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most sacred things and usages, as they had been taught to regard them, must have been very unwelcome and puzzling to His disciples until they realized that this was part of His revelation of God to them. The sons of the Kingdom were *free*, and this was the point at which St. Paul takes up the very thought of Jesus. 'The sons are free' might sum up all Paul's teaching. And so we might pursue the same process in other directions. We see how the idea of 'salvation' was transformed by what

Jesus was and did, and how the apocalyptic hopes of that day were transfigured by Jesus and found a necessary place in the message He gave to His disciples. And all through the New Testament we see how the positive content of their conception of Jesus as Saviour and Lord came not from abstract considerations, or inherited hopes or longings, or from Old Testament promises, but from Jesus Himself—what He was and said and did and suffered and achieved.

Moral Problems of To-day.

XII.

Sunday Observance.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND A. A. DAVID, D.D., BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL.

THERE are three currents of thought which intermingle and sometimes conflict in the general approach to this question. The first comes from the Christian Churches, the natural guardians of the Christian Sunday; the second from the State, whose main function in this regard is to preserve the liberty of the individual, but to prevent his encroachment upon the liberty of others; and the third is public opinion, that unstable but powerful and, in the last resort, decisive influence in the ordering of social life. It is the purpose of this article to examine the interaction of these three interests, both in history and at the present time, and to suggest how they may be harmonized in the work of building up a just and wholesome tradition which shall allow for them all.

BEGINNINGS.—During the earlier part of the first three centuries, when most professing Christians were in humble walks of life, the question hardly arose. A simple service early in the morning with a common meal in the evening was enough to mark 'the fixed day' in every week for those who were not strong enough to separate it in any other way from other days. Gradually, as the Christians rose in social status and influence, was made the claim that their day of common worship should also be a holiday. This claim was strengthened by the tradition of the pagan festivals on the one hand, and on the other by the Jewish inheritance of the Sabbath. But it came from below. Public opinion

was steadily moving in that direction, at first without much guidance, or indeed encouragement, from the official authorities of the Church. By the end of the third century, however, the ecclesiastical and theological leaders were adopting, justifying, and administering the popular conception of a day like the Sabbath, set aside for religious observance and involving a general cessation of labour. In 305 a Spanish Council went so far as to make attendance at worship compulsory, and to punish continued absence with excommunication; and in 321 came Constantine's famous decree, enacting a public holiday once in every week on the 'day of the Sun,' with exemption for those who tilled the land. What his motive was, has been disputed. Probably, like most motives, it was mixed. It is likely enough that for social reasons he seized the opportunity to substitute a weekly day of rest for the numerous but irregular pagan festival days. But it is certain that he was largely influenced by the Christian demand for freedom to exercise their own observance. Thus he secured what every statesman seeks, namely, separate streams of support from different sections, converging, each for reasons of its own, upon the measure he proposes. The decree was generally accepted as the basis of particular laws of Church and State, reflecting the special emphasis laid at various times and in various regions upon particular directions of its application. One Council in 585 goes further

than Constantine and forbids all work on the land. On the other hand, a letter of Gregory the Great about the same time shows the need of restraint upon excessive Sabbatarianism. He protests against the prohibition of Sunday baths.

In the early history of Sunday observance as a social institution we may discern two facts which constantly reappear in its later developments; first, that it sprang from the rank and file of the public, and was shaped and re-shaped by their necessities and desires; secondly, that the Church, while insisting with Divine authority on the duty of public worship, was content on the one hand to adjust and adapt times and seasons to the habits of the people as crystallized in law, and on the other, to curb extravagant restrictions of social liberty in the supposed interest of religion.

THE REFORMATION.—The early reformers clearly understood the effect of our Lord's teaching upon the Christian interpretation of the Fourth Commandment, and firmly asserted it. But the trend of an uncritical allegiance to the letter of the Old Testament was too strong for them, and was pressed to its logical conclusion in a book written by one Nicholas Bownd in 1595, called *The True Doctrine of the Sabbath*. He boldly transfers to the Christian Sunday the whole observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and demands that it shall be enforced by law. This view was developed in a hundred and twenty books published in the next hundred years, and was strengthened both by the memory of excesses in the previous century, and by the licence of the Restoration. But the swing of the pendulum gradually sank to a narrower arc. Extreme opinions on either side were discounted, and the Sunday Observance Act of 1625, revised in 1677, represents a compromise which was recognized until late in the nineteenth century.

THE GREAT WAR.—In the meantime there have emerged two new conditions of life which have an important bearing on this question. The first is the fact that the industrial revolution involved for working folk harder and more continuous labour. And the second is the rapid development of transport, bringing new means and creating new habits of recreation. The natural result of harder work was a demand for a fixed day of rest. Even in countries where secularist interest was strong a weekly holiday for working men was imposed by law, and at the end of the nineteenth century Sunday had been almost everywhere set free from enforced labour. This negative observance survived even the necessities of war-time. In the first year of the Great War an attempt was made to abandon

it, with a significant result well described by the late Canon Glazebrook in *Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (xii. 109):

'Intent upon claiming what they considered their right to recreation and convenience, the mass of the people did not see what was involved in its satisfaction. Shops were increasingly opened, trains ran in ever-increasing numbers, and a large number of subsidiary industries were obliged to join the movement. Then contractors who were in a hurry took to Sunday work; and there was a real danger that the industrial population might lose their day of rest. About the beginning of the twentieth century the trade unions and other bodies began to realize the danger; shop-assistants began to protest; and so a check was imposed upon the movement. In the first year (1914-15) of the Great War it seemed as if the national necessity might obliterate Sunday rest. Munition factories and many others were opened on Sunday, and double pay was offered for work on that day. But the result was uniformly a diminished output. Many of those who worked on Sunday for double pay spent the extra money in drink on Monday and Tuesday; and such as conscientiously toiled all seven days did so with rapidly failing energy. After two years Sunday work was generally abandoned; and it may be hoped that the nation has taken the lesson to heart.'

THE PRESENT DAY—STATE ACTION.—The share in the ordering of Sunday that belongs to the State is discredited on two accounts. First, because there cling to it memories of days when those who urged Sunday observance on its religious side expected the State to share their reasons for urging it, and to enforce it by law. They were slow to learn that it is neither reasonable nor possible to compel the expression of religion. Apart from the wrong principle involved in such attempts we know that they have all failed. Nevertheless, there still persists a half-conscious expectation that Church-going can be promoted by legislation, and the suspicion that this design lies behind much of the modern agitation for a better observance of the Lord's Day, calls forth a certain resentment from those who have no religious interest in it. This is one of the reasons why Governments have been unwilling to promote legislation on a subject which they are apt to regard as dangerous. Thus they have been content to leave old laws upon the Statute Book long after they have failed, till they

have become ludicrously obsolete. This, too, has prejudiced the whole question of State action in this matter. The time is ripe to think out again the principles on which the State should interpret public opinion and Church convictions side by side, and should determine how far either or both ought to be reflected in legislation.

To begin with, it should be recognized that there is a clear distinction between Sunday as an institution and Sunday as a day of religious obligation. As an institution it concerns every citizen of the State, and therefore the State itself. Freedom on that day from the compulsion and strain of week-day labour is now the acknowledged right of all. But experience has amply proved that this freedom cannot be preserved from encroachment except by the protection of law. It is, therefore, the duty of the State to secure the general liberty to rest and to re-create, and so far as it can to prevent the demand of some for any particular kind of rest or recreation from imposing labour upon others. This is a large and exceedingly complicated task, and we cannot wonder that Governments show no special readiness to face it. The Bill now before Parliament proposes to confer upon local authorities the power to allow or forbid some forms of provided and commercialized recreation, just as they can already refuse or permit Sunday games in public parks. As a matter of legislative policy the proposal has two attractions. By transferring its responsibility to the shoulders of local bodies, Parliament lightens a burden of its own which becomes heavier every year and threatens it with something like paralysis. More and more we look to Parliament to order the growing complexity of our industrial and social life. The result is an increasing multitude of Bills demanded. Only a small proportion can be pressed into the Statute Book, and of these not all are carefully thought out or wisely drafted. And when experience proves them wanting, the opportunity to amend them must often be delayed till they have already produced much harm and injustice. It may be that resort to local option is one of the remedies for legislative congestion at Westminster. There is another argument in its favour. In the long-run laws are respected and obeyed, or disregarded, according as they are recognized as imposing upon all the reasonable will of the majority. The smaller the area in which the popular will is asked to declare itself, the speedier and the surer will that declaration be, provided, of course, that the issue can be simply expressed. Cities have already decided for or against Sunday games. If they change their

minds, their decisions can quickly be reversed. It may be argued that in this way local option keeps a closer touch with public opinion than national legislation. On the other hand, nothing is more likely to confuse the principles of public regulation than an indiscriminate shelving of national responsibility. We need to think out what departments of government may safely be relegated to local control, and the question deserves more attention from political thinkers than it has yet received.

A CHRISTIAN SUNDAY.—The impact in this regard of the Churches on public opinion and in consequence upon the legislature, is weakened by obvious differences among Christians themselves. Large numbers of Church folk, mostly in the Evangelical tradition, hold firmly that Sunday should be marked by the complete cessation of all ordinary occupations, whether laborious or recreative. In their view to dig in the garden, to play golf or tennis, and even to listen to a band, is to desecrate the day. This implies that Sunday makes certain acts sinful which on other days are innocent. Others are unable so to read the mind of Christ. It seems to them that in this, as in other regards, He avoided precise instructions which would involve a list of things condemned; that in His judgment He considered first the motives and circumstances of acts and habits; and that He would make His followers free to decide in His Spirit for themselves and for each other. In so doing the first step is to bring our minds, cleared of all prejudice, to a fresh examination of our Lord's own words and example. When He dealt with the Pharisees on this question He revealed a principle fundamentally different from that on which their teaching was based. They enjoined Sabbath observance as a matter of man's obedience to God. The Sabbath was a test of that obedience, and the methods of rendering it had become so complicated and irksome as to overshadow all other aspects of that day. Jesus deliberately changed this basis. He taught that the Sabbath was a gift in which God showed His love and care for men. For man it was made, and by man it shall be ordered by the guidance of the perfect man whom God has sent to bring His Kingdom upon earth: 'the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' So is the Fourth Commandment, which our Lord never mentions, fulfilled in righteousness. It can never be abrogated. We should even hesitate to say that our Lord set it aside. But it is unquestionable that He separates in it the spirit from the letter. We are to obey the Divine command to keep our Lord's Day holy.

But we are set entirely free from the injunctions by which this holiness was impressed upon the Jews.

What, then, are the principles which should govern the ordering by Christians of their Sunday? The first is the obligation of worship. It is hardly worth while to discuss here the question whether this obligation can be discharged apart from gathering together for common prayer. There are and always will be some who find that their impulse towards God is met and satisfied in a field or a wood or before a wireless set better than in an ordered service shared with others. But our Lord's own practice and the age-long example of His Church show clearly that such an impulse, true as it may be, is imperfect, and needs to be developed. The response to God's love which is most acceptable to Him comes from men meeting with one accord in one place and bringing each his contribution to a common offering. Therefore the Sunday which the Christian orders for himself will provide time and opportunity for worship with others at fixed times.

Worship is rightly regarded as a duty towards God. But it has also a reflex effect upon ourselves. It is the highest and the most effective form of rest. In worship we ascend in heart and mind to the heavenly places. There we are surrounded by a silence in which the confused clamours of our daily work die down, and we attain essential peace. This is a truth of experience which is not confined to mystics and very pious people but is shared by ordinary faithful worshippers. Thus the Christian claim for worship, as for themselves the first requisite in the ordering of Sunday, goes to the heart of their conception of a day of rest.

It remains for them to select other occupations which shall minister to the refreshment and recreation of the whole self. It is their obvious Christian duty to society as well as to themselves to resist the present, and it may be hoped the passing, craze for speed and noise which has deplorably changed the whole character of the day. By painful experience the world must learn, and the Church must teach, that excitement and distraction are the enemies of rest. A man with a family and a home where quiet can be enjoyed will use Sunday as a day when family life can be realized and cultivated, always remembering that the particular form of quiet he needs does not always suit his children. May they play games on Sunday? Most would agree nowadays that no Christian principle is so transgressed. But from early years they should be trained in two convictions—first,

that their own Sunday recreation must never impose labour upon others; and secondly, that they should respect the conscientious scruples of their brethren, whether they are reasonable or needless, and so far as possible avoid offending them.

Both these issues were once raised in a practical form at a public school, where enforced idleness made Sunday a day of special difficulty, which had been increased by irritating restrictions designed to prevent some of the dangers which lie in wait for a combination of freedom and inactivity. The result was a sullen boredom which was actually more dangerous than the perils from which it was (not always successfully) protected. The boys were taken into counsel and made some quite practicable suggestions. It was arranged that workshops, art and music rooms, and other opportunities of occupation should be open under supervision and with service supplied by the boys themselves. There was no demand for cricket or football. Of these they had enough in the week. But might they 'change' for the purpose of unorganized games on the ground that these 'would not be wrong'? Authority said no, and explained that so long as Christian public opinion in the town was against Sunday games in public recreation grounds, it was not fair that the School should enjoy what might offend. The reason was readily accepted.

THE CHURCHES AND THE NATION.—Besides determining their own observance of the day, members of the Christian Churches, have, as citizens, the further duty of exercising their influence so as to secure a reasonable regulation of Sunday which may apply to all. In so doing they may fairly claim some consideration for themselves. If a number of people, still large, regard themselves bound to set aside certain hours for a certain common purpose, it is reasonable that they should not be hindered in that purpose. 'Church hours' have always been in some measure protected. In one or two cities of the north where a considerable proportion of the people go to Sunday School at three o'clock, it has been urged that band music in parks should not be allowed to compete with a traditional fixture. But in pressing these claims for themselves, Church folk should be careful to avoid the attempt to impose their own customs upon other people. Laws and regulations which seem to be based on the desire to drive people into church are bound to be resented, and have always failed. The Churches take the wisest and most Christian course when, having secured real freedom for themselves, they enter sympathetically into

the desire and need of 'them that are without' for the highest and healthiest relaxation possible in every section and class according to its circumstances. The full Christian observance of the day is outside the scope of law, and can only be promoted by teaching, and especially by example. The strongest influence we can exercise upon the public mind in this matter will come through our own faithfulness to the principles of our profession. When we argue that a day of rest is neither complete nor secure unless it includes provision for worship, people will not believe us till they see that we ourselves order our habits accordingly. It may well be that both for our own sake and in the public

interest we need to rearrange the times of our services, our Sunday Schools, and Bible Classes. Social habits have changed and new necessities have arisen since the hours of eight, eleven, and six-thirty were fixed for summer and winter alike. The Archbishop of York has recently made some suggestions which will certainly be tried. Indeed, the time is ripe for free experiment in order to discover how in town and country we may adapt to man's varying conditions the day that was made for man. But in all such adaptation the witness from the Churches which will count for most is not denunciation of Sabbath-breakers, but our witness by example to the duty and value of public worship.

On Preaching the Cross.

BY PROFESSOR THE REVEREND A. J. GOSSIP, D.D., GLASGOW.

DR. COFFIN is a gallant spirit who holds his head up, and looks out on life with steady eyes. And yet he is uneasy. For the Churches, as they are to-day, seem to him to be little better than a shadow of what they are meant to be, with far less authority and thrill and power over men's minds and lives than they ought to possess—a thing sombre in itself, but much more disconcerting if, as he believes, one main cause of it is the sinister fact that too many of the ministry and of the people seem to have lost their grip of, and their interest in, the very core and centre of the faith; that Christ crucified is not being preached; that many so-called Christians are ill at ease on Calvary, and somewhat ostentatiously avert their eyes from that stark ugly Cross, partly because they do not understand it and can only stammer rather incoherently about it, and even more because, frankly, they do not like it, have an uncomfortable feeling that this grim horror will not fit into their cosinesses and soft ways, calls to a hardihood from which their flabby souls recoil, and out on an adventure, which, while it reads well in the lives of others, is too heroic for their taste by far; and so they leave it out, and contrive to tone down the gospel to a drab and unexciting thing, which ordinary people can live out without much drain upon their gallantry or their self-sacrifice.

And thus, even apart from the buffoons who have come to the conclusion that the way to make folk

Christian is to say as little about Christ as with any shred of decency they can, and spend their time on flashy titles and ephemeral nothings that may catch vulgar eyes and fill their pews on any terms, many honourable men, resolute not to talk beyond their own experience, determined not to be unnatural or strained, keep to the sunny days in Galilee, and preach about the Master and the Teacher and the Healer and the Friend. But the Saviour! That they let alone. Loisy tells us that his father held his tongue about religion, because it had nothing to say to him. And many adopt the same simple policy about the Cross, and for the self-same reason.

Well! even so, they may have a real and vivifying message. For everything about Christ is worth preaching, can win and can transform. Not His death only, but His life, His character, His victory, His presence with us now, have their own glorious message and appeal. There have been great days in the Church, when the centre of men's preaching was not Calvary. In the sub-apostolic times the faith was spreading like a prairie fire, and folk were risking everything for Christ with a crazy gallantry. And yet their creed was curiously nebulous and superficial, seemed to miss the bigger things and the real source of power, with an odd blindness. Apparently the Cross was not the axis round which their life span. And in its glory the Greek Church of old, gathered about