

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

the "Authorized" Version, depends, to some extent, of course, on the character of the revision of the Old Testament. When the whole work is completed, another effort may be called for, and the revision be revised. Time will show. It is easy to speculate, and it is useless. For ourselves, we can only say that our study of the present Revision has deepened our admiration for the conscientious care with which the labour has been done. The work was carried on, we believe, in a true spirit of prayer, and dependence upon God. Of the learning, the candour, the ability, and the unwearied assiduity of the Revisers there can be but one opinion among unprejudiced readers. And the number of readers will increase, we have no doubt, who entertain a very high sense of the value of the boon which the Revisers have conferred upon the English-reading population of the Christian world.

---

#### ART. VI.—SUNDAY CLOSING.

**I**N the article in last October's CHURCHMAN on "Local Option and Local Control," it was truly remarked that, to anyone unacquainted with the temperance question these terms convey of themselves no definite ideas. It may, however, be doubted whether to many of those who are acquainted with the temperance question, and of those who voted in the recent divisions in Parliament in favour of Local Option, they convey any very definite idea, or are associated with any tangible proposal for carrying them into effect. The demand for Sunday Closing, on the other hand, is a definite, tangible, and practical proposal. It postulates the introduction of no new principle into our legislation.<sup>1</sup> It asks for no exceptional dealing in the case of the liquor traffic. It simply proposes the extension of restrictions already in operation, and the application to this traffic of the prohibition which already exists in the case of other trades. It is directly based rather on the distinctive character of *the day*, than of *the trade*, affected; although, as a matter of course, the latter largely enters indirectly into the consideration. Hence it stands on a platform

---

many a storm of gainsaying or opposition?" The Translators of 1611 foresaw the enmity and opposition which their work would meet with. They knew what St. Jerome had to undergo. The first critic, bitter enough, was the erudite but arrogant Hugh Broughton, who had been passed over. Broughton was so vain that when he went to the Continent it was said he was gone to teach the Jews Hebrew.

<sup>1</sup> Even the application of the principle to the whole day has been conceded by the Legislature in the creation of six days' licences.

of advantage over all other projects of temperance reformers, and unites in its support, not only those who are jealous for the sanctity and due observance of the Lord's Day, and the honour of its Lord, but also those who desire the suppression of intemperance, and the limitation of the sale of intoxicating liquors. It has this further advantage, that it proposes no untried experiment, as Sunday Closing is already, and has been for some time, in operation, in portions of the United Kingdom and in the Colonies; and invariably with the most beneficial results. It has, therefore, been proved to be *practicable*. And it may be fairly claimed for it by its advocates, that it would be likely to do more for the suppression of intemperance than any other practicable measure which is at present before the public. On the one hand, the effect of the break which it would introduce in the drinking habits of a large portion of the community, would be likely to be of incalculable advantage, in the promotion of sobriety during the remainder of the week;<sup>1</sup> while, on the other hand, it would remove temptation out of the way of those who have an unoccupied day on their hands, and a considerable portion of a week's wages in their pockets. There can be no doubt that, owing to these facilities, many, especially of the young, learn the first lessons of drunkenness in the Sunday School of Bacchus.

Blackstone lays down this general principle, which regulates our legislation as to Sunday trading, and his language is worthy of serious attention in these days with respect to the wider question of Lord's Day Observance:—

Profanation of the Lord's Day, vulgarly (but improperly) called Sabbath-breaking, is a ninth offence against God and religion, punished by the municipal law of England. For besides the notorious indecency and scandal of permitting any secular business to be publicly transacted on that day in a country professing Christianity, and the corruption of morals which usually follows its profanation, the keeping of one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a State, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes, by the help of conversation and society, the manners of the lower classes (which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit); it enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God so necessary to make them good citizens, but which yet would be worn out and defaced by

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ivie Mackie, a large wine and spirit merchant, in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1868, said: "Closing on Sunday would be a great benefit to the public, because if any man requires rest one day in seven, it is the drunkard who drinks six days; and I think it would be of the greatest benefit to him for the houses to be shut on Sundays."

an unremitted continuance of labour, without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker, and therefore the laws of King Athelstan forbad all merchandizing under very severe penalties, &c. &c.—*Commentaries*, iv. p. 63.

At the present time an exception is made to this general prohibition of trade, in favour of the sale of intoxicating liquors; and the questions which have to be determined in dealing with this exception are, “Is it beneficial?” and “Is it necessary?”

As to the former, no lengthened argument is needed. To many of us it might be sufficient to ask, “Is it for God’s glory?” inasmuch as we believe that whatever is for God’s glory must be in the truest sense for man’s good; while, on the other hand, whatever is for man’s good must be for God’s glory. There is but one answer possible to this question, and that is, that there is nothing which causes so much dishonour of God, and leads to so much profanation of His Holy Name, and so much neglect of His worship—nothing which in our large towns and their outskirts so greatly tends to convert the Lord’s Day into the devil’s high day—nothing which is so responsible for turning God’s good gift to man into a curse, as the facilities afforded publicly for drinking on Sunday.

Can it then be for man’s good that this exception exists? Let us endeavour very briefly to sum up the arguments against it, and in its favour.

I. We maintain that the Sunday sale of intoxicating liquors is undoubtedly injurious.

(a.) *To the community at large*, as tending to form and foster habits of drinking, which result in the pauperism, crime, disease, and insanity which entail vast expenditure in the shape of taxation on the community.<sup>1</sup> Statistics show that, *in proportion to the number of hours in which the houses are open*, there are more arrests for drunkenness on Sunday than on any other day of the week, excepting, perhaps, Saturday; while the opinion of gaol chaplains, and others qualified to judge, is almost unanimous to the effect that Sunday drinking is directly or indirectly connected with the larger proportion of the crime of the country, and that, if public-houses were closed on Saturday evening and Sunday, crime would diminish in a marvellous degree.

(b.) *To other tradesmen*.—It is calculated that at least fifteen millions of pounds are annually spent on Sundays on intoxicating drinks. Is it not, looking at it from merely a financial point of view, a hardship and injustice to other traders that this large amount should pass into the till of the publican, largely because he has the monopoly of exercising his calling on the

---

<sup>1</sup> See evidence of the Writer before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Intemperance.

day when the working-classes have money to spend, and time to spend it; while they are precluded from keeping their shops open? Of course, this argument, from a higher point of view, has another side to it.

(c.) *To the neighbours of the public-houses*; who have a right to have the quiet and peace of their much-needed day of rest shielded from the disturbance and unseemly sights and sounds, the products of Sunday-drinking, which haunt our streets long after the public-house has disgorged its besotted frequenters at the hour of closing.

(d.) *To the wives and families of those who frequent the public-house*; who would hail with thankfulness the removal of that which is not only the formidable rival to home, but also, in too many cases, the cause which makes home miserable on the day which ought to be the day of home.

(e.) *To those who frequent the public-house*; multitudes of whom, while too weak to resist the temptations placed in their way, are, in their better moments, sincerely desirous to be delivered from them. This was established by the evidence given before the Select Committee of 1868, of Revs. Newman Hall, Verner White, Messrs. S. G. Jowett, of Bradford, Joseph Leicester,<sup>1</sup> W. Cockburn, &c.

One injurious effect of Sunday-drinking is seen in the largely-prevailing absence of men from work on Monday and, to a lesser degree, on the days immediately succeeding. "Saint Monday," as it is called, is too often the legacy of a drunken Sunday. The effect of the holiday, instead of being, as Blackstone writes, to "enable the workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness," is, in too many cases, to unfit him for work during the earlier part of the ensuing week; and, in this way, Sunday-drinking destroys the beneficial effect designed in the institution of a day of rest. Economically speaking, this has become a very serious evil.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> As a sample of such evidence, Mr. Leicester, Secretary to the Glass Making Societies of Great Britain and Ireland, stated that he should say that it was the habit of the working-classes in London to more largely indulge in drinking beer on Sunday than any other day, and that there are thousands of those who have been slaves to the habits of intemperance who would wish to be delivered from this temptation.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. B. Whitworth, M.P., said, in a speech in Exeter Hall (June 14, 1875):—"I am connected with concerns in this country employing 45,000 men, and paying something like £4,000,000 every year in wages. I will just give you the result of Sunday drinking in one of those concerns. We pay £10,000 a week, and employ between 7,000 and 8,000 hands. We never commence work on Monday, because we find the men do not come in sufficient numbers to make it worth our while to get up the steam to turn the machinery. Now, I have calculated very minutely what the cost of that is to that concern. It is £35,000 a year of a loss—equal to 4 per cent. on the capital employed. I want to know how long this country

(e.) But probably *on those engaged in the trade* the greatest injury is inflicted by their deprivation of a day of rest, more needed, perhaps, by them than by any other class of the community, when we consider the physically injurious character of their occupation (evidenced by the fact that the death-rate among publicans is 155 against 100 of the whole population), the length of the hours during which they are employed, which may be 108 hours a week in the country, and 123½ hours in London, and still more the unpleasant and morally-injurious character of their occupation. The number of these is estimated as at least 340,000, and many of them are young persons—barmaids and potboys. In their interests this measure is imperatively demanded. And it is believed that a great majority of them, and especially of the more respectable amongst them, greatly desire it. This has been evidenced by the canvasses which have been made to ascertain their feelings on this point. In Liverpool, out of a total of 1,399, 756 signed in favour of total closing, while 113 more stated that they would be glad of the Act; 85 closed already; 97 were servants not in a position to sign; 90 were not seen; 6 were in favour of keeping open an hour or two; and only 252 refused to sign. It may, indeed, be asked, Why, if this be the case, none of them do not take advantage of a six days' license? The answer is, that many of them would not be allowed to do so by their landlords, and that others fear to lose their customers on the remaining days of the week, to their rivals who keep open, if they refuse to entertain them on the Sunday. There are, however, an increasing number of

---

can stand such a drain as that. We are competing with the whole world, and I say that with a weight like that, we shall not long be able to compete with it."

Mr. W. Cockburn, Manager of Messrs. Pease's Ironstone Mines in Yorkshire, stated in evidence before the Select Committee of 1868 that, having taken an account of the percentage of men off work on different days of the week during three years, he found, in one mine where the men were paid fortnightly, 14 per cent. were off work on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in the week after pay-day, and 9 per cent. on the three following days; in the following week, 13 per cent. on the three first days, and 8 per cent. on the three last. In one mine, 21 per cent. were off work on Monday, against 9 on Thursday; and in another, 17 per cent. against 9; and accounts for this difference by the effects of their drinking principally on the Sabbath-day. He stated that he believed that the majority of the men would hail Sunday Closing as a boon.

It is instructive to notice that while a similar state of things prevailed in Scotland previous to the passing of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, according to the Report of the Commission of 1858, and the evidence given before the Select Committee on the Irish Bill (1877) by the chief constables of Edinburgh and Glasgow, there are no complaints on that point now, or not to anything like the same extent—the number who absent themselves from work on Monday being small compared with previous years.

those who do avail themselves of this provision (2,352 being in operation according to the last returns of the Board of Inland Revenue).<sup>1</sup>

(*f.*) To these we may add, those *who are engaged in Christian work* for the elevation and evangelization of the masses of the population. These find in the open public-house the most formidable antagonist to their efforts on that day, when, but for this hindrance, they would have the readiest access to those for whose welfare they are concerned. To this cause is largely due the absence of the working-classes from public worship. It is this which, more than anything else, neutralizes the work of the Sunday School, and interferes with every endeavour to improve the opportunities which the day affords for the benefit of the working-classes.

II. Having considered the injurious effects of the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday upon various classes of the community, from which we may conversely infer the benefits which Sunday Closing would confer on those classes, let us ask who would be injured by it.

(*a.*) Travellers and lodgers in licensed houses are excepted in the proposed measure. It is, however, very desirable that the difficult question of the *bonâ fide* traveller should be settled by stricter definition.<sup>2</sup>

(*b.*) It is objected that working men would be deprived of what is virtually their club and place of resort during these leisure hours; and touching pictures are frequently drawn of the discomforts of their homes. But it may be replied that the home has to suffice for the wives and children: that Sunday is the day on which the home ought to be made most comfortable; and that the money spent on that day in the public-house, if spent upon the home, would, in many cases, serve largely to increase domestic comforts. Surely, instead of tempting men away *from* their homes, we should rather encourage them to find their happiness, and to seek to promote the happiness of their families, *in* their homes on that day, which should be especially sacred to home. But, as a matter of fact, as those who are most conversant with the subject well know, the public-house is almost exclusively used as a place of drinking rather than of innocent resort

<sup>1</sup> There have been instances of the publicans in a town uniting to close voluntarily on Sunday, and the arrangement being defeated by the refusal of a single member of the trade. They need, in such cases, protection against the tyranny of a minority.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance, in their Report for 1880, suggest as a remedy for "this fast-increasing nuisance," as they call the *bonâ fide* traveller, that, unless to hotels of a *bonâ fide* character, no license should be issued that is not limited to six days; and that hotels should be only at liberty to supply *bona fide* guests.

and social intercourse. The case of the metropolis, where many live in lodgings, and habitually take their meals at a public-house, is exceptional, and might have to be dealt with by exceptional legislation.

(c). The objection, however, which is most commonly advanced, and which is found to be most formidable by the advocates of Sunday Closing, is based on the difficulty which would ensue in the way of the working man obtaining his beer for his Sunday dinner and supper—the former being generally his best meal during the week. Of course, many have an easy solution of this difficulty in the answer, “Let him go without.” But this by no means disposes of the objection as held and put forward, not by working men themselves so much as by their self-elected advocates; nor ought it, I think, to dispose of it, as the question at issue is not whether beer be a necessity, or beneficial or not. The true answer is, that the beer may be procured, like other articles for consumption, on the Saturday; and if it be genuine, and properly treated, need be none the worse for the keeping, even if bottled beer be found less palatable or too expensive. The Select Committee of 1854 reported:—

“That it is the practice of such publicans as close on Sundays—and there seem to be many who close throughout the country—to provide their customers with stone bottles and jars in which to take their beer home well-corked on Saturday night for Sunday’s use. The best evidence that the practice is found to answer is, that none of them speak either of complaints of their customers or loss of custom.”

Since that time the number of those adopting this practice has largely increased, and the result has been equally satisfactory.<sup>1</sup>

Surely we may safely leave the demand to create the supply, and the trade to adapt itself to the new conditions under which it would be placed.

This would do away with the necessity of keeping the houses open for a short time at noon, and in the evening for the sale of drink to be consumed off the premises as proposed by Mr. J. Abel Smith in 1868, and by Mr. Pease in his Bill this Session—a plan which would in reality deprive the publican and his servants of their holiday, and which is not generally desired by the working-classes themselves. This has been established by canvasses in which their opinion has been taken on this point. In Preston, for example, 8,142 were for total closing; 416 for closing *except for two hours*; 394 against Sunday Closing.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Alderman Mackie, of Manchester, and in the liquor trade in Dublin, Liverpool, Birmingham, Birkenhead, London, Brighton, as well as Manchester, in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1868, was asked, “Do many working men, within your knowledge, buy their beer on Saturday night, and keep it for Sunday’s dinner?” and replied, “I know, of my own personal knowledge, that hundreds and thousands do.”



and 2,075 neutral. Amongst the *working-class* population the majority against two hours' opening was 21 to 1. In Liverpool, out of upwards of 60,000 canvassed, 44,149 were in favour of total Sunday Closing; 6,417 for closing except for two hours; 3,330 against Sunday Closing; and 6,339 neutral.<sup>1</sup>

III. A few more general objections to the measure deserve a brief consideration.

*a.* There is the old "cant" cry about interference with the liberty of the subject. The simple answer to this is twofold; First, that you do already interfere with that liberty; and that the principle is conceded, as in the whole system of licensing so in the closing of the houses for a great portion of the day: and still more in the facilities given for the granting of six days' licences which virtually place the liberty of the subject in the power of the publican. The question at issue is merely one of degree. Restrictions on the drink traffic are imposed by every State in the interests of social order. And the only question is how far are these restrictions to go—a matter to be decided by experience alone.

Secondly, that all legislation implies, and must imply, restriction upon the liberty of the individual in the interests of the community. A man has only a right to do as he likes so long as he does not injure his neighbour.

*b.* It is repeated *usque ad nauseam*, that "you cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament." This we are ready freely to admit. You cannot, in like manner, make people healthy by Act of Parliament, yet you desiderate and enact sanitary legislation. You cannot make people instructed by Act of Parliament, and yet you have your Compulsory Education Act. At the same time it will be conceded that laws should set a standard of right and wrong: should make vice difficult and virtue easy: and should strengthen the weak against the strong. It is, moreover, a matter of fact that in our past legislation we have largely helped to make people drunk by Act of Parliament; and in the same way may hope to help to make them sober.

*c.* It is further objected that the proposed measure would

---

<sup>1</sup> The objection, indeed, has been recently advanced that Sunday closing would tend to increase drunkenness and to aggravate its evils, inasmuch as working men would be likely to lay in large quantities of drink on the Saturday, and to drink themselves drunk in the presence of their wives and families, and even to tempt them to like excess. In rare instances this *might* be the case: but surely it is a gross libel upon working-men in general to suggest that they would be capable of such deliberate wickedness, although they may not be strong enough to resist temptation when it is thrown in their way in the shape of the open public-house. It is somewhat inconsistent that this argument should be put forward by those who complain that the advocates of this measure are unjust in thinking that the working-man needs protection against himself.

savour of *class legislation*. It would indeed affect all classes alike, and close the hotel or bar-parlour frequented by the rich, as well as the bar or the vault used by the poor. Doubtless, however, the poorer classes would be chiefly affected by it, but the question remains whether they would be effected *beneficially* or otherwise. We claim for this legislation that if it be class legislation, it is so because it is *in the interests* of a class; and because it is in accordance with their desire. I have alluded to the canvasses which have been made of the wishes of the people on this subject. In about 500 different places the householders (only) have been canvassed with the following results:—

For Sunday Closing . . . . .	756,846
Against . . . . .	89,417
Neutral . . . . .	55,814

or more than 8 in favour to every one against. In 56 workshops canvassed the number were—In favour, 10,627, against 1,190; neutral 514. Here the proportion is larger. And when we come to analyze the canvasses we find invariably that the lower down in the scale of population we go the larger is the majority in favour of closing. The question is a working-man's question, and working-men have plainly expressed their opinion upon it, and would soon settle it if they had their own way. The objections and opposition chiefly come from well-meaning friends of the working-man, as they have constituted themselves, who are ignorant of his wishes in the matter; and from those who are pecuniarily interested in the Trade.<sup>1</sup>

(*d.*) Lastly, it is objected that you will not lessen intemperance by Sunday Closing. This brings us to the important evidence furnished by Scotland and Ireland.

In the former country, the Forbes-Mackenzie Act has been in operation for twenty-seven years. It closes public-houses during the whole of Sunday, and on other days from 11 at night to 8 in the morning.

In the ten years before the passing of the Act, in 1854, the consumption of British spirits in Scotland was 66,675,852 gallons. In the ten years after the Act came in force the consumption amounted to only 51,442,915 gallons, although the population was largely increased. It may enable us to judge of the passing of the Act, if we compare this state of things with that in England and Wales, in which the consumption of British spirits for the ten years ending 1853

<sup>1</sup> It is, however, frequently suggested that it is not fair that the public-house be closed while clubs are allowed to be open on Sunday. No argument, however, can be legitimately drawn from the one to the other: for the club is not a trading establishment, nor open to the public: nor are there any complaints as to the effects of clubs being open on Sunday, nor any requests from those who use them that they should be closed, as is the case with reference to the public-house.

amounted to 91,632,344 gallons; and for the ten years ending 1864 to 111,888,703 ("Report of the Commissioners for Inland Revenue, 1870," vol. ii. pp. 8, 17).

The results in Edinburgh are very remarkable:—

	Average of 1852-3; before the Act.	1872-3; after the Act.
Total number drunk and incapable. . . . .	6,047	1,923
Number of persons arrested for drunkenness between 8 o'clock on Sunday morning and 8 o'clock on Monday morning . . . . .	367	53
Number of persons arrested for drunkenness on Monday . . . . .	752	234
Daily average number of prisoners in the city gaol . . . . .	575	329
notwithstanding an increase in the population of 38,488 between 1851 and 1871.		

Important evidence was given before the Select Committee "On Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Ireland) Bill 1877."

Capt. Alex. M'Call, Chief Constable of Glasgow (connected with the police force of that town since 1850), stated that his experience of the effect of Sunday Closing had been that there had been a wonderful change wrought upon the peace and quiet of that city; that since the public-houses have been closed on Sundays it has been a very rare thing to see people going about the streets drunk on those days from 6 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock at night; whereas, before the Act came into operation, it was very common; that the Sunday used to be perhaps the busiest day of the week with the police, but that has entirely changed now; that there are no complaints about "idle Monday" now; that the number of illicit houses (which it is argued that Sunday Closing would increase) is not one-third of what it was before; that he could not see any sign of an increase of private drunkenness, nor does he believe that such is the state of things; for if the people were in the habit of getting privately drunk, as it is called, it would be sure to lead to disturbance in some parts of the city, and the attention of the police would be called to it; and that he looks on the Act as the greatest benefit conferred on Scotland, and especially on Glasgow, for the last fifty years.

Mr. Thos. Linton, Chief Superintendent of Police, and Procurator-Fiscal of Edinburgh, connected with the police force for forty years, gave evidence to the same effect. He said that, before closing of public-houses on Sunday, a larger force of police was required than now; in fact, between eight o'clock on Sunday morning and ten o'clock on Sunday night, there were only twenty-six men at a time on the beats in the whole of Edinburgh, and on week-days there were seventy-eight. The closing of public-houses on Sunday had led to a decrease of drunkenness on Monday, and the number who now absent themselves from work on that day is small compared with previous years. The

shebeens have diminished in number since the passing of the Act, and he had not seen any sign of an increase of private drunkenness. He was quite satisfied that if the votes of the publicans were taken, there would not be one in five who would not say they considered it a great boon; and the same proportion would be the result of the votes of the people. He had no doubt that Sunday Closing in Edinburgh has been very beneficial, and the improvement in the social and moral condition of the people is great.<sup>1</sup>

*Ireland.*—The result in Ireland has been equally satisfactory. It was predicted during the struggle to obtain the measure that it would lead to riot, disorder, and increased private drinking; but since the Act came into operation (Oct. 13, 1878), there has not resulted a single breach of the peace, and drunkenness has diminished beyond the most sanguine hopes of the promoters of the Bill.

The Board of Trade returns give the following figures for the years 1878 and 1879 respectively:—

	1878.	1879.
Consumption of spirits in Ireland .	£6,101,905	... £5,335,000
„ „ beer in Ireland .	4,850,424	... 4,040,695
Total . . . . .	£10,952,329	... £9,576,634

being a reduction of £1,576,634.

The returns for the first six months of 1880 are even more satisfactory. The following are the figures for the half-years ending June 30 in 1878, 1879, and 1880:—

	1878.	1879.	1880.
Spirits returned for home consumption in Ireland .	. gals. 2,959,814	... 2,675,666	... 2,352,904

showing a reduction in 1879 of 284,148 gallons compared with 1878, and in 1880, of 322,762 gallons compared with 1879, during the six months.

The returns of beer are equally satisfactory. The figures show a reduction of 1,968,696 gallons on the six months.

But the results of Sunday Closing are seen more clearly by a reference to Parliamentary Returns affecting the day itself, from which it appears that the arrests on Sunday, not including the five large towns which are partially exempted from the operation of the Act, were—

For the year preceding Sunday Closing	...	...	4,555
For the first year of Sunday Closing	...	...	1,840
Decrease (about 60 per cent. on the whole)	...	...	2,715

<sup>1</sup> The whole evidence is worthy of careful attention. It has been reprinted in a pamphlet. Price 6d. Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, E.C.

In the five towns partially exempted the result stands thus:—

For 1877-78 (with seven hours' sale)	. . .	2,820
For 1879-80 (with five hours' sale)	. . .	2,132
		688
Decrease (nearly 25 per cent on the whole).	. . .	688

The testimony of the judges of assize, magistrates, and clergy, are unanimous as to the beneficial effects of the measure, while the publicans declare that it has largely affected their trade throughout the week.

Such facts speak for themselves; and those relating to the consumption of beer are especially valuable, inasmuch as objections are constantly made to arguments drawn from the success of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, in favour of a similar Act for England, on the ground that spirits are the staple drink in Scotland, while beer is in England.

A Bill for Sunday Closing in Wales, called for by the almost unanimous voice of the Principality, is now before Parliament, and will, it is hoped, have become law before these pages meet the eye of the reader. The second reading was carried on May 4th, by 164 to 17, and it is remarkable that in the division no Welsh or Scotch member voted against the bill, and only four Irish members against twenty-eight in its favour.

Surely when—not to mention the Colonies—Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man,<sup>1</sup> and Wales, enjoy the blessing of Sunday closing; and its beneficial effects are recognized in them all, the same boon cannot long be denied to England. In order to secure this result, it needs only that all who are jealous for the sanctity of the Lord's Day, all who desire to check the intemperance which so lamentably prevails in our land, and all who desire the true prosperity and peace of our country, our Christian ministers and Sunday School teachers, and other workers, should unite, as these have so successfully done in Ireland and Wales, in earnest determination to make their voices heard in Parliament, and their wishes known to their representatives; and, by God's blessing upon such united effort, at no distant time will the blot which the existence of this traffic leaves on the Christian character of our country be wiped out, and the Lord's Day be emancipated from that which more than anything else robs it of its blessing to thousands of our countrymen.

T. ALFRED STOWELL.

---

<sup>1</sup> It may be stated that in the Isle of Man—the writer has it on the authority of H.M. Attorney-General—the Sunday Closing Act has worked well; greatly diminished Sunday drinking, and given rise to no practical difficulty. See also the writer's evidence before the Lords' Committee.