

WORSHIP OR PLAY ON SUNDAY?

BY LIVY S. RICHARD.

Arguing against Sunday baseball and Sunday golf, a distinguished clergyman recently said:

"A man will not find in the field the worship that will build his soul."

It depends.

"The groves were God's first temples," and in them there is yet much to learn—much which makes for reverence. I see no reason why the God that is visible out of doors is not as worthy of veneration as the God of the sacred books which men expounded in churches.

I have listened to many sermons which it seemed to me did less good than might have come through a wholesome game in the open air. Baseball, for instance, teaches team-play, fair play and fellowship; teaches to be up and doing. Whereas those sermons taught little but patience and that selfish type of piety which exhausts itself in preachments of correct personal conduct, with very little social understanding or incentive to fight the devil in society.

The soul building which I think most worth while comes less with passive worship than with battling man to man for a better order.

If anything is said or done inside a church of a pleasant Sunday which will help the church-goer to think better thoughts, to have finer aspirations, to deal more kindly and show greater mercy afterward than before, then that is something which should not be missed. And where there is such ministry you don't need to fear the competition of the beckoning field, for men and women everywhere are hungry for it, and soon or late will find it and go to it.

The decline in church attendance, as I figure it out, is nothing more or less than a decline in the church's vital appeal.

Folks stay away because there is no strong call for them to go.

Any live minister with a vibrant

human message can fill a church, be the outside attractions what they may;

Billy Sunday isn't blanketed by baseball or golf. He turns thousands away. He does it, not by his theology, which is mighty old-fashioned ~~it~~, indeed, he has any at all, but by his earnestness, his virility, his elemental human appeal.

You go to a service conducted by a man like that because you want to go, not because he or anybody else says you ought to go.

A minister who can make folks want to go to church has no bother about empty pews.

It is because so many clergymen are merely going through forms and motions in the pulpit, preaching and praying against time, dodging or soft pedaling the big issues of our day, that so many folks prefer golf or a ball game.

Sunday, we have learned, was made for man, not man for Sunday. So man is doing on Sunday what he wants to do.

The problem of the preacher is to make him want to do what he ought to do. Unless they can do that I know of no way by which they can hold their jobs.

They can do it whenever they are willing to cut loose from conventionalities, ignore the big pew-holders and preach straight-from-the-shoulder Christianity as taught by the Carpenter of Nazareth.

SOMETHING DOING

Some very noticeable improvements are being made by the Rev. C. A. Tuttle about the M. E. parsonage lawn and gardens. Stumps and dead trees are being removed and several shade and fruit trees and shrubbery will be planted in their place. The agricultural and horticultural features of these premises have been neglected for several years.—Lyons Cor. Burlington Democrat.