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Editorial

THE LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE COMPETITION

WHEN TRAVELLING as a student in Germany, I found myself one Sunday afternoon with a Lutheran minister having refreshment together in a restaurant while all the world and his wife made holiday. "How good it is," I remarked to my companion, "to see people enjoying themselves free from any sabbatarian bondage." His retort was: "But their liberty does not come out of faith."

His remark shed the proper kind of light upon the Church's problem regarding the use of Sunday. Most Christians, as well as "Christendom" in general, have shaken off rigorous rules about the "Sabbath," but are they exercising the liberty proper to the Christian man or are they yielding to the impulse of the "natural man" to cast off restraint? Church members are not sure, and therefore tend to have an uneasy conscience. They are not fully persuaded in their own minds, as St. Paul said they should be on this matter (Rom. 14:5). Most of them intuitively feel that the old way was wrong—or at least that it would not be right for our time—and yet they are not sure that the present fashion is good. Frequently a compromise is hit upon and some effort is made to keep the day somehow "different."

A thorough doctrinal re-examination of the matter is necessary. How could St. Paul teach *freedom* from the sabbath law (Col. 2:16) and the Westminster Divines on the contrary assert that God had "by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, *binding* on all men in all ages," appointed one day in seven for a sabbath. Plainly, something has gone wrong somewhere. The Church cannot talk sense into the present confusion of changing customs until she has cleared her doctrinal understanding of the question. There cannot be a better start than with the splendid chapter in A. G. Hebert's *The Throne of David*.

The Lord's Day Alliance has been holding conferences of theologians and church leaders upon the subject, with an open-minded, root-and-branch procedure that has delighted and stimulated the participants. We warmly welcome the Alliance's enterprise and repeat below the announcement which appeared in our October issue last year, in the hope that others will be moved to share in the good work. Only, *absint laudatores temporis acti!*

D. W. H.