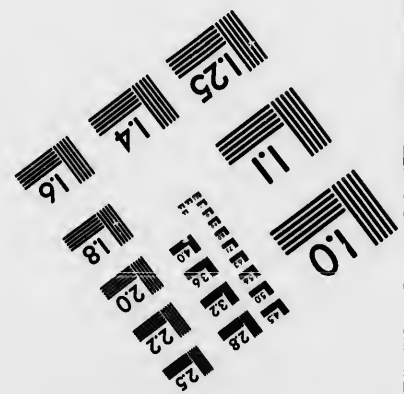
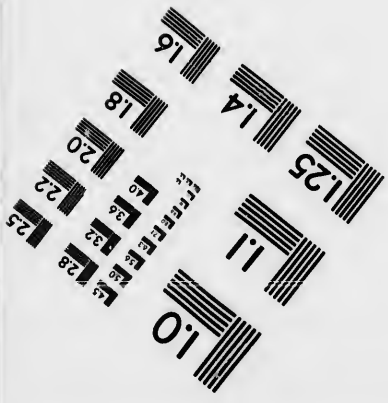
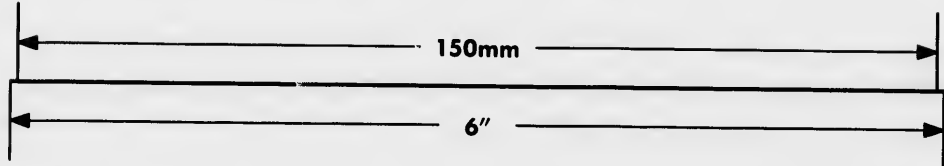
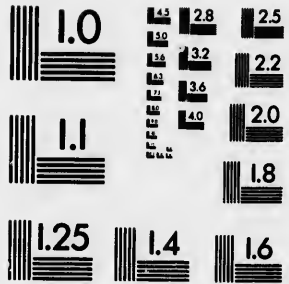
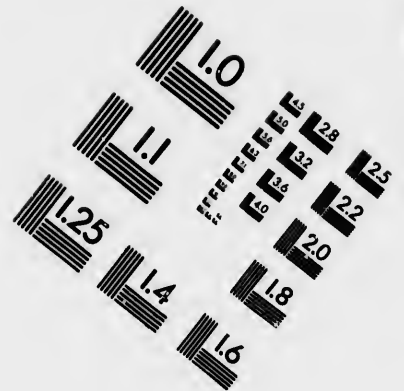
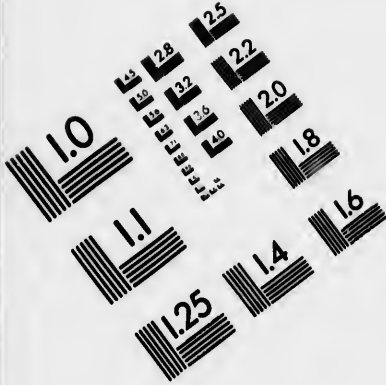


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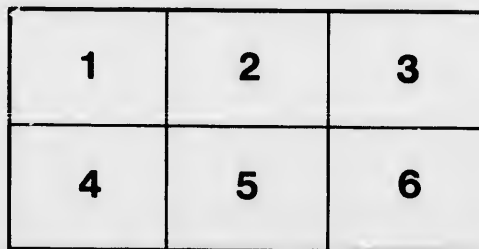
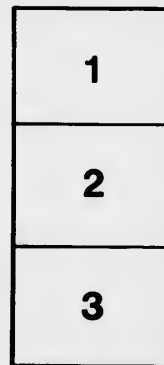
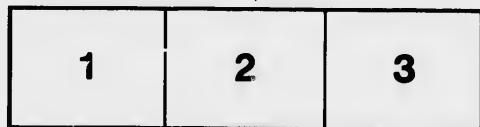
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SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

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[From THE GAZETTE, Montreal, November 23rd, 1900.]

To the Editor of The Gazette:

Sir,—For several weeks past Sunday observance has been discussed in the newspapers, and a number of Montreal citizens have published their opinions on the subject. Without in the least undervaluing these opinions, it would be well to place before your readers the opinions of persons of world-wide reputation who have written on this important subject, in different countries and at different times. The question is important, seeing that it seriously affects one-seventh part of the life-time of every man, woman and child in the community.

It is certainly a great boon to have one day in seven as a day of rest and refreshment. Especially is it a boon to the tolling millions of our times, who work from morning till evening, six days every week, all the year round, to get food, clothing and shelter. Surely they are entitled to one day in seven for rest, refreshment and amusement, for a thorough change from their drudgery. Certainly let them go to the country, and there commune with Nature, and learn "to look through Nature up to Nature's God;" or to engage good-naturedly with their friends in athletic games and sports.

I don't mean playing for money; that is vicious and never leads to any good, on Sunday or any other day.

Agos before the institution of the Christian religion, Sunday was the people's weekly holiday. Bishop Andrews, in his "History of the Sabbath," says: "The festival of Sunday is more ancient than the Christian religion, its origin being lost in remote antiquity. It did not originate from any divine command, nor from piety towards our God; on the contrary, it was set apart as a sacred day by the nations of the pre-Christian world, in honor of their chief god, the Sun."

The Jewish Sabbath was a priestly invention to control and subdue the laity, so as to obtain a large share of the very best of their earnings. The Jewish reformers in the time of Apollonius and of Jesus and his disciples, revolted against the Mosaic ceremonial laws, and conspicuously against the Sabbath. This, no doubt, was a manifestation in Palestine of the wave of intellectual and moral reformation that was passing over the Orient at that time. Jesus avowedly broke the Sabbath, and when the Jewish rulers found fault with Him, He rebuked them, saying: "The Sabbath was

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made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2nd, 27.)

In the Sermon on the Mount, no duties are prescribed, but the Sabbath is not even mentioned. The Jewish priesthood had ordained that a Sabbath day's journey should be limited to two thousand yards, but Jesus and his disciples traveled on one occasion (Matt. 23th, 16) from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a distance of four miles (7,040 yards), on the Sabbath.

When a young man came to Jesus, asking what he should do to be saved, Jesus replied: "Thou knowest the Commandments." He then gave him the "Hexalogue," consisting of the moral laws only, of the Decalogue—Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and thy mother. (Mark 10, 19). The theological and ceremonial commands were designedly omitted, and with them the laws pertaining to the Sabbath.

Next to Jesus, Paul is the most important personage in the New Testament. What does he say about the Sabbath? He believed and taught that with the coming of the new Saviour, "All things have become new," that the Jewish law was superseded by the Gospel, and that the old rights and customs—circumcision, sacrifices, feasts of moons, sabbaths, etc.—were no longer binding on any one.

To his Roman converts he wrote (Romans, 14 " 5), "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." (Revised version)—that is, guided by his own opinion. Upbraiding the Galatians for their superstitious observances of days, he says:—"Ye observe days and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." (Gal. 4 "10). To the Colossians

he says (Col. 2"16): "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day." This passage shows that the early converts to Jesus were in the habit of keeping the feasts of the moon's phases, which were commonly observed all over the Roman Empire.

Let us glance at the teachings of a few of the leaders of the early Christian Church, during the first four centuries:—

Jurinus, A.D., 132—135, a martyr to the Christian faith, in his controversy with Trypho, a Jew, on the Sabbath says, "You, because you were idle on one day, suppose you are pious Our God is not pleased with such observances."

Irenaeus, A.D., 160-202, in his work "Against Heresies," says: "Man is not justified by these things (Sabbath observances, etc.)..... given as a sign to the people. This fact shows that Abraham himself, without circumcision, and without the observance of Sabbaths, believed in God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called a friend of God." Again, "These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, he (Jesus), cancelled by the new covenant of liberty."

Tertullian, who is said to have been the first to call Sunday "The Lord's Day" (because of the resurrection of Jesus on that day), shows in his writings that in His time Christians observed Sunday as a holiday or festival, but not as a sabbath; for he says, "we count fasting and kneeling in worship on the Lord's Day to be unlawful."

Origen, (A.D., 200-254), says: "To the perfect Christian, who is ever in his thoughts, words and deeds serving the Lord, all his days are the Lord's, and he is always keeping the Lord's Day."

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Eusebius says (Ecclesiastical History Bk. I):--

"They (the patriarchs) did not therefore regard circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, neither do we."

Cyril, of Jerusalem (345-386), says:-- "Henceforth, reject all observances of Sabbaths."

Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, (367-402), says:--"God regarded not outward cessation from works upon one day more than another."

Jerome, a learned and extensive writer (374-420), says: "Considered from a purely Christian point of view, all days are alike."

Thus, we have clear evidence that no particular day of the week was recognized as more sacred than another, during the first four centuries of the existence of the Christian Church. Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, says:--"Many also observe the fourth day of the week (on which Jesus was betrayed), and the sixth (which was the day of the Crucifixion)," Dr. Heylin says, "Sunday in the eastern churches had no great prerogative above other days, especially above Wednesday and Friday. The religious services of the primitive Christians occupied only a portion of the day, and when these were ended they resumed their occupations."

"So we may conclude that neither Jesus nor His followers observed any particular day, and that such an institution as a Christian sabbath was unknown in the early days of Christianity."

We may have good reason to be suspicious of our present-time formalists who require a higher or larger amount of ceremony than the founders of Christianity did; especially, when we find that the history of all religious systems shows that the greater the ceremony the less the genuine piety and righteousness.

The first day of the week was the people's weekly holiday, not only in ancient Rome, but all over the pagan world, that day being the festival of all the Sun-gods--Sol, Bacchus, and Apollo, of Rome; Hercules, of Greece; Mithra, of Persia; Osiris, Horus, and Serapis, of Egypt; Buddha, etc.

It was the Imperial murderer, Constantine, who made the first authoritative attempt to convert the people's holiday into something like a sabbath. Seeing the advantage to be gained by conciliating the Christians, he conceived the idea of blending the discordant systems of paganism and Christianity; he became a Christian, but he did not absolutely renounce paganism.

Pagan temples were now converted into Christian churches. "The cross, which had been hitherto a pagan emblem, became, what it never was before, a Christian emblem,--and images of pagan gods became Christian saints."

In 321 Constantine issued an imperial edict as follows: "Let all judges and all people of the towns rest, and all the various trades be suspended on the venerable day of the Sun. Those who live in the country, however, may freely and without fault attend to the cultivation of the fields, lest, with the loss of favorable opportunity, the commodities offered by Heaven be destroyed."

Even this edict placed no restriction on pleasure-seeking and amusement. The clergy, seeing the advantage to them of having a special day set apart for the attendance of the laity at the temples, offered little opposition to the edict. But its observance never became general, for it was not liked by either the pagan or Christian sections of the people, and the edict was repealed by Emperor Leo in the ninth century.

White, Bishop of Ely, in his "Dialogues on the Lord's Day," says:—"In St. Jerome's day—A.D. 400,—and in the very place where he was residing, the devoutest Christians did ordinarily work upon the Lord's Day, when the service of the church was ended."

Jerome (Heylin's "History of the Sabbath,") says, "As soon as they (certain devout women) returned home on the Lord's Day, they sat down severally to their work, and made clothes for themselves and others."

Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, 399-407, concludes one of his homilies by dismissing his audience to their respective ordinary occupations. The third council of Orleans, A.D. 538, advised that people should rest from work, "not because work was a sin on Sunday, but in order that people may not be prevented from attending church." The Catholic Church, East and West, have always recognized work on Sunday, provided the people found time to attend the chief service of the Church, which was always in the morning. Civil courts too were always held on Sundays.

In the twelfth century, an attempt was made to enforce a rigid keeping of Sunday, and the clergy, seeing their opportunity, made a great effort to increase the sanctity of the day. In 1201, an anonymous parchment was found on the altar of a church in Jerusalem, by Eustace (afterwards canonized), which he pretended was "written by God." It was as follows: "By my right hand I swear to you, that if you do not observe the Lord's Day, and the festival of my saints, I will send you the pagan nations that they may slay you." It goes on to say that if they still persisted in violating these, after having been slain: "I will open the heavens, and for rain, I will rain upon you stones and wood, and hot water in the night; that no

one may take precautions against the same, and that so I may destroy all wicked men." Then, if they still remain obstinate, they are to be killed again: "I will send unto you beasts, that have the heads of lions, the hair of women, and the tails of camels, and they shall be so ravenous that they shall devour your flesh, and you shall long to be far away, and hide yourselves for fear of the beasts."

About this time, in order to strengthen the new theory, many miracles relating to Sunday were concocted and published, such as these:—

"A farmer, going to his field to plough on Sunday, took a piece of iron to clean his plough; the iron became fixed in his hand, and remained in it two years. A miller, grinding corn on Sunday, found his corn turned into blood instead of flour. A woman, attempting to bake on Saturday evening after the Lord's Day had commenced (it had been settled by theologians to commence at 3 p.m. on Saturday), and though she kept the oven heated for two days, her cake still remained dough. Another woman, failing to get her dough prepared before the Sunday began, put it aside, intending to bake on Monday, but when she looked at it again it was baked."

These attempts to rob the people of their weekly holiday were fortunately transient and local, for, as a general rule, the people worked and amused themselves as each felt disposed on Sunday, and in many instances fairs and markets were held in churches on that day, up to the middle of the fifteenth century. Even when Sunday labor had been forbidden, Sunday recreation and amusement were always allowed.

In Reformation times the Lutherans and Calvinists, although they considered Sunday a suitable day for religious exercises and instruction, made

it a day of enjoyment and amusement. "The Calvinists, though more strict, spent the day in amusement, visiting, dancing, games, etc." (Pop. Encyc.). Dr. Hesse says (Brampton Lecture): "The reformers were nearly unanimous on this point. Sabbatarianism of every phase was expressly repudiated by the chief of them in every country."

The seven most eminent reformers on the Continent of Europe, namely, Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Erasmus, Zwingle, Beza and Calvin, expressly wrote against a Sabbatical Sunday. Although they considered Sunday a suitable day for people to assemble to be instructed during a part of the day, they placed no restriction whatever on how the people spent the rest of the day.

Luther says (Vol. III, p. 73): "Even Paul and the Apostles, after the Gospel began to be preached, clearly released the people from the observance of the Sabbath."

Again (in "Table Talk"): If, anywhere, anyone sets up its observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to dance on it, to ride on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall reprove this encroachment on the Christian spirit of liberty."

Melancthon says: "They who think the observance of the Lord's Day has been appointed by the authority of the Church instead of the Sabbath, as a necessary thing, are greatly deceived. The Scripture allows that the observance of the Sabbath has become void, for it teaches that the Mosaic ceremonies are not needful after the revelation of the Gospel."

Again ("Augsburg Confessions"): "The observance of them (Lord's Day, Easter, etc.) is not to be thought necessary, nor the violation of them to be regarded as a sin."

Bucer says (Cox's "Sabbath Laws"): "It is not only a superstition, but an

apostacy from Christ, to think that working on the Lord's Day is a sinful thing."

Erasmus says: "It is meet, therefore, that the keeping of the Sabbath Day give place to the commodity and profit of man."

Zwingle says (Cox's "Sabbath Laws," p. 287): "It is lawful, on the Lord's Day, after divine service, for any man to pursue his labors."

Beza says (Cox's "Sabbath Laws," p. 286): "No cessation of work on the Lord's Day is required of Christians."

Calvin, in his "Institutes," bk. 33, chap. 8, says: "Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days. . . . Those who adopt it far exceed the Jews in a gross, carnal and superstitious observance of the Sabbath."

So much for the continental reformers. Let us glance at the opinions of a few English reformers and other eminent theologians.

Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, wrote (in his "Catechism"):—"The Jews were commanded to keep the Sabbath; but we Christians are not bound by such commandments of Moses' law."

Frith, who was associated with Tyndale in translating the Bible, says:—"We are as superstitious in our Sunday as the Jews are in their Saturday, —yea, we are much more mad, for the Jews have the word of God for their Saturday, since it is the seventh day, and they are commanded to keep it solemn; but we have not the word of God for us, but rather against us."

Tyndale, the Bible translator, and John Knox the Scotch reformer, both wrote and preached against the observance of the Sabbath. Tyndale says:—"Neither needed we any holy day at all, if the people might be taught without it." Knox agreed with

Calvin as to how Sunday should be kept.

Dr. Hevlin (chaplain to Charles I.), in his "History of the Sabbath," says: "Take which you will, either the fathers or the moderns, and we shall find no Lord's Day instituted by an apostolic mandate, no Sabbath set on foot by them upon the first day of the week."

Taylor, an eminent prelate, says (in his works, vol. xii.):—"The Lord's Day did not succeed in the place of the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was wholly abrogated." Again (in his "Ductor Dubitantium," Bk. II., ch. 2):—"The primitive Christians did all manner of works upon the Lord's Day, even in time of persecution, when they were the strictest observers of all the commandments; but in this matter they knew there was no commandment. And therefore, when Constantine had made an edict against working on Sunday, he still permitted to agriculture the labors of the husbandman. That we are free from Sabbath observance St. Paul expressly affirms in Colossians."

Mander, an eminent historian and professor of theology, in his "Church History" says:—"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance; and it was far from the intention of the Apostles to establish a divine command in this respect; far from them and far from the early apostolic Church to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday."

Paley, author of "Evidences of Christianity," in his "Moral Philosophy" says: "If the command by which the Sabbath is instituted be binding on Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties and the penalty; in none of which it is received. . . . The opinion that Christ and His apostles meant to refrain the duties of the

Jewish Sabbath, shifting only the day from the seventh to the first, seems to prevail without sufficient reasons."

Canon Barry, of Worcester, president of King's College, London, says: "The notion of a formal substitution by apostolic authority of the Lord's Day for the Jewish Sabbath, has no basis whatever in Holy Scripture or in Christian antiquity."

Bishop Warburton, in "Divine Legislation" (Bk. IV., sec. 6.) says:—"The observance of the Sabbath is no more a natural duty than circumcision."

Whateley, Protestant archbishop of Dublin, and an eminent writer, says: "The dogma of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster that the observance of the Sabbath is a part of the moral law is to me utterly unintelligible. . . . It will be plainly seen on careful examination of the accounts given by the evangelists, that Jesus did decidedly and avowedly violate the Sabbath. . . . It is not merely that the apostles left us no command pertaining to the observance of the Sabbath, and transferring the day from the seventh to the first, there is not even any tradition of their having made any such change; nay, more, it is abundantly plain that they made no change."

Penn, the eminent Quaker, says: "To call any day of the week a Christian Sabbath is not Christian but Jewish."

Milton, eminent theologian as well as poet, says (in his "Christian Doctrine," Bk. II., chap. 7): "The Sabbath was originally an ordinance of the Mosaic law, and given to the Israelites alone. . . . The law of the Sabbath, being repealed, that no particular day of worship has been appointed in its place is evident. . . . Under the Gospel no one day is appointed for divine worship in preference to another."

With all this unanimity of opinion among the prominent men of the Christian Church up to the middle of the sixteenth century, it may be asked: "When and How did the doleful Sabbath Sunday get such a foothold in England, and in some of her colonies.

In Queen Elizabeth's reign the English Reformation may be said to have been completed by an act of Parliament, which took effect on the 24th of June, 1559. With the decay of the old ecclesiastical authority, and an open Bible in English, a number of sects sprung up, as in the early days of Christianity. Controversy ran high between the old or high church party on the one hand, and the evangelical party and Presbyterians, afterwards called Puritans, on the other, with Baptists and other independent sects. In the struggle the Puritans got the upper hand in England for a time, and carried matters with a high hand. It was these Puritans who originated the Sabbath-Sunday, taking the idea from a prominent sect among them called the "Seventh Day Baptists." The Presbyterians and Episcopalian reformers did not regard Sunday as more sacred than any other of the saints' days, or holidays; but while they abolished almost all the numerous saints' days of the old church, they retained the Sunday and used it for pushing their doctrine among the people.

There is plenty more historical testimony, if more is wanted.

Before concluding, I may remark regarding the Jewish Sabbath that two different reasons are given in the Jewish Scriptures for keeping the Sabbath day holy.

(1) Exodus 20, 8-11, V. 11th. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

(2) Duet., 5, 12-15; V. 15th: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

Which of these is the true reason, I leave the Jews and Sabbatarians to decide.

J. MOWAT REID.

Montreal, October 17, 1900.

P.S.—The above letter was written in response to a card issued by "The Montreal Herald," inviting opinions on the question of Sunday observance. But although the above letter gives the opinions regarding Sunday of a number of learned men, every one of them eminent in the Christian Church, the editor of "The Herald" curtly rejected it.

J. M. R.

