

Sunday Rest.

THERE are two solid grounds on which Sunday laws rest: one, the right of the prevailing religion of the country (be it Jewish, Christian, or Pagan) to have its day of worship free from disturbance; and the other, the right of every man to an equal share in a rest-day from toil.

As regards the first, if this country were a Jewish country the Jewish worship on Saturday should be peculiarly protected from molestation. If it were a Mohammedan country, the Friday should be in like manner protected. This is simple common sense applied to things as they are, and no action of doctrinaire theory. Where there is a conflict of sacred days, as among Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan, all cannot be protected, and hence the majority must determine the question. This certainly distinguishes the sacred day, but does no harm to those who do not count it sacred. It only obliges them to be courteous. The inequality in the matter is only such as in some things must obtain among the freest people.

As regards the second ground: physiologists, physicians, statisticians, and sensible observers in general, have agreed that man's body and mind need a complete rest at an interval of about seven days. But man will not take that rest from labor unless he is obliged by law to do so. His greed for gain will make him ruin health in his own case, or (worse still) make him force his employes to ruin theirs by continuous work. The law, therefore, must make and enforce a rest-day. But what day shall it take? Again: common sense says, "Take the day which the mass of the community, from religious reasons, already regard as a rest-day." So the civil law, providing for men's physical well-being, appoints and enforces a rest-day from labor, which is the same day on which the great Christian community worship, and in which the same law, for other reasons, protects them in worship.

There is the whole of the Sunday question in a nutshell. There is no compelling men to be religious, no supporting a state church, no puritanical blue-law. The Jew, or Mohammedan, or Pagan simply must not make a boisterous demonstration, such as a noisy parade, on Sunday. Why? Because the vast majority of the people see fit to worship on that day. The Jew, or Mohammedan, or Pagan must not keep open shop that day. Why? Because the people have decreed a rest-day from labor once a week to help humanity, and that is the day.

The only objection that has any color in it is that the Jew then must keep two rest-days in the week, and hence is at a disadvantage with his neighbor. Well, as we have already said, in the most equal administrations, there must, in the nature of things, be some inequality. Laws, for example, require a notice of "danger" to be put up in dangerous places in the city; but, alas! blind men cannot read the notices. The laws are unequal to the blind man. They have to be. So here the Jew's conscience tells him to keep from working Saturday. The law tells him to keep from working Sunday. It is a pity; but it cannot be helped. The other alternative would be "no rest-day," and that would be destructive to the whole community. We must all bear some burdens for the public good.

Our American liberties are largely connected with the weekly day of rest. This day has given the people time to think, and read, and enjoy family life, and without it we should have become an ignorant, brutish, machine-people, like the low peasantry of Continental Europe. Take away this rest-day, and you undermine our high moral and educational condition as a people. You turn us into a nation of mere "workies." The cry of religious oppression, as against Sunday observance, is a device of the enemy. It is but the voice of soulless corporations, and of the proprietors of drinking-saloons and other demoralizing places, who wish to make their great gains on Sunday, and care nothing for the welfare and happiness of the people. They are the oppressors, and the advocates of a day of rest are the staunch supporters of a true freedom.

America has three bulwarks of liberty—a free ballot, a free school, and a free Sunday, and neither domestic treachery nor foreign impudence should be permitted to break them down.

Stealing a Minister.

THE great deep of Protestant ecclesiasticism is often vexed by no small tempest of talk about the relations of vacant churches to settled pastors. It frequently happens that a clergyman, supposed to be happily and permanently located, is called away from his work to a new field of labor, amid loud complaints of the injury done to the church left pastorless. Even when a decorous silence is maintained before the public, there is often not a little suppressed resentment; and the opinion that no church has a right to disturb a settled pastor by calling him into its service finds angry expression. The act is denounced as a species of larceny, and laws to punish the crime of stealing a minister are feelingly invoked. Several flagrant cases of this sort have recently occurred, arousing unwonted ire in the breasts of staid parishioners, and no week passes that does not witness griefs of this nature in some part of the land. The ethics of this relation deserve, therefore, a little careful study. It is a subject in which good Methodists are supposed to have no interest.

Without doubt it is a hardship that a church should be deprived, for any reason, of the services of a teacher to whom it has become attached, and who seems to be contented and successful in his work. The wish to be protected against such a loss is one which the members of a church naturally entertain. But the question has two sides, and the irate church whose pulpit has just been emptied is not apt to see more than one of them. The welfare of the minister, as well as of the church, must be considered. Now, it is unquestionable that the welfare of the minister sometimes requires him to change his field of labor. A life-long pastorate may be the ideal, but it is impossible, in many cases, to realize it. A change is sometimes demanded, not chiefly for an increase of salary, but for relief from burdens of labor and care that have grown intolerable, or to preserve health and power of work. In these exacting times, when the pulpit must grapple with so many great questions, and when the condition of power is wide and constant study, this necessity frequently occurs. There are ministers who,