

imposes restraints and limitations upon the exercise of personal and property rights, and it does all these things because it assumes that the action taken is taken in the interest of the great mass of the people, and is for the public good.

It is upon that basis that we justify the enactment of a Sunday rest law. The purpose of the law is to secure the good of the great mass of the people, to secure to those, who perhaps otherwise would be unable to secure that boon, the right to exercise the privilege of Sunday rest upon the seventh day of the week. Sunday rest is, of course, the outcome of modern or Christian civilization. It is not asserted that it was a feature of the Greek or Roman civilization, it is, of course, the natural outgrowth of Christianity, but when we admit that Christianity strengthens the demand for Sunday rest, we assert that it does so merely because it strikes hands with every demand made in the interest of humanity, and this qualification relieves us from the charge of defending here what is exclusively a religious usage or right. We simply find Christianity in touch, in sympathy and in alliance with everything that makes for human good, with everything that tends to uplift mankind, and for that reason Christianity sanctions what this Bill asks of this House—an enactment to secure the labourer in the enjoyment of his civil and religious liberty and in the right to enjoy uninterrupted the exercise of the privilege of rest upon the seventh day of the week.

Now, it may be said that this argument is ill-founded. It may be said that the requirement which I am advocating to-day is one that is contained in the Decalogue, that it is simply the fourth Commandment, part of a religious code, which I am seeking to have embodied in the civil law. I reply that the fact that it is embodied in the Decalogue does not militate against the assertion that it is a proper subject for legislative action. There are other commands embodied in the Decalogue that are proper subjects for legislative action. There is, for instance, the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill." It might as well be argued that that should be left as a matter of conscience, and that the law should not interfere to enforce that Commandment. There are the Commandments: "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"—all these Commandments, in their enforcement, are supplemented, and properly supplemented, by legislation. These Commandments cannot be made binding without the intervention of human legislation. It is for that reason this legislation is asked for, it is in order to secure to the labourer the right to enjoy his day of rest.

But it may be said that this law is unnecessary. It may be said: leave the labourer to judge for himself whether he

will rest upon the seventh day of the week or not; allow him the privilege of being a free moral agent in this matter. But unfortunately, in the condition of society that exists to-day, hundreds of thousands of labourers are deprived of the power of exercising their own choice in the matter. Men working for railway companies, men working for corporations, men whose employers demand that they shall work on the seventh day of the week, are powerless to resist that demand. If they do, they lose their situation, and these men ask for the intervention of law to secure to them this right, which otherwise they would not be able to secure or enjoy. Selfish greed and disregard of the rights of others stands in the way of those men securing the right to which they are entitled and which by this Bill it proposes to give them.

I might be asked to point out, as a justification for the enactment of this law, some beneficial fruits or results of rest from labour on the seventh day of the week, and I shall very briefly refer to a few facts, which, I think, warrant me in asserting that beneficial results do follow from Sunday rest. One of the great economic evils of the day is over-production. We have too much food produced, too many textile fabrics, too much of everything. Our markets are glutted, prices are cheapened, the whole course of business is deranged from over-production, and the employment of labour during seven days in the week is calculated to make this evil greater. The employment of labour seven days in the week is calculated to enlarge the volume of over-production, which in six days in the week is already too great. And for that reason, on economic grounds, the adoption of this system of securing a rest day for labour would produce important and beneficial results.

Another reason for this enactment is that without Sunday rest, in all cases, we find among people physical deterioration. It is said by travellers that when you go into countries in Europe where there is no Sunday rest you scarcely ever see an old man, you find the labourers wan and worn and lacking that stamina and vivacity which characterize the labourers in other countries who have their Sunday rest. One of the fruits of Sunday labour is to lower the moral tone of the people, another is the increase of drunkenness and social disorder, another is the decline of public virtue, and the most lamentable of all, and the summing up of all, is national degeneracy. Some of the fruits of Sunday observance, on the contrary, are most commendable and desirable. One of the fruits of Sunday observance, secured by legislative enactment, is protection to the labourer from the greed of capital, from the greed of those who would deprive him of this right for the purpose of swelling their own dividends and the dividends and gains of corporations.