

parations made for the change. We shall be glad to receive suggestions for publication on the subject.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

There is something to think about in the following statement of the Committee on Christian Life and Work, with regard to Public Worship, viz:—that “among our congregations, particularly in country sections, the general attendance seems especially good. Among all this class of answers there is scarcely one complaint. In cities and the smaller towns it is not so good; one answer giving ‘much irregularity;’ another stating what many sadly experience, viz., that, while in cities many strangers fill the churches, yet almost half of the regular families do not attend as regularly as they ought. Some systematically attend only once on the Lord’s day, and then only when the day is fine.”

The contrast presented here is a painfully suggestive one, and certainly requires careful reflection. “Comparisons are odious,” some people think; so, when they come before us so strikingly as they do in this case, the best plan is to look at them fairly now, and try and make something else of them, that they may be avoided in future. Why, then, we ask, this singular condition of affairs—that professors of religion in the centres of population, and possessors of almost every christian privilege, should present such an unfavourable contrast to their fellow-worshippers in the rural districts? What can be the cause of the existence of such a fact as has been made patent to the Church,—that attendance upon public worship in country sections is “especially good,” while in towns and cities there is “much irregularity,” and “almost half of the regular families do not attend as regularly as they ought,” and “some systematically attend only once on the Lord’s day, and then only when the day is fine”? There must be a reason for this somewhere; and if a sound one cannot be given, the more serious the charge.

In the first place, the contrast presented would seem to indicate that rural districts possess advantages in this re-

spect that the city does not afford. But is that the fact? Is regular attendance there more convenient, less wearisome, or does it admit of greater personal indulgence? In every aspect in which it can be viewed, we think it is otherwise. For instance: In our cities and towns, the distance between the place of worship and the most remote residence of worshippers is comparatively nothing when we consider what a “Sabbath-day’s journey” in the country means. Many persons travel long distances, reaching sometimes to ten and fifteen miles, and seldom miss the regular Sabbath services unless through illness, or on exceedingly stormy occasions. That is quite a common practice, in which both old and young join. They deem it no great sacrifice, but rather rejoice that the means of grace are within their reach at all. And though the distance in both cases were equal, are not solid pavements and uniformly level streets, in fine and stormy weather alike, superior to the rough and often muddy roads that have to be traversed by our country friends? Again, supposing it were true (which is doubtful), that the mental and physical labor of citizens is much more severe than that of the farmer, the miller, or the lumberman, ten or twenty minutes will enable him to reach his pew in time for worship,—thus affording ample leisure on the Sabbath morning to recruit his exhausted powers—a luxury not enjoyed by the dwellers in country sections. Besides, are not the people composing our town and city congregations, on the whole, as wealthy, and therefore as well provided with every requisite for personal comfort and safety—with ingenious contrivances to protect themselves from injury by the storms and cold of winter, as well as secure their persons from the sunshine and heat of summer? Are not city churches as comfortable as those of rural settlements? Are they not as well heated in winter, and well shaded in summer?—as free from all kinds of defects and annoyances?—as well lighted, as well carpeted and cushioned, as well supplied with every essential to ease the mind of the worshipper, and promote a spirit of thanksgiving and devotion, even after coming through the