

1.—Is it not a fact that miraculous orders were inherent in the church as it left the hands of God? "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 28). "He gave some to be apostles; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). I Tim. i. 18. Acts viii. 18.

2.—Is it not a fact that gifts of miracle spring essentially out of justification by faith? "This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2). "These signs shall follow them that believe: in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

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# The Lord's Day

By D. M. PANTON.

THE fundamental significance of the Lord's Day is its vital identification with the Christian Faith. There are some five hundred millions of men in the world to-day who profess the Faith of Christ; and while on many points they are deeply divided, on this there is no division—that the Lord's Day is as old as Christianity, and dates from the Apostles. And the doctrinal reason for this extraordinary unanimity is profound. Exactly as the Sabbath intermingled its roots with the fundamentals of the Mosaic Law, and was grounded on a miraculous deliverance out of Egypt, and a completed redemption (Deut. v. 15); so the Lord's Day is a perpetual photograph, recurring weekly, of that Empty Tomb in which the salvation of the world was born; and so divinely is it designed as an abiding photograph that its rejection is (in principle) the rejection of the Christian Faith. In the oft-quoted words of Voltaire: "If you are to kill Christianity, you must get rid of Sunday." For the Lord's Day presents, doctrinally, the very heart of the Gospel. Israel's Sabbath was a rest *after* work; because, imitating the Creator's acts, man under law was to work out his own salvation, and only so find rest: but the Lord's Day is a rest *before* work; because, under grace, we first rest from

they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17). John vii. 38, 39.

3.—Is it not a fact that God's gifts, which are never revoked, deepen holiness, enlarge knowledge, and constitute the true wealth of the church? "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1 Cor. i. 11). "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself" (1 Cor. xiv. 4). "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things; and ye need not that any one teach you" (1 John ii. 20, 27). John xvi. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 15. "In every-thing ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 5).

4.—Is it not a fact that miraculous gifts, lapsing with the fall of the church into worldliness and justification by works, nevertheless God still bids us seek? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father" (John xiv. 12). "I would have you all speak with tongues"; "but desire earnestly the greater gifts"; "follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy"; "desire" (I Cor. i. 5).

learn the mind of God if the Lord's Day is abolished? Archdeacon Stanton Jones of Bradford, tells us that there are 600,000 fewer children in the Sunday Schools to-day than when the Great War broke out. Here is an extract from the Red Catechism taught in Proletarian Sunday Schools:

- "What is God?"
- "God is a word used to designate an imaginary being which people of themselves have devised."
- "Who is Jesus Christ?"
- "Jesus Christ is the son of a Jewish girl called Mary."
- "Is He the Son of God?"
- "There is no God, and therefore there can be no God's Son."
- "Is it true that after Christ's death the Apostles received the Holy Ghost?"
- "It is not. The Apostles had imbibed too freely of wine, and their dizzy heads imagined all sorts of queer things."

Bearing in mind that the children of to-day are the masters of to-morrow, the creators of the destinies of nations, what will happen if, Sunday Schools being swamped in Sunday games, the children have no Bible and no God? "Where," asks a Christian army officer, "do the clergy expect to get their congregations ten or twenty years hence?" The Lord's Day is the day of vision; and "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. xxxix.)—cast off restraint (R.V.), become ungovernable: revelation, when it is replaced, is replaced by revolution. In the extremely striking sentence of a Jewish Rabbi in New York: "Jew as I am, I must say it is anarchy or Christ."

So we appeal for the brightest jewel on a nation's brow—its worship of God. The Lord's Day was Creation's birthday out of chaos; it was the birthday of light; it was our Saviour's birthday out of the tomb; it was the Church's birthday at

earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues" (1 Cor. xiv. 5; xii. 31; xiv. 1, 39). "For Ghost], and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him" (Acts ii. 39).

5.—Is it not a fact that the divine tests imply the possibility of either spirit manifesting itself at any moment, while ensuring the perfect safety of all tested intercourse? "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: every spirit which confesseth that I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God"—*ie.*, no inspired man—"saieth, Jesus is anathema; and no man"—*ie.*, inspired—"can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). "Matt. vii. 15-20. Gal. i. 8. 2 John 7. "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesy-ings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. v. 19). Rev. ii. 2.

6.—Is it not a fact that miraculous evangelising powers were never more needed than at the present moment amongst the increased masses of mankind? "Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs"

all our works in the finished work of Christ, and then we are free to serve. It is the Lord's Day, and we can abandon the Day only when we abandon the Lord.

Now let us glance for a moment at its Christian significance, as the day of worship. It is exceedingly remarkable that all our Lord's supreme acts, after His resurrection, were done on the Lord's Day. On this day He first appeared to His disciples; on this day He met them, in different places, and repeatedly; on this day He breathed on the Apostles the Holy Ghost; on this day He commissioned them to preach the Gospel to the whole world; on this day He met them to expound the Scriptures; and on this day He reascended to God. For nineteen centuries it has been the day on which Christ constantly meets His own. A young man said to me some years ago: "Out of fifty-four Sundays on which I have attended this Chapel, on about forty-three the subject handled on the Lord's Day has been exactly what I have been debating in the week, and generally so as to solve the problem." In a mission held in the Church I served some years ago, among some two hundred professed converts, something like ninety per cent. reported themselves as regular attendants at worship somewhere: that is, the Holy Ghost converts within the ambit of the Churches; and to those disciples of Christ who, because of corruption in church life, are tempted to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together," I commend one deeply impressive fact. "He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day" (Luke iv. 16): in spite of profound corruption, lifeless assemblies, rampant error, Jesus—not by capricious whim, or chance accident, but of set design and habitual practice—was never absent from the worship of God. "I would have been a maniac long ago," said a foremost merchant, "but for the Lord's Day."

Let us glance for a moment at its national significance, as the day of vision. The Education Committee reported recently that "at the present time the Bible is probably less widely read, and less directly influential in our life and literature, than at any time since the Reformation." Where will the millions

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7.—Is it not a fact that prophecy indicates the restored activity of inspiration and miracle in the neighborhood of the second advent? "And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations. And when they lead you to judgment, . . . whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark xiii. 10). "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts ii. 17, 20). "Behold, the husbandman [God: John xv. I] waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Jas. v. 7).

and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 18). "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Heb. ii. 4). "They went forth everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed" (Mark xvi. 20). "And now, Lord, . . . grant unto Thy servants to speak Thy word with all boldness, while Thou stretchest forth Thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus" (Acts iv. 29).

Pentecost; and for nineteen hundred years it has been the day, incomparably above all others, of the second birth of untold millions. Sunday School teachers may well ponder the words of John Bright: "I don't believe that all the statesmen in existence, and all the efforts they have ever made, have tended so much to the greatness and true happiness, the purity and glory of this country, as have the efforts of Sunday School teachers." And all who, by their desire to stand by the day of the Lord and by the Lord of the day, may take fresh heart of grace from the words of Gladstone, written out of a ripe and profound experience: "The welfare of mankind does not now depend on the State, or on the world of politics; the real battle is being fought out in the world of thought; and we politicians are children playing with toys in comparison to that great work of restoring belief."

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