



10th May, 1915.

Dear Sir,

I have seen in the daily newspapers of the 8th May, a letter of yours, regarding my communication to you of the 27th April, which calls at once for a reply and an apology, and I hasten to make both. The fact is that, in dictating replies to two organisations at one time, in my hurry I incorporated one with the other and sent a letter to you of which only the first portion had any reference to anything you had written to me, or said of me. I am deeply grieved that I should have made such a mistake and that it should have been given publicity, and I now make the only amendment open to me. It is certainly not true that you or the members of your organisation publicly libeled me and failed to withdraw any unjust accusations when their falsity was proved to them, and it was quite by mistake that I made any such charge against you or them.

However, let me say that your protest against interference with the sanctity of the Sabbath is somewhat belated, especially as regards infringements of the law. Sunday observance laws, which you profess a desire to uphold, have been broken to flinders in every direction over and over again during the last thirty or forty years. Under the conditions of modern civilization, it is quite impracticable to keep laws, which were made anno domini 1627 to 1677, and the danger is that while such laws remain on the statute book, impossible as it is to keep them, they may at any time be put into operation to the grievous injury of some who are unaware of their existence, while greater offenders are permitted to go scot-free. You should know that the laws of Charles I and Charles II make travelling of any kind impossible on the Lord's Day, whether by vehicle, boat, ferry, lighter or barge, and also make it penal for any man to follow his ordinary occupation on that day. Since these injunctions still exist, and since you have hitherto refrained from protesting against their non-observance, it appears to me in the highest degree

The Reverend Stephen Taylor,
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The Rectory,
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degree absurd that you should denounce the very small accession of freedom which I have permitted, while allowing very much greater infringements of these obsolete laws to continue without protest. The fact is that, while it is necessary for the health of man and the worship of God, that the seventh day should be set apart as a day of rest, so far as may be, the conditions of modern civilization make impossible a rigid observance of the legal conditions set up 240 years ago. The laws for Sunday observance are broken by every one in the community: by church-goers and clergymen who use vehicles of any kind on that day: by the officers of the churches who ring bells and open doors: by the choristers and organists who are paid to lead and assist in church psalmody:- just as they are broken by those who are employed on public railways, public tramways, and on ferry-boats and boats which ply for hire. All that I have done is to make applicable to the whole of the country that freedom in purchasing soft drinks and fruit on Sunday which has been accorded to the whole of the metropolitan district during the last four years, and which prior to that date was accorded freely to all sea-side resorts. I view with surprise your resentment of my application to the country districts of privileges enjoyed in the metropolis, since there the use of cool drinks and of fruit is much more necessary.

Yours sincerely

George Black

Chief Secretary, and
Minister of Public Health.
