There is evidence in the Fathers that in some respects the Lord's Day not merely succeeded, but represented the true spirit of, Sabbath observance. For instance, Clement of Alexandria says: "The seventh day is announced as rest, an abstinence from things evil as preparing for the first day, which is truly our rest." Tertullian mentions that Christians abstained from work and secular occupations on the first day. Eusebius, commenting on Psalm xci., says: "The Psalm, in fact, is inscribed for the Sabbath Day . . . it signifies the Lord's Day and the Resurrection Day." Passing from their testimony

it is at least probable that Constantine's Edict, A.D. 321, in which rest on Sunday from common tasks was enjoined, was prompted by this thought.

It is, at any rate, certain that Clotaire, King of France, when he prohibited servile labours on the Lord's Day, did so because he believed that Holy Scripture required this observance of the day. King Ina of Wessex enacted that if a bondman worked on Sunday by his lord's command he should be freed, and his lord should pay thirty shillings ; if a free man worked on that day without his lord's command he should forfeit his freedom or pay sixty shillings ; it was added that a priest should be doubly liable. It is appropriate to note, in the laws of Howel the Good, A.D. 928, this statute : " There is to be no swearing to land on a Sunday or on a Monday ; Sunday is a day for praying ; Monday is a day for labouring, to procure relics and essentials for swearing to land."

In the ancient laws of Ireland called Senchus Mor, relating to the Church, in the codifying of which St. Patrick is alleged to have had a chief place, it is prescribed that the son of a chief shall wear clothes of two different colours on Sundays ; that the son of a somewhat more exalted chief is to wear new clothes of two colours every Sunday, it being understood that the Sunday clothes are to be better than the week-day clothes, and those for festival days better than those for Sundays. This rule certainly seems to imply that Sunday was not considered a day for doing ordinary work.

It is worth while to reflect that in maintaining the moral character and universal obligation of the Fourth Commandment we really add to the realization of the evidential character of the Lord's Day, for the problem is all the more striking when it is asked : " How did the observance of the Lord's Day supplant that of the Sabbath ?" Although for a while some observance of the Sabbath " dragged on a lingering existence by the side of the Lord's Day," Christians in all probability relinquished the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath at the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. If, then, before A.D. 70 the Jewish Sabbath merely dragged on a

lingering existence, how are we to account for the change from the seventh day to the first? It must have been because the keeping of the first day was founded on a conviction of overwhelming strength, supplying a new motive and manner of fulfilling the old law. The conviction was the result of the irresistible evidence for the Resurrection of our Lord. Thus, Sunday observance, when connected with the moral precept of the Fourth Commandment, gains in evidential value. It is the festival of the Resurrection, and, as it is said in "Lux Mundi": "No one will now dispute that Jesus died on the Cross. If He did not, on the third day, rise again from that death to life—*cadit quaestio*—all Christian dogma, all Christian faith, is at an end."

May it not be taught, therefore, that there is a distinct relation between the Fourth Commandment and the observance of the Lord's Day, the nature of the relation being indicated in the Sermon on the Mount. To quote Dr. Gore: "God does not despair of what is imperfect because it is imperfect; He views every institution (or person) not as it is, but as it is becoming—not by the level of its present attainment, but by the character and direction of its movement. Everything that is moving in the right direction is destined in the Divine Providence to reach its fulfilment."

On the positive side people should be trained to recognize that attendance at Divine service is the paramount obligation, and there seems ample scope for suggestions as to how this training may be inculcated. Then, in the present condition of our religious life, it would seem likely to imperil the restoration of the day to the character it is given in the laws of Howel the Good as a day for prayer, if we countenance recreations such as tennis, golf, bridge, and motoring, for the reason that if individuals who have fulfilled the primary obligation of the day might themselves innocently participate in such pastimes, their example would certainly be cited to support those who reject every religious obligation; and there is the further consideration

that some, at any rate, of such recreations, must involve work on the part of others.

A renewed effort should be made to discountenance unnecessary employment on Sundays, and it might be well to reflect to what extent the alleged failure of the Church in country parishes is due to the practice of Sunday labour. Farmers, not unnaturally in these days, have reduced their staff to a minimum, the result being that there can rarely be a rotation in the men employed on Sundays. It would be a modest demand that every agricultural labourer should have at least one Sunday in each month entirely free from ordinary toil, and the Church should take the lead in making such a demand.

When the necessity of being present at Divine service is more fully acknowledged, then it may be the time to cease deploring the assimilation of Folkestone to Boulogne in all matters, even in apparent neglect of Sunday observance.

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Correspondence.

BISHOP BERKELEY.

To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—Some time ago you invited your readers to send you observations on the articles in your magazine, and accordingly I venture to suggest that Mr. Hooton, in his interesting article on “Bishop Berkeley and the Bermudas,” has done the good Bishop less than justice with regard to his methods of thought.

On p. 905 he says: “Imagine the kind of character which can put forth ‘reiterated efforts and pangs to apprehend the general idea of a triangle’ and (though a student of mathematics) find it ‘altogether incomprehensible’”; and on p. 906 he again refers to his “painful efforts to realize the abstract general idea of a triangle”: in both cases leaving the reader to infer that this effort was part of the Bishop’s own philosophical imagining.

But as a matter of fact the Bishop is only ridiculing the notions of his opponents—it was they who were the propounders of the notion of abstract ideas; they who, as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, “implied that we could frame an idea of a triangle *neither equilateral isosceles nor scalene*”; and the fact that the Bishop found such an “abstract idea” altogether incomprehensible is an indication rather of robust common sense than of a mind so minutely dialectic as to exclude missionary fervour. (By the way, Acts xvii. 17 indicates that the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.)

G. A. KING.