

## THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE: THE LORD'S DAY.

THE Lambeth conference have touched with great judgment and yet with great firmness on the subject of "Sunday Observance"; and this remark applies to the contents of all the three documents, the Encyclical, the Resolutions of the Conference, and the Report of the Committee. With respect to this last, we should remark that almost every phrase employed by the Committee (consisting of English, Scottish, Australian, Irish and American Bishops) was adopted in the Resolutions and in the Encyclical of the Conference, although in some respects the expressions are slightly toned down. There is not here, however, as on the question of Temperance considered last week, any such divergence as demands special notice except on one minor point. We shall, therefore, merely give the well-considered and weighty paragraph from the Encyclical, and base our remarks upon it.

It reads as follows: "*Observance of the Lord's Day.* The due observance of Sunday as a day of rest, of worship, and of religious teaching, has a direct bearing on the moral well-being of the Christian community. We have observed of late a growing laxity which threatens to impair its sacred character. We strongly deprecate this tendency. We call upon the leisurely classes not selfishly to withdraw from others the opportunities of rest and of religion. We call upon master and employer jealously to guard the privileges of the servant and the workman. In 'the Lord's Day' we have a priceless heritage. Whoever misses it incurs a terrible responsibility."

These utterances will commend themselves to Christians and to philanthropists alike. It is interesting to note how the atmosphere of the passage is of the Eastern rather than the Western Hemisphere. It is certainly a matter of thankfulness to see that the good English word *workman* has not yet given place to the detestable substitute, *employé*. May we hope that common sense will prevail to restore it here? On the other hand, it raises a smile among ourselves to read of the "leisurely classes." Doubtless they are still to be found in the old world. Where are they in the "Broadway," in "Wabash Avenue," in our own "King Street"?

We notice one curious omission in the Encyclical. There is no distinct statement of the "Divine obligations" of the "religious observance of one day in seven," as it is in the Report of the Committee, and in the Resolutions of the Conference, apparently carried without division, both authorities declaring this obligation to be "embodied in the Fourth Commandment." We are inclined to agree with the judgment here expressed, and yet we are glad that it was not embodied in the Encyclical, and this for the simple reason that the practical aspect of the question is quite clear, while the theoretic is not,

While we grant with Archbishop Whately that the *positive*, as distinguished from the *moral* portion of the decalogue is not binding upon Christians, we do yet strongly sympathize with those who point out that the very position of the Fourth Commandment, containing positive precepts, in the midst of a series of other commandments, which all enforce moral obligations based upon principles seems to give almost a moral character to that commandment. On the other hand, the reader of the New Testament cannot be unaware that St. Paul treats the observance of the "Sabbath" as an open question, a question to be decided by every Christian's own conscience; and it is quite certain that, at that time, the Lord's Day had not taken the place of the Sabbath, except that the early Christians met together on the first day of the week for breaking of bread and for prayer, and probably, in most cases certainly, went afterwards to their usual day's work.

Having regard to these facts and considerations, it was well that the Conference should rest their appeal on the sure ground of ecclesiastical usage, common consent, and Christian expediency, although only the last of these is formally alleged. We do entirely agree with the Bishops that the misuse of the day involves "a terrible responsibility," whether we mean by that misuse a needless secularisation of the day on our own part, or a hindrance to its being enjoyed as a day of rest by others.

In so speaking, we are, in no way, open to the charge of Judaizing or what is called Sabbatarianism. We are not pleading for the letter of the Fourth Commandment. We are pleading for a custom which is one of the oldest in the Church of Christ, which has been found of the highest utility, and which has been, in different forms, embodied in the laws of Churches and of States. We may mention, in passing, that, some years ago, the French Bishops made an earnest, combined effort to secure a better observance of the Lord's Day; and every one who knew Paris, for example, thirty years ago, and who has visited it during the last few years, cannot fail to be impressed with the great change which has taken place in regard to work on Sunday, whatever may be said of amusements.

Sunday amusements present a real and obvious difficulty. On the one hand, it seems the height of cruelty to refuse innocent recreation to people who can have it only on one day in the week. On the other hand, it is difficult to sanction Sunday recreations without necessitating increase of labour on the part of a portion of the population, and perhaps depressing the religious character of the day. Here is the problem. We are not aware that any one demurs to this statement of it, although the proposed solutions are widely different.

Some time ago THE WEEK drew attention to the question of the use of the street cars on the Lord's Day. It was then pointed out that the running of the cars during certain hours in the afternoon would enable those of the working classes who lived in the heart of the city to enjoy the benefits of country exercise and fresh air. We have seen no argument against this suggestion which is not equally applicable to the use of private carriages. Nay, the argument is far stronger for the running of the street cars than for the use of private vehicles. The well-to-do man or woman can drive out for recreation any day; the working man or woman can do so only on Sunday. We mention this subject at present merely to point out that we should not regard the running of the street cars as "Sabbath desecration."

There are two sentences in this portion of the Encyclical which should be emphasized and dwelt upon. We will quote them again. "We call upon the leisurely [well to do] classes not selfishly to withdraw from others the opportunities of rest and of religion. We call upon master and employer jealously to guard the privileges of the servant and the workman." To some extent these exhortations are less needed in this country than in England. The working classes here are mostly able to take care of themselves. But, unfortunately, a good many of those who have most need of the rest of the Lord's Day are the least able to make sure of it. Among these are certainly to be reckoned our domestic servants. It is not easy to ascertain the exact condition of this class, or rather, to get to know how many different kinds of conditions there are among them, and to what extent they are cut off from the means of recreation and of religious instruction and worship.

But, perhaps, in days when domestic servants, if they are worth anything, can almost make their own terms, there is little danger of their being kept in bondage. There is perhaps a greater and more subtle danger in many of them being members of households in which either no heed is given to the sacred character of the Lord's Day, or else where it seems to be taken for granted that the observance of it on the part of domestic servants need extend only to the taking of recreation. In other words, no pains are taken to encourage the young women, of whom this class is chiefly composed, to attend a place of worship.

With those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church, as many of them do, it matters the less, as their spiritual directors will insist on their attending at mass, and generally will see that they do it. But with regard to Protestant girls the case is different; and we would respectfully suggest to the clergy of the different churches that this matter should be considered by them as a part of their ministerial duties.

We are quite aware that congregations resent what they consider meddlesomeness on the part of their clergy, and are not willing to have their domestic habits and customs made the subject of comment. But surely a minister of Jesus of Nazareth could hardly be exceeding his commission if he were to ask his people whether they were considering the spiritual welfare of their domestics. Surely they might even give hints which would quicken the consciences of some who had never given the subject sufficient thought. For example, might they not hint that Sunday calls and Sunday afternoon "teas" must have a bad effect on their dependents, who, if they think anything of the Lord's Day at all, will probably regard such things as violating its spirit? If they do not quite see their way to the introduction of such a subject, they can say that the hint was given in a "secular" paper, and, if they like to be more particular, they can say THE WEEK.

ERRATUM.—In last week's article on "Intemperance," in an extract from the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, the words "distilled and undiluted" should have been "diluted or undiluted."

THE average wheat crop of Italy for the past ten years has been 132,000,000 bushels, and Italy, as a wheat-producing country, ranks as third in Europe, being excelled only by France and Russia; so that it will be seen that the outturn of her harvest has somewhat to do with the requirements of Europe. The crop of last year was about 120,000,000 bushels, or 12,000,000 bushels below an average of the past ten years. The consumptive requirements of Italy the coming cereal year will be about 140,000,000 bushels, or 20,000,000 bushels above her production. The bulk of this will, in all probability, be supplied by Russia and India.