A CLERICAL "SYMPOSIUM,"

ON

SUNDAY AND ITS OBSERVANCES.

LETTERS FROM LEADING CLERGYMEN IN SEVEN GREAT DENOMINATIONS.

THE VIEWS OF THE REV. DRS. POTTER, CROSBY, COLLYER, TAYLOR, TIFFANY, ORMISTON AND ARMITAGE.

It was shown in THE TRIBUNE last Sunday that nearly one-half of the population of this city are not members of any church and do not attend religious services. The manner in which New-Yorkers of all classes spend Sunday was described in detail. On a pleasant day in warm weather about 75,000 people go out of the city to the various resorts near at hand. Tens of thousands pass the time on and about the Harlem River, and in the big beer-gardens which abound in certain parts of the town. Tens of thousands more spend hours in Central Park, and in other parks and squares. The bar-rooms and beer-saloons do a flourishing business, though in a less obtrusive way than on other days. Attempts to enforce the excise law are successful only to a limited extent. In the evening, concerts and other entertainments in theatres and halls draw large audiences. For amusement, for all lighter forms of recreation, and for dissipation of every kind, there is the widest opportunity. For instruction and improvement outside the churches, in the way of reading-rooms, free libraries, etc., the provision is extremely meagre.

This striking picture suggested the inquiry what the leading clergymen of the city had to say about it. Below will be found the responses of the Rev. Drs. Henry C. Potter, Howard Crosby, Robert Collyer, William M. Taylor, O. H. Tiffany, William Ormiston and Thomas Armitage, representing respectively the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Congregational, Methodist, Dutch Reformed and Baptist Churches—the seven great Protestant denominations. The Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn was asked, in behalf of the Roman Catholics, to present his views of the subject; but he did not find time to comply with the request or even to answer soon enough to permit THE TRIBUNE to secure a response from some other representative of his Church.

The seven clergymen whose views are herewith presented agree substantially that the observance of Sunday cannot be enforced on religious grounds; that its observance as a day of rest is the very foundation of human well-being; and that a universal blessing rests in its religious consecration. But they differ widely in their attitude toward the changing spirit of the times—ranging from the genial liberality of Mr. Collyer to the "Puritanical Sabbath" of Dr. Howard Crosby.

THE TENDENCY TO SECULARIZATION.

BY THE REV. DR. HENRY C. POTTER—EPISCOPAL.

To the Editor of the Tribune.

SIR: I am asked to state first, my opinion as to the popular tendency in the matter of Sunday observance; second, as to what it is likely to become in and about this city; third, my objections to existing practices; and, fourth, as to the best course to be taken by the religious community in the matter both for themselves and with reference to the community at large.

First, then, the popular tendency in the matter of Sunday observance is unquestionably toward the secularization of the day; and, secondly, this characteristic is likely to become more and more pronounced. The reasons for this are not obscure. The elder Sunday of Colonial and subsequent days was the product of a people largely homogeneous and strongly Sabbatarian. The Puritan in New-England, the Hollander in New-York, and the Huguenot in South Carolina, differed about other things, but they agreed about the observance of Sunday, or, as most of them for some reason preferred to call it, the Sabbath. It was easy to get legislation enforcing such observance from State Legislatures which were like-minded; and, in New-York, the churches on Broadway were protected during public worship from passing disturbances by chains stretched across the street. Nowadays our Teutonic brethren not merely will not endure the chain, but beat the big drum and blow the biggest trombone with redoubled and malicious emphasis, as it sometimes seems, when they are passing a church door. And their presence among us is typical of that heterogeneous America which has supplanted the elder. A vast influx of unassimilated foreign citizens has given us a new version of Mr. Tennyson's admonition that

"The old order changeth ever,
Giving place to new,"

and the new order is conspicuous chiefly in this, that whether Italian, Irish, French or German, it has brought with it its own notions of Sunday, instead of adopting ours. There is no likelihood that it will adopt ours; for, while a change has been going on among the working class, brought about by the importation of foreign usages and ideas as represented in those foreigners who are working people, the more favored classes have been importing the same ideas, not merely from Italy and Germany and France, but also from England. M. Taine has painted the dreariness (as he accounted it) of an English Sunday. But, meantime, since the peace which followed the victories of the allied forces over Napoleon, England has been learning foreign ways and adopting them as never before. She has not become so little distinctive and national in manners as many Americans aping her have become, but no one who knew England twenty-five years ago, and who knows it to-day, can be insensible to the widespread relaxation, as in many other old-fashioned ideas, so in the old-fashioned idea of observing Sunday.

Thus there are two forces or tendencies—one working from below, and another from above—which conspire to make the American Sunday what it is, and to indicate what it is likely to become. They will both undoubtedly continue to operate until checked by some such reaction as has already begun in France and in parts of Germany.

Third, the objection to existing practices from the standpoint of the clergyman is first of all that they are fatal to those opportunities for the education and development of the higher side of man's nature afforded by the Sunday of our forefathers. If he is a spiritual being, with spiritual as well as intellectual and physical needs, a man must have some opportunity for spiritual nurture. If he is related to a Being above him, Whose child he is, and in intercourse with Whom he is to find his highest joy and dignity, there must be some chance amid the busy occupations of work-day life for the exercise of his higher aspirations. This the secular Sunday largely renders impossible. Whether it is given up to amusement or to work, it is equally divorced from spiritual uses. But besides this, the secularization of Sunday tends inevitably to its destruction as a rest day. Let it be granted that man is not a spiritual being, that he has no wants outside of those of his brain or his stomach; his body demands periodic rest, and it is impossible to fail to see that the highest type of civilization has been coincident with those ages and nations which have had a rest day and have rigorously respected it. The dawn of a time when the distinction which has marked out Sunday from other days shall be effaced will be the dawn of an era of moral, intellectual and physical decadence. And this suggests specifically the existing practices which are objectionable. It is impossible to make Sunday indistinguishable from other days in the matter of traffic, travel, and many forms of amusement, especially those that are theatrical, without making it a work day. The scene-painter and the carpenter are no more free on Sunday than on other days, and the encroachment will be sure and certain (anybody who has heard the sound of the hammer on the great buildings that are going up in France on Sundays must be sensible of it) which will compel other artisans and laborers to work on Sundays as well as week-days. The competion of great cities, the cupidity of employes, the needs of the poor, will all conspire in the direction of a compulsion, to resist which, here as elsewhere, the working man will be impotent.

Fourth, "as to the best course to be taken by the religious community in the matter of Sunday observance both for themselves and with reference to the community at large," it may wisely be remembered that the interests of the two are one. The religious community ought to desire nothing which will not respect the rights and conserve the happiness of their fellow-citizens whatever their beliefs or want of belief. And this suggests that anything and everything which shall make this plain is to be striven for. The welfare of those who work with their hands lies at the foundation of the prosperity of the State. The legislation which seems to bear hardly upon these, which touches in no wise the liberty or the indulgences of the rich, but abridges the privileges and pleasures of the poor, will inevitably provoke resistance; and it is to be regretted that in efforts to enforce the Sunday law regard has not always been had to the rights of those who are weakest and least favored. When the intelligence and wealth of the country fail to unite in unselfish consideration for these, when the week-day exactions from the laboring man are so selfish and incessant as to spare him no week-day spaces for recreation, it is not to be expected that he will be a conspicuous respector of Sunday. The confounding of Sunday as a rest day with Sunday as a pleasure or travel or labor day is greatly to be deprecated, but it will inevitably come to pass unless those who make the laws and give the tone to public sentiment of the better kind shall see to it that somewhere in the working man's life there is room for that which shall brighten and refresh it. This is the problem of all others in this whole matter which awaits solution. It can only be solved by a large-minded and large hearted unselfishness which recognizes that bond of a common humanity, the reality of which it was the office of the Founder of Christianity to teach and to illustrate.

HENRY C. POTTER.

New-York, May 18, 1883.

REST AND QUIET—NOT COMPULSION.

BY THE REV. DR. HOWARD CROSBY—PRESBYTERIAN.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Sunday as a day of rest has three aspects. First, there is the Religious Sunday, a day observed by devout hearts for purely religious purposes, the study of divine things, the preparation of the heart before God, and the worship appertaining to these. This Sunday is entirely an individual matter, belonging to the individual conscience and to be treated by the individual judgment.

Second, there is the Civil Sunday. This is simply a day of rest from labor made necessary by the constitution of man. All scientists agree that such a periodical rest is necessary for the preservation of life and working ability. Some say that such a rest should take place every seventh day, others every tenth day. All agree that whatever may be the amount of time thus set apart for rest from labor, it should be regular in its return. It is also clear that in order to have a general rest from labor all labor, must be forbidden by law with penalty for trangression, otherwise the greedy will work to gain a temporary advantage over the resting.

Third, there is the Religio-Civil Sunday if we may coin a term to bring the two adjectives together. This is a Sunday which is civil in its foundation in the law, but which regards the prevailing religion of the land in its choice of the specific time for the day of rest, and in its arrangements for general quietness. This third Sunday is the Sunday of the United States. From the civil standpoint it insists upon the cessation of labor in all departments of work, with the only exceptions of necessity. The general good of the community demands this, and the laws should make the exceptions very carefully and conservatively. Every additional exception granted helps to destroy the fundamental law and its good effects. In consideration of the Christianity which prevails in the United States, and which recognizes Sunday as a holy day, the specific day selected for rest is Sunday. If the population of the United States were Mahometan the day would be Friday. If population were Jewish, the day would be Saturday. By a very general consent every seventh day is preferred to every tenth day. In consideration of the prevailing Christianity, Sunday has always been recognized in our country as the rest-day. Furthermore, for this same reason, as Christians hold public worship very generally on that day and in all parts of the day, the day is to be a quiet one in the streets, so that the religious worship of the majority be not interfered with.

Such I regard to be the fundamental principles of the Sunday rest as established by law. The law does not aim to make men religious, but to make them courteous and considerate to the prevailing religion, while ceasing from labor on hygienic and anthropological grounds. It is true that many of those who have had to do with making our laws have intended to put a distinctly religious force in the Sunday laws, but such an effort is contrary to the whole genius of the American polity, which recognizes no State religion, and considers a Jew or a Mahometan as in all respects equal to a Christian before the law. Let this false notion of "the law acting for religion" be cast aside, and we shall put an end to most of the opposition to a quiet Sunday, which we demand on civil grounds and on the grounds of common sense and common courtesy. The religious community should no more press a Sunday law as a religious engine than they should press a law for baptism. We are not to copy Europe in these erroneous ways. Our German fellow-citizens especially should understand (coming to us as they do so largely with free-thinking views and with honest notions that our Sunday is an exaction of a government religion) that we insist upon Sunday rest for the good of the laboring man, and upon a quiet Sunday for the sake of decent courtesy to the prevailing religion. No sensible man can object to these arguments, or see any religious oppression in the practice.

On the above grounds, and only on these, I hold that the Sunday laws should be most strictly observed, and that it is for the interest of the whole community to form a united public opinion against open stores and menial labor on the day of public rest. I think that the popular tendency would be altogether to keep the Sunday rest if it were divorced from the idea of a religious compulsion, and that divorce I most thoroughly advocate.

Any endeavor to govern our land or any part of it from a system of religion must prove fatal to all true religion. What we must have is perfect freedom for religion to grow as it will, and this perfect freedom cannot be had if the law interferes.

Personally, I believe in a strict Puritanical Sabbath, and such I observe every week; but I have no right to force my belief on others, or make my belief the guide for their conduct. To his own Master each one stands or falls. I count the Sunday a holy day; others count it a holiday. Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind.

But, apart from all that, the quiet Sunday is an American institution, founded on broad and righteous principles, which believers and unbelievers alike can honor, and as Americans, loving our country and honoring our fathers and the privileges they gave us, we can never give up the day of rest they bequeathed to us at the call of politicians and of foreigners who have not yet learned the A B C of American ideas.

HOWARD CROSBY.

New-York, May 15, 1883.

WORSHIP, RECREATION AND LIBERTY

BY THE REV. DR. ROBERT COLLYER—UNITARIAN.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Milton's noble saying: "He who would wisely restrain men within due bounds must first know how far the lines extend of a just and honest liberty;" and this of Edmund Burke: "Lawful enjoyment is the surest way to prevent unlawful gratification;" and our own home-made axiom: "Be sure you are right and then go ahead," should all be taken into account, as it seems to me, when we consider the question of "Sabbath observance" in a great city like this of ours and with such a diverse population. And such words should have special weight with us now, because it is clear that the attempt made last winter to enforce the Penal Code as it touches this question, met with no encouragement from the broad common sense and good feeling of our citizens who want a quiet Sunday, but do not want to over-ride the deep-seated instincts of those who can never think as they do on this question and so have only the option, if the native man's ideas are enforced, of a false conformity, or a quiet resistance carried through on long lines. No kindlier heart beats anywhere, and it rebelled at once at the sight of those poor creatures in the clutch of the law, not for any moral offence or misdeed, but because they wanted to eke out their scanty little industries, in which there was no clamor, and that could only offend those who, as Sydney Smith says, are the choicest champions of the right of private judgment, but will not allow this right to the man who is not of their opinion. The attempt to enforce the Sunday laws by inquisition resulted at last in high peals of laughter, which were not confined to our island but went ringing over the whole world. And in crossing the city on a Sunday morning not long ago, I saw a cheery little boot-black brushing away as if such laws had never been heard of, while a policeman looked on with quite a beautiful benignity; and half a block away there was a boy selling papers, and a swart Tuscan busy with his oranges and peanuts. We shall see no more I think of those terrors of the law.

The truth was then what it is now, that there is no city in Christendom so populous as ours, and so blended together of all sorts and conditions of men, in which a finer quietness can be found than that which falls every Sunday on this island. It stands in the softest possible contrast to the turmoil of the week, and touches us as kindly as the south wind and the spring sun. It has been noticed as a healthful instinct in the English, who work so hard during the week, that they hold on with a firm grip to their Sunday as a day of rest and recreation; and fifty years ago one of the ablest physicians of that time said, in a report made to the House of Commons, that the working classes must have their Sunday held free from invasion or they could not bear the strain. It put back the balance of power, he said, into the working man's hands which had passed during the week into the hammer, the engine, the plough and the pen. We have inherited and held the same instinct; we believe thoroughly in Sunday as a day of rest, and though we may not live up to our belief, we do try.

A shrewd observer travelling in France many years ago noticed that the workingmen in the great cities there were growing gloomy and bitter, and said that in his opinion the main reason for this was that they had lost track of their old sunny Sunday. And I remember when I was in Paris in 1865 counting forty different kinds of workmen busy at their tasks as I walked on a Sunday morning from my hotel to a church not very far away. I wondered where that would end, and saw the end in 1871 in the fires that had been kindled by the Commune. I could not get a carriage for some time, because they said they had eaten up the horses, and the steward at the Bedford told me he had tried when things were at the worst to eat a cat. Those men grew bitter and sullen over their work on week days and on Sunday they had no fair chance at rest and recreation; were driven to madness by absinthe, bad cigars and newspapers edited in hell, and then the furies goaded them on to burn and slay. We insist on a quiet Sunday for the vast majority of those who have to work hard during the week. They may abuse it, but that is their lookout and the most of them do not abuse it.

We need recreation also as well as rest, and as I cannot take mine on Sunday I take it on Monday. If my wife says there is to be a wash-day dinner, I have an engagement down town. I go through the book stores and galleries, the libraries and museums, as the humor takes me, and that is recreation; or I go into the country. But the most of those who have to work in the stores and factories must take theirs on Sunday or not at all, and there should be no bars set up to prevent them. Such libraries, museums and galleries as we have should open their doors freely on Sunday, and the managers should say to our working population: "Come in and welcome." I think our great grandchildren will find it hard to believe the report printed in last Sunday's TRIBUNE about our libraries and reading-rooms. They will say the great rich city could not be so heedless as that in 1883, or so far behind Boston, Cincinnati and Chicago.

It is a fine instinct which takes our people out in such crowds on Sunday to escape the stifling summer heats, and instead of regretting this tendency or denouncing it, we should all be glad. They are far better in the groves or by the sea-side than they would be in their pent-up rooms. I have watched 20,000 people on Coney Island on a Sunday afternoon, and I think the world does not afford a quieter or cleaner crowd, or one more mindful of good manners, take them, as we used to say in the West, "by and large."

We have to face this innovation of the music halls on Sunday evening who would like to see this headstrong metropolis inside our churches. I do not believe in such things at all as I do in my own religious services; but then they will not come to our churches who go to those concerts as it seems, not in going there do they over pass the lines of a "just and honest liberty." They go to the music halls for recreation as we go to the churches for worship. It is the business of the Mayor and police to find out whether any of these are masked batteries of the devil shotted with base suggestions, impure actions and bad rum; to shut them up Sunday and week day and be done with them. But about the good, wholesome places we shall have to come to this conclusion, finally, that, since we must have them, it is best to be frank and honest about it and not compel those who "run" them to tell lies touching their real nature and use; and to this conclusion also, that any good and wholesome thing fitting to be said or sung on Saturday does not become profane and evil on the stroke of midnight and continue to be that just twenty four hours and then change again. May I recapitulate?

1. This is an enormous city, with a population which cannot be brought to think of Sunday in the good old native American way.

2. We need our Sunday as a day of rest and recreation, those who are born here and those who come here. The devouter heart takes both in church; the rest stay at home or go where they can find what they want, read or hear music, or rush out into the sweet fresh country.

3. The one true way to consider the question of Sabbath observance is to consider this diverse mind and nature. Stop all work which can be stopped and let the toilers rest. Open all the fountains freely of a sweet and wholesome recreation. Make our churches the sweetest and most wholesome, if we can; so that the people will go there as wild pigeons go to a wheat stack. Out-bid, out-general, and out-fight the things we think are hurtful, but beware how we, as churchmen, cry the law on them. It is not a handsome sight, this steady retreat of the churchman before the "world's people" touching Sabbath observance, which has been going on in America for a hundred years. There is sound and solid ground we can take. Rest on one day in seven, recreation hand in hand with rest, and then, please God, worship again to which the estranged masses will gladly gather when we reveal to them its worth.

ROBERT COLLYER.

New-York, May 16, 1883.

SUNDAY DEPENDS UPON CHRISTIANS.

BY THE REV. DR. WILLIAM M. TAYLOR—CONGREGATIONALIST.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I have read with much interest the statements of your reporters in regard to Sabbath observance in New-York, and have given as much thought to the matters suggested in them as the pressure of other duties would allow; but the subject is too difficult and delicate to be satisfactorily discussed within the limits which you have prescribed, and I must satisfy myself with the statement of a few general principles, leaving their application to particular cases very largely out of the account.

To begin with, let me say that I thoroughly believe in the Divine appointment of the Sabbath. I hold that it was instituted by God for the benefit of man as man, and that the rest which it was designed to secure is necessary for the physical, intellectual and moral well-being of the human race. It was incorporated into the Jewish system, and there was hedged round with restrictions similar to those which in other matters characterized the Mosaic economy; while its observance was enforced by penalties appropriate to a theocracy under which the violation of a Divine command was virtually equivalent to the breaking of a civil enactment. These restrictions have been done away under the Christian dispensation; but the original institution of a day of periodic rest remains, and is not affected by the change of the day, which under the sanction of the Apostles and with the general consent of Christendom has made it a weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of the Lord. But here as in other respects, the difference between the Old Testament and the New comes out. The former—especially in its Mosaic portion—was a book of rubrics; the latter is one of principles. The former went into details and gave minute prescriptions as to what things might be done, and what things ought to be avoided; the latter gives the general law and leaves the forms in which it is to be observed to the dictates of the individual conscience. The former dealt in sanctions of civil penalty; the latter makes the man responsible to God alone. The result is that while Christians generally agree in holding the Sabbath as a day of rest, they are not to judge each other as to the mode in which they observe it. If they have respect to the authority and supremacy of Christ, they will regard the day as different from other days, and after the example of the first Christians will come together on it for purposes of worship and mutual edification, but, for the rest, they are not to judge each other or anathematize each other because of differences as to the manner of its observance. In general, however, it may be said that the higher the spiritual life is the better will the observance of this "Easter day in every week" become.

Now if among those who recognize the Lordship and supremacy of Jesus, there is to be this liberty of individual conscience, this absence of judgment and anathema, this abrogation of civil penalty, it will follow, I think, *a fortiori*, that we should not seek to secure its observance as a religious day by civil enactment among those who repudiate or do not acknowledge His authority. It is not within the province of an earthly government to compel any man by pains and penalties to observe a purely religious institution; but Christians have a right to be protected in their observance of the Sabbath; and may seek by law to secure that nothing of which the civil government can take account shall be be allowed to disturb their worship. In my judgment, however, it would be unwise, especially considering the mixed character of our population, to base any legislation concerning the Sabbath on the ground of its religious character. But looking to the necessity for periodic rest, as indicated not in Scripture alone, but also in all history and experience, the civil law ought to enact that one day in the week should be reserved for cessation from work, and, as on other grounds, Christians do rest on the first day of the week, the natural thing to do in such circumstances is that the Legislature should enact that Sunday shall be the day for rest, and that all Government offices and public departments shall be closed thereon. Not long ago the English Legislature appointed four days in every year for business rest, making them *dies non*, without injustice to any party, and there is no violation of personal liberty in such a law for the Sabbath, any more than there is in those which appoint our legal holidays. There, as it seems to me, legislation should stop, and the use which each man makes of his rest should be left to himself, with only such restrictions as shall prevent him from disturbing the rest of his neighbors.

The bearing of these principles on amusements is apparent at once, for the amusement of some involves the labor of others, and so it cannot be systematically furnished without infringing on the rights of others. The same is true of traffic generally, and especially of the liquor traffic, which is so much of a disturbance on common days, and which is most of all dangerous to the community on the day of rest. There are exceptions, of course, to all this on the score of necessity and mercy; but these reveal themselves at once to a wise common sense, and need not be further particularized.

To what, then, do we look for the improvement of the present state of things among us? Not to civil enactments—and nothing seems to me more injudicious than the "spurts" of short-sighted enthusiasm which ever and anon impel well-meaning men among us to bring paltry offenders before the judge on the ground of Sabbath desecration. That will only provoke reaction and retaliation and make the Sabbath more hated by those who have no love for it already. The true remedy lies in the evangelization of the people as a whole; and the better observance of the Sabbath by those who profess to be Christians among us. If the people are to value the Lord's Day, they must first be brought to love and venerate and obey the Lord of the Day. Therefore, if we wish a better Sunday we must become more earnest, more active and more liberal, in our home missionary efforts. We live not under a theocracy, but under a kingdom of which it is written that it is not in word but in power, not in a demonstrative "lo! here! or lo! there," but in that which is within a man; and therefore only in the proportion in which we can make the people Christians can we make them Sabbath-keeping.

But in addition to that, the standard of Sabbath-keeping must be elevated among Christians themselves. If the choice of the Lord's Day, as the day of periodic rest, is to be founded on the fact that Christians already observe that day for other reasons, then it is manifest that they must make the most of it as a day of holy gladness and devout worship in their homes and in their churches. So soon as they become careless and indifferent about it the general observance of it will disappear. On them, therefore, the main stress of the responsibility rests. They must settle whether we are to have a Sabbath or not, and they must settle it not so much, if at all, by weapons of legislation as by their own earnest and holy Sabbath-keeping. Their conduct here will do more than anything else.

Let them make the day the happiest of the week in their homes. Let them prize it for its intellectual and spiritual stimulus in the house of God as well as for its physical rest. Let them avoid all travelling for business, and all patronage of amusement on its weekly recurrence. Let them regard it and be seen and known to regard it not as a restraint to be chafed under, but as a precious blessing joyfully prized; and with all this let them multiply manifold their exertions for the Christianization of their fellow-citizens. These are the means on which we must rely. Would that the Christian people were more alive to the importance of using them. Legislation seems a short and easy method, and multitudes are tempted to fly to that, only, I fear, to save themselves from this greater responsibility, but it ought to be iterated and reiterated that the Sabbath among us is to be conserved, not by legal enactment, but by the character, example, influence and evangelistic activity of the church members in the land.

As I said before, the subject is both difficult and delicate, and deserves more thorough treatment, but my desire has been to indicate principles rather than to go into details.

WILLIAM M. TAYLOR.

New-York, May 17, 1883.

A HOPEFUL VIEW OF SUNDAY.

BY THE REV. DR. O. H. TIFFANY—METHODIST.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: You ask me for an opinion concerning the reports recently published of Sabbath observance in the city. Your statements, if reliable, show a very remarkable condition of society, and unless closely inspected would lead many to believe that our city was "wholly given to idolatry." You would have done well to add a list of the Christian benevolences and charities, that the intensity of the zeal of Christians might also appear.

I am not filled with any spirit of alarm at the facts presented, for the immense proportion of foreign-born residents who have been accustomed to a different Sabbath usage largely explains the multitude of non church-goers and pleasure-seekers. Nor do I think that as religionists we give as much weight as we ought to the consideration that there are two entirely different ideas of Sabbath observance. The Christian and the Jew believe religious observance obligatory; the non-religious only hold and contend for rest and cessation of daily toil.

The religious followers of Christ are by your estimate 500,000 Romanists, 100,000 other communicants, to which must be added at least 250,000 for home and family influence. These 850,000 persons are forbidden by the spirit and teaching of their Master to make use of compulsory legal regulations for the Sabbath day. The whole idea of worship is excluded when men are forced into conformity. The most that Christians may do is to seek protection in the law for themselves and families, that their worship may not be disturbed and interrupted. Law may rightly be enforced for the suppression of traffic, unseemly travel, as in public processions, etc., and especially of those demoralizing and injurious pursuits which are inconsistent with the best interests of society; but it is well understood that no law can or should be enacted or enforced compelling participation in religious acts.

The rest from accustomed toil, the release from grasping taskmasters and greedy employers, the privilege of home associations and companionship, may be secured by law in the interest of the common good, and these all add to the opportunity for worship on the part of those who wish to worship; but they ought to be enacted and enforced on the ground of the general good and not on any belief held by any portion of the people.

If a day of rest is secured by legal enactment for all men to conserve the general good, the manner of using the day must be a matter of individual liberty, within the limitations which secure to each the privileges which the law confers on all—that is non-interference with the rights of others.

The general good requires the shutting up of dens of vice, places of dissipation, and all enervating and demoralizing pursuits; and while the law may not be able to abolish them completely, it ought to specially guard against their evil influence on a day secured for the general rest. This may offend the sensibilities of some, but if it secures rest and quietness to all they must submit for the general good. So the general good may require the carrying of the mails, the opening of libraries and parks and museums, and while it may offend the religious conscience to have these things done, yet if they do not interfere with the freedom of religious worship, and are so ordered as to compel labor from the smallest number, the religious conscience must be offended in the interest of society at large.

While as religious teachers we may regret that so small a number are attracted by our ministry, we must find our remedy in the power of persuasion and not in the authority of legislation, which pertains only to "kingdoms of this world." Your reporters show that a very large proportion of non-church-goers seek recreation rather than dissipation; the parks and pleasure resorts are more frequented than the theatres and places of vice; the police reports show a smaller proportion of arrests for intoxication and disorder on Sunday than on any secular day, notwithstanding the fact that wages are generally paid on the preceding day. These are encouraging results which may become more and more marked with the enforcement of prohibition against all traffic which interferes with the general quiet and personal rest. They indicate an advanced moral condition over the state of things in cities where no protection is given by law to those who need rest.

In London, where Sunday laws are enforced, one sees the rich riding in coaches and the poor largely deprived of public conveyances; and the home-goer from religious service will pass on his way lines of men waiting for their turn to enter a groggery when the hour of its opening shall arrive. In Paris I have noticed that in some quarters there has been a large increase in the number of business places closed in answer to the demand for a day of rest, and some parts of Paris on a Sunday have been found as quiet and orderly as many parts of London.

It is to me a hopeful condition of things that the enforcement of our excise laws has been found possible; the most violent contender for personal liberty must admit the limitation which the rights of others demand, and the non-interference with and respect for religious worship by a population where the foreign element is so large is an emphatic demonstration of the right appreciation of republican institutions. The non-church-goer must surely respect the religious convictions of those whose religions acts provide for him and for his family homes, hospitals, asylums, retreats, and all the benefits of charitable institutions, which also largely influence public opinion in securing him one day in the week for rest; and while he may not accept the religious dogmas which these teach, he will rejoice in the practical translation of these creeds into good works.

All this may be the reaction from a condition of things which, however religiously based, was not in former times wisely enforced; and some may feel alarm that the day of compulsory religious observance is passing or has already passed away. But Christianity itself, in the person of its Founder, revolted from the methods of observance practised in His day, and in teaching that "the Sabbath was made for man" advanced the best interests of the world by showing a more excellent way of using it. It does not seem to have been His wish to lessen the respect felt for that day so much as to raise up all other days to its standard of rightness. He was denounced for His non observance of the Sabbath, even while showing us how best to use and keep it. The world has grown better and the Church wiser under the influence of His teaching and example; and He will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth.

That (1) more than one-half of the citizens of a metropolis containing the largest foreign population are members of churches or of families under religious influences, and are uninterrupted and protected in religious worship; that (2) the greater proportion of others do not profane the day by excess and riotous ungodliness but pass it in decent and well-ordered behavior; that (3) the number of arrests for intoxication and disorderly conduct is less on Sunday than on other days; that (4) it has been found possible in a great measure to close improper places and protect the unwise and unwary from the solicitations and seductions of saloons and dram-shops—may well cheer the lovers of good order, and influence to a larger zeal and a wiser effort those who believe, as I do, not only in a day of rest but in a day of religious worship.

O. H. TIFFANY.

New-York, May 18, 1883.

ENFORCED RESTRICTIONS ESSENTIAL

BY THE REV. DR. WILLIAM ORMISTON—DUTCH REFORMED.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The article headed "Sunday in New-York," published in THE TRIBUNE, I have read with interest and attention. The subject is wide and embraces many points, the discussion of which is as delicate and difficult as it is urgent and important. The practical questions connected with the observance of Sunday in New-York, which press for immediate solution, are diversified and intricate, and involve many apparently conflicting interests. The health and the hopes of our citizens, the material and moral prosperity of the city, the power and progress of Christianity among us, depend upon the character of our Sunday observance. How best to maintain and perpetuate the religious observance of the day, amid a vast population so varied in origin and differing so widely in religious sentiment, training and traditions, is a problem worthy of the profoundest consideration of every patriotic, pious and Christian citizen.

It is of the utmost importance for the due recognition and the suitable observance of the day, that correct views be held concerning its origin and claims. "The Sabbath was made for man." It is divine in its authority and universal in its adaptation to human circumstances and needs. For reasons connected with His own being, and for the best interests of mankind individually and as a race, the Creator wisely allotted and solemnly sanctioned a definite portion of time for refreshing rest and religious service. The divine injunction is that men shall rest on that day and keep it holy. The institution is primeval and antedates every form of civil government or dispensation of religion, but is fitted for incorporation with any. Rest on the one day is as clearly a divine law and a human necessity as labor on the other six. Uninterrupted toil exhausts man's energies, lessens his enjoyments and shortens his life; it also deprives him of the necessary leisure and opportunity for the cultivation of his spiritual faculties. As man's physical and spiritual nature requires some portion of time, so his social nature renders a common time not only proper but indispensable. Neither the needed rest nor the desired religious culture and service can be attained individually. It is very desirable that the whole community should, as far as practicable, enjoy the rest and improve the privilege for the highest ends of their being, and in a high moral state of society this might be secured.

The question, however, is not what theoretically is best and most desirable, but what, in existing circumstances, is best and practically attainable. Under the theocracy the law of the Sabbath as a part of the civil code of the nation was enforced by penalties as any other of the divinely sanctioned enactments. But under any form of merely human government, even where the being and authority of God are acknowledged, the law cannot be enforced on purely religious grounds, nor can any human authority constrain a man to consecrate the day by spending it in religious services. All that a wise and judicious legislation ought to do is to secure, as far as practicable, to every citizen the peaceful enjoyment of the day as a day of rest; and to interdict whatever necessarily tends to hinder or annoy any one in the proper exercises of his religious worship.

Since a wise and benign civil government should insure to all its citizens the rest of one day in seven, as an inalienable human right, and since on other grounds Christians generally hold the first day of the week as a sacred day, devoted to religious services, it is surely within the powers of the civil authorities of the State to appoint that day as the day of rest, and to enact that all ordinary business and all public service be suspended on that day, so far at least as the safety and essential interests of the community will allow.

In the community as in the family a certain amount of work must be done by some, in order to secure the welfare of all. But in the community as in the household the amount of labor should be reduced to the minimum required for comfort, and the work should be so arranged and distributed that no servant, private or public, would be wholly deprived of the privilege either of rest or worship on that day. A careful and judicious discrimination is therefore needed to determine the character and amount of labor that is necessary and allowable.

It is also perfectly competent for the civil authorities, in regulating all other traffic, entirely to suppress the sale of intoxicating drinks on that day of rest, not only because in common with other trades it interferes with the rights and privileges of all engaged in it, but because it is inimical to the peace, good order and well-being of society, and disturbs others in the proper observance of the day. Public places of amusement seem to me to fall under the same category as factories and places of business, where men are employed for the purposes of gain; and they ought to be closed. No plea of necessity can be offered in their behalf, and all employed in them need the day for the same purposes as other workmen. Because Sunday is a divine ordinance, all men have a natural right to enjoy it as a boon, and are under moral obligations to keep it religiously. And were the entire community actuated by high religious motives the duty of the government would end with the simple appointment of the day, in order to secure its common observance. But as many avowedly are not influenced by religious convictions, and some are covetous and vicious, the restraints of law are necessary to secure to those who desire to keep the day the peaceful and uninterrupted enjoyment of their rights.

However much the fact may be deplored, it is patent to all, and especially confirmed by the article referred to, that multitudes of our citizens are not disposed to spend the day in religious worship or work. Hence, until they can be led to view the question differently, and to appreciate the day as a means of grace fitted to foster, strengthen and beautify their spiritual lives, we cannot feel surprised and are not disposed hastily to blame many of the comparatively poor and toiling classes for seeking to spend a part of the day in the open air, and in cheerful and innocent companionship, rather than to confine themselves and their families in narrow and cheerless apartments, situated not untrequently amid unattractive and unhealthy surroundings. Pure air and social fellowship are human necessities. For many who are disposed to read but who cannot procure books, properly selected libraries and suitable reading-rooms would prove a source both of enjoyment and improvement.

It is painfully obvious that the course of events and the growth of popular sentiment tend to the secularization of Sunday as a day of business or pleasure, especially the latter. For many who are willing to cease from labor on the day regard it simply as a holiday to be spent in recreation, sports and amusements of various kinds, and thus deprive it of all religious significance and influence. Unless the religious part of the community, and the Christian churches generally, immediately take wise and earnest measures to arrest and counteract this tendency, it is to be feared that the remaining restraints will soon be swept away, and the hallowed Sabbath of our fathers will disappear. Upon the Christian people of this city devolves the responsibility of preserving and perpetuating the Lord's Day as a day of rest and religious privilege. Let them faithfully observe and consistently honor the day in their households and churches. Let them commend its observance by their example, and as far as is in their power secure, at any personal sacrifice, to all under their control the full enjoyment of it. Let them put a charitable construction on the views and practices of those who differ from them. Let them use all means to inculcate and disseminate right views of the nature, obligation, design and advantages of the day. Let them make a united, persistent and self-denying effort to evangelize the entire city so that to all the day might become truly the Lord's Day—a weekly religious festival. Thus and thus only can we hope to secure for New-York the invaluable boon of a proper Sunday observance and to hear the people "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable."

New-York, May 18, 1883.

W. ORMISTON.

LEGAL AND MORAL INFLUENCES.

BY THE REV. DR. THOMAS ARMITAGE—BAPTIST.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Your facts and figures on Sabbath observance in New-York are forceful and startling, but may create the inference that desecration of the day is frightfully on the increase. Still, do they warrant such a conclusion? You show that 600,000 out of 1,400,000 are members of churches; that 119,000 attend Sunday-schools; and that many not connected with either attend worship, making, say, 725,000 who observe the day religiously, without counting the 100,000 Jews, whose Sabbath is on Saturday. The remaining 675,000 you dispose of thus: Over 40,000 resort to saloons, beer-gardens, concerts and other questionable places; from 90,000 to 100,000 visit the Park, and in the hot months 75,000 leave the city for its suburbs; in all about 185,000. This leaves 490,000 odd, who either profane or waste the day in some other form. So, then, more than five-tenths of our people observe the day religiously, in some manner or measure on Saturday or Sunday.

The question: Should not our number of Sabbath observers be greater in New-York? prompts a comparison between our Sabbatarian statistics and those of foreign cities. In many of the cities of Great Britain, the Sabbath-keeping land of Europe, not over 10,000 people attend Sunday worship out of 30,000. This would be a large proportion for Edinburgh, even, while in London the working masses almost universally neglect church attendance. Then, in the large Continental cities only five in every hundred go to Sabbath worship, according to late statistics. But your figures show that here about fifty in every hundred attend. And our city borrows its anti-Sabbatic ideas from its foreign-born people, for more than half of its Sabbath neglectors are of this class. This influx never ceases, and it contaminates our community largely, but not in a degree at all proportioned to its numbers. Besides, our counteracting influences are constantly increasing to purify and strengthen these new citizens in better things. The faces and tongues of the children in our numerous missions show them to be of foreign parents, many of whom wish them trained to observe the American Sabbath; so that more potent facts than those now at hand are needed to prove that it is becoming a Cæsar's holiday of merriment, feasting and crime. The day has as firm a hold on the stable, native population as ever, as your tables show. With the brain, the influence and the true patriotism of the city, it is still set apart for purifying and elevating the moral nature. Former Puritan strictness is laid aside, but reverence for the day remains much as it has ever been, and is likely to remain.

On present data the Christian Sabbath seems to be in no more danger among us than any other ordinance of Christianity, and stands the tests of modern iconoclasm with right good nerve, notwithstanding the inroads of its foes and the bilious croaking of its friends. Our ancestors here were stern,