

bring re-action. No one has a right to impose such a burden on men's shoulders which is heavier than they can bear.

These arguments are frequently put in stronger and more offensive language. But I state them moderately as I wish to deal with them calmly. Before considering them in detail, however, there are one or two remarks which it may be well to make.

1. And first I would remark that we must distinguish here carefully between what ought to be allowed by law and what ought to be allowed in conscience. The legislator has nothing whatever to do with the way in which any man spends the day except to prevent him disturbing its rest and quiet. He has nothing to do with the question whether men spend it religiously or not, whether they spend it in recreation and pleasure or not, so long as the recreations are not of such a kind as to interfere with the rights and privileges of those who desire to use it for religious purposes. The state should not pronounce upon the question of recreation as such, but only in so far as it may be a nuisance or an annoyance or an impediment to the proper employment of it. The limitations of sound legislation therefore in no sense correspond to the proper limitations of conscience.

2. Secondly it may be remarked that no argument based upon the inclinations and dispositions of those who have little sympathy for religion can fairly be drawn against the duty of a wholly religious observance of the day. From their very character they are disqualified from being judges. Of course they cannot observe it all religiously without weariness. But then you could never satisfy them without shutting out religion altogether. And we are not yet prepared to consider that.

3. Another thing is to be noted. A good deal of prejudice has been created in the public mind against the purely religious view as to the occupation of the day by descriptions of the somewhat needless severity with which it has been pressed at certain periods both in Britain and in New England. To render this odious historians and novelists have not hesitated grossly to exaggerate the facts. Who has not heard of the "Blue-Laws" of Connecticut whereby it was provided that a man should be fined for shaving or for walking in his garden or for kissing his wife on the Sabbath day? It is now known that these laws are a pure fabrication, but they are still taken as fairly representing the spirit and the practice of the Puritan Sabbath, and vivid pictures are painted of the numberless hypocrisies to which men were driven to evade the rigidity of their own principles. But exaggerated applications of a principle are no argument against the principle itself, unless they can be shown to be necessary or natural. And in these cases the sternness and gloominess arose not from their principles as to the Sabbath, but from the whole type of their piety, which was quite as stern and gloomy on other days as it