

SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Whereas we, your committee on Sabbath Observance, have brought a report on this subject for three consecutive years, and nothing new has come under our observation we have secured some literature from the Lord's Day Alliance and are bringing you extracts from same.

Jesus said in His assertion the Sabbath was made for man. He declared the Sabbath to be not local but universal. It is the heritage of all peoples and of every class. The modern world recognizes this, for the Sabbath principal has been embodied in the statutes of all nations and has been woven into the warp and woof of the League of Nations.

It is not temporary but permanent. If made for all men it should endure for all time. Its law is not arbitrary but is written in the nature and needs of man's body and soul. Thus the blessedness of keeping it not only for physical rest but also for spiritual culture will never be annulled. The stress and strain of modern life makes a special demand upon its restful quietness.

A little over a year ago a group of business men in London, Eng., awoke to discover that they had lost, or at least were rapidly losing, their Sabbath, as a day of rest and worship. In order that they might have accurate information, and not be unduly influenced by casual observation, they had a general survey made, the results of which are given in part in the following figures, which tell their own tragic tale:

250,000 shops open in England every Sunday.

40,000 in London alone. Here the assistants lose their Sunday rest.

86,728 drinking places open every Sunday in England, twice as many as there are places of worship.

19 Sunday newspapers, containing much garbage, published every Sunday. Circulation over thirteen millions.

85 per cent of the population of London habitually neglect public worship.

500,000 crowd the cinemas every Sunday in London.

930,000 attended National Sunday League Concerts last year.

2,000,000 persons followed their ordinary occupation every Sunday, 1 out of 8 of the adult population. This means that two millions have lost their Sundays.

No wonder Mr. James Douglas says: "England has no time for God."

This survey was followed by the organization of an extensive and intensive campaign of legislation and of education, which is still in progress, designed to try to 'recover' a day which they have already largely lost.

Canada, beware! To "retain" or to hold what we have is our task, and it is very obvious that it is not going to be an easy one. It will be much easier for us to "retain" our day, than either to "recover" or "regain" it, if, for any cause or combination of causes, we allow it to slip out of our organized civic, social and religious life.

No other day can afford such opportunities, and therefore no weekday can be an equivalent for Sunday; nor can any financial consideration compensate for its loss. It is a day of freedom, a glad day. As Emerson puts it:

"Christianity has given us the Sabbath, the jubilee of the whole world, whose light dawns alike into the closet of the philosopher, into the garret of the toiler, into prison cells, and everywhere suggests even to the evil, the dignity of spiritual beings."

This gift, so desirable in itself, so timeless in

its principals, so universal in its sway, so wonderful in that the poorer and less privileged, the recipient the greater its value to him, could only have been conceived in some heart and mind intent on the well being of mankind. Its character, the reasons given in the Old Testament for its establishment (Deut. 5:14-15), and the conditions attached to it, indicate a higher origin than the human mind. It must have come from the mind and heart of God. This was the thought of Jesus when He said, "The Sabbath was made for man."

Sunday is the great school of love, not only because it gathers together and unites people who would otherwise seldom or never meet one another, but also because it brings the family together as no other day of the week.

Of recent years a Sunday in May has been observed as "Mother's Day". Every Sunday is mother's day. On the other days of the week, school, athletic and social activities demand and receive the attention of the children, but on Sunday mother has her innings. She has, or should have, the children to herself, and can introduce them to the moral and spiritual inheritance of the race, as inscribed in its sacred and inspired books and in art and music. They can know the feeling of her arms about them, and she can know the feeling of their little minds and hearts, and watch what happens in their eyes.

Then, too, Sunday is the Lord's Day, sacred to Him who took the little children in His arms and blest them, and who looked with sympathy into the eyes of youth.

The Church depends upon Sunday. "Were it not for our little church", said a lady, "I do not know what would become of our village." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to keep up this little church without Sunday. The home must co-operate with the church. Children of a western family, who had come to Canada from a locality where there was little Sunday observance enjoyed for the first time the opportunity of going to church or Sunday School. "It would be impossible", said the father, "for me to tell the change that has come over our home as the effect of this new experience."

Lecky, the historian, states that in his opinion, the finest qualities of our national character are due to the fact that in the past Sunday has been "primarily devoted to religious worship."

These two, the home and the church, may be likened to two great lights in our lives. Should we lose Sunday it would mean that these lights would be obscured and perhaps even extinguished, and the children would be the chief victims.

Oh, that the teaching of the sanctity of the Sabbath was deeply rooted in the child life, which ought to be started in the very early years of the child, so that when they come to the years of adolescence their doings would not be such a violation of their parent's sentiments. The danger is decay. The deliberate destruction of Sunday is not to be feared, at least in Canada; but it is true of this, as of other institutions, like the home, that to change its character, to put it to other than its original purposes is not only to tarnish the gift, but gradually to destroy it. That is the great danger in Canada today. Sunday as a day of rest from labor is almost universally observed; Sunday as a day of worship and the cultivation of spiritual ideals is being allowed to decay. Its high standards are being lowered, its origin and purpose forgotten. It is being put to purposes for which it was never intended, some of them degrading, the best of them of very secondary importance. The spiritual employment of the first day of the week has been a great rock in the face of a driving materialism, behind

which the weak, the weary and the over-driven have long found shelter. We never needed that rock more than we do today.

The Sabbath principal came out of religion, and was made known through religion. Its preservation through the ages has been due to the recognition of its religious and humanitarian character and to the active defence of the leaders of religion. Nothing but a continuance of that recognition and leadership can safeguard the institution even as a day of rest for ourselves and for our children. Moreover, among Christian people, the observation of Sunday, and the vitality of religion have ever been closely connected. This is a fact worthy of more attention than it receives. Voltaire, one of the most intelligent of men, said: "If you want to destroy Christianity, you must, first of all, get rid of the Christian Sunday". If Sunday goes, religion may not long survive.

The alternatives before the Canadian people are: Sunday, the Lord's Day and the people's rest day, or, Sunday, a weekly holiday with its devitalization of our leisure and its ever growing needless toil by which so many are being increasingly robbed of their share of its advantages. Between these alternatives the Canadian people must choose. Which of these two will they hand down to their children? Of all the questions facing Canada today, none is more important than this, "What shall we do with Sunday?"

Respectfully submitted,

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DYING FOR A SMOKE

We clip the following from Norman Dunning's Life of Samuel Chadwick. It has to do with the days when Mr. Chadwick was principal of Cliff College.

"No man would dare to take liberties with Samuel Chadwick. Shortly after the beginning of a certain term, a student, much older than the average Cliff College man, knocked at the door of the principal's study. On entering, he addressed the principal very timidly:

"'Sir', he said, 'would you give me permission to have a pipe?' (It was a rule at Cliff College that no student smokes.) 'I am not like these boys. I have been a smoker for twenty years. I finished my last pipe before I came through the college gates on Friday, and I have tried my best to do without tobacco since. But, sir, I can't hold out any longer. I am DYING for a smoke!'

"The principal half turned in his chair, and swept the brother with his glance, from his toes to the crown of his head.

"'Is that really true, brother? Are you really DYING for a smoke?'

"'I am, sir,' replied the student.

"'Then', said the principal, pointing to a seat beside his desk, 'sit down in that chair and DIE.'

"The principal then went on to explain that any man who allowed such a habit to get such a hold on him that he would die if he did not give way to it, was better dead. The would-be smoker looked first at the floor, then at the ceiling, and then at the floor again.

"'Let's talk to God about this', said the principal. So they knelt together on the floor of the study. The principal prayed that God would glorify Himself in this young man's life. The student rose from his knees,—the craving was gone! For a year he stayed at the college, and the temptation to smoke never returned."

—Moody Church News.