

# ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST SUNDAY BASEBALL

Our Readers Send in Numerous Letters Regarding Agitation Which Has Village All Excited.

Following are a few of the letters received by The Reporter in the past week regarding the question—Sunday baseball—to play or not to play.

Downers Grove, Aug. 3, 1919.  
Dear Mr. Staats:

It would seem that if the good people of Downers Grove wish to deny their returned soldier boys the privilege of playing ball on Sundays, without the necessity of their having to go to some other town, this might be alright, though undoubtedly lacking in consideration for the boys; but to have them said "Nay" to by a number of the Reverend Clergy, who are all practically strangers within our gates, surely is it not—to state it mildly—presumptuous on their part? We all realize of course that their position gives them a certain right—even duty—to help dictate the policies of our village; on the other hand the cross, not to say raw, way which they have, in their over-zeal expressed themselves amacks of the obvious in a degree little short of the superlative, and I anticipate that the voters will show their appreciation (I) accordingly on Saturday. Our boys don't need any defense, but they are due an apology.

Relative to argument it sums up to this, that they are going to play Sunday baseball anyhow, and the only question is whether—using a parallel case—"the girl shall receive her beau at home, or away from mother's wise oversight." It may be that we shall "retrograde" to the state of some of our neighboring towns that comprise a large foreign population, of which the Reverend gentlemen write so deprecatingly; but I hardly think our native folk will have any fear in this regard! (I understand that they forgot to mention Hinsdale and other towns more in our class where their boys do enjoy Sunday ball.) Neither do I believe any of our "respectable, law-abiding citizens" will be deterred from attendance at any of the games shortly to be held here upon pain of their being considered as merely "good people who have loose, low or unsettled moral standards."

Verily, the nerve of it! And this too from those who, by the way, do not differentiate between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, which apparently, blissfully unconscious dereliction on the part of the Village's "Official Mentors" in their direction of our conduct, may serve to explain their magnificent conceptions morally. Adventists keep Saturday!

With respect to the statement of Rev. Little about "starting a battle with God" proving a losing one, of a truth it would, beyond peradventure, and even so—a great pronouncement! However—I guess most of us will fall to be influenced by this type of bigshot, for we deny his assumed authority to correctly advise in the premises of this question. So adios to such nonsense! I trust, therefore, that the boys will "go to it" and win, just as they did when we sent them to lick the Hun, for Downers Grove is interested in their welfare NOW, as well as when, garbed in the uniform of Uncle Sam, they stood ready to face death in our behalf. And in this connection I want to say that it makes my blood boil every time I go down town on evenings, and see a bunch of these fellows with "nothin' to do and no where to go"—of the kind to develop their talents under the right auspices. Let's not only enable 'em to enjoy, as innocent recreation, our National game of baseball on one of our vacant lots, but let us construct a building in which to occupy their leisure time at home, instead of having to go to Chicago or somewhere—anywhere else.

"Them's my sentiments", Mr. Staats, and I wish only to say further that the Great World War has fortunately given our Boys a grasp of the importance of the fundamentals of religion, which cannot fail to enable them to distinguish the same from non-essentials of so thin a veneer that not even camouflage can dissociate it from the thought of "standing at a goat and swallowing a carrot."

Very sincerely yours,  
H. S. Dum.

Saturday afternoon the citizens of Downers Grove will have the opportunity to record their final judgment on the Sunday Base Ball question.

It is to be regretted that the request for the repeal of this ordinance comes from the American Legion of ex-service men. No one holds these returned heroes in higher regard than do the ministers of the Gospel and the church people here in Downers Grove and the country over.

Sunday Base Ball and Sabbath Desecration.

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But, if one will stop to reflect, he must know that Christian people who believe in the strict observance of the Sabbath have been asked to surrender something which they love and cherish almost as they love and cherish life itself.

To surrender the Christian Sabbath to any individual, or to any group of individuals, however deserving or worthy, upon any pretext whatever, would therefore, be almost like surrendering their church and their faith in Jesus Christ.

For them to do this, would be for them to stultify their conscience, to betray their church and to openly disobey God in the breaking of the Fourth Commandment. How can any unprejudiced and fair-minded man think for a moment that they will do this or that they ought to?

But, it is insisted, "these men are heroes." "They volunteered when humanities' cause looked blackest," "goodness knows they have by their work done enough for us, now let's do something for them." No one disputes this fact. Their heroic deeds will ever mark one of the most brilliant pages in American history. But,

intention of casting any reflection whatever upon any liberal, virtuous, high minded citizens who happen to disagree with us upon the question at issue who might attend the Sunday Base Ball game. But we do insist that we believe the Sunday Base Ball game would attract a great many undesirable people here just as it does elsewhere.

Another thing, we are advised by those who are in a position to know that Sunday Base Ball will be commercialized and that the boys who will consent to play on Sunday, as a rule, will sooner or later play for money, and that gambling and betting on the game will be prevalent.

This we do know, that Base Ball "fans" are listed by banks as poor credit. They are known to lock up and neglect their places of business to attend "match games" in order to gamble over the same. These "fans" are invariably identified with Sunday Base Ball.

But the opposition says, "We do not see any harm in just a quiet game of Base Ball on Sunday afternoon." Who ever heard of a "quiet Base Ball game?" We believe that the noise from the game will classify it as a public nuisance and that it will tend to break down the entire institution of the Christian Sabbath. We cannot afford to jeopardize this day of worship and rest. Everybody needs it today as never before. If the Sabbath day were suddenly taken away from us we would all feel that we had lost one of life's greatest boons.

How about the games played on Thanksgiving Day when the churches change their hour of worship in order to allow the congregations to attend the football game? Did the crowd become rowdies, not so that you could notice it; but they did cheer and shout, show me the game where they don't, as they went home feeling refreshed and buoyant, in other words, they had found recreation. And say, you hoodlums, do you remember that basketball game last winter when Downers Grove seemed hopelessly beaten and only a few minutes to play; first one basket, then another, then the score, time, and finally D. G. were ahead? Did you yell? Well I guess, its a wonder the roof held. Wouldn't you have gone to witness that game even if played on Sunday afternoon, and wouldn't you have cheered and yelled, and wouldn't you have found enjoyment and recreation, even if only five boys played? Wouldn't you go on a Sunday afternoon to see Griff and Davy and Chuck and Sambo rip thru that line? And wouldn't you yell? And wouldn't you have found recreation? Wouldn't you go on a Sunday afternoon to see Shanny and Brick and Ted wallop the ball or pull off some fancy bit of fielding? You bet and you would cheer and root, the greatest recreation in the world.

Do you believe that because you saw any of this on a Sunday afternoon you would become a rowdy, a low moraled creature? Do you believe it would be necessary for Downers Grove to increase its police

where and get into devilry. Answer: that kind of boys will do it anyway." Somewhere in the Bible the question is asked "Am I my brothers keeper?" Sermon after sermon has been preached to us that we are our brothers keepers. The position of the church and its ministers is lost if the above paragraph remains unchallenged by the church people themselves. Or is yours the position of the Pharisee when he prays, "I thank thee, O Lord, that I am not like these." I ask, would it not be better to keep at home these boys, give them the sport they crave and by your influence build up their moral standard?

When the reverend gentlemen speak of its relation to the family they are touching upon the industrial question and it should be the endeavor of anyone interpreting the doctrine of the carpenter of Nazareth to so shape our industrial fabric that fathers would have more time to give to their families than just Sundays. How many of those engaged in earning their living can take an afternoon off during the week for a game of golf?

In conclusion, let me say, "Give us Sunday ball; if it is wrong and improper it will soon so demonstrate itself and die a natural death, as it must have support to continue and flourish."

Olaf K. Jorgensen.

To the Editor of the Reporter.

Dear Sir: Some of us, while we dislike very much to take any position opposed to the local chapter of the American Legion, nevertheless, must oppose its official stand on Sunday base ball. We think the stand of the Legion in this matter is a mistake that involves more serious consequences than its members realize, and we oppose the repeal of the present anti Sunday base ball ordinance.

This world's truest welfare depends upon moral and religious forces. The best service a man can render to the world and to his country is the propagation of these forces. And on the other hand, the greatest harm that he can do is the hampering or the crippling of these forces. The failure of the world to generate these forces sufficiently, made the Great War possible, makes race riots possible, makes every evil which we abhor and detest, possible. We aim, by the help of God, to build a world where these things shall be no longer possible. We take seriously the petition, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." Now we hold that the plain Divine command, and absolute necessity, call for the

setting apart of one day in seven to be devoted specifically and wholly to such activities of mind and soul and body as will best help us in this mighty task. If a man is to become a lawyer, doctor, educator, minister, or member of any other leading profession, he must spend seven years or more in special study, which means, assuming that the average active life of such men is twenty five years, that they must spend at least one third of their very best years in preparation for their life work. Just so, it is not unreasonable, but it is entirely reasonable that we must spend at least one seventh of our time in special training for the highest spiritual and moral living.

The world is always ready to blame the church for not doing more to promote the good and to abolish evil. Then let the world allow the church those things which she deems necessary in order that she may meet this demand—among which is the proper use of the Lord's Day. If some may think us narrow we at least have the consolation of being in good company, as the following quotations will show:

"The observance of the Sacred Day, which was willed expressly by God from the first origin of man, is imperatively demanded by the dependence of the creature upon the Creator. . . . And it is to the fatal tendency which today prevails, to lead mankind away from God, and to order the affairs of Kingdoms and Nations as if God did not exist, that is to be attributed this contempt and neglect of the Day of the Lord."

Pope Leo XIII. "I regard the maintenance of Sunday laws of extreme importance; essential, indeed, to be true civil liberty."

Ex-Justice Strong of the U. S. Supreme court.

"That the troops may have opportunity to attend public worship, and rest after the great fatigue, the General will in the future excuse men from fatigue duty on Sundays, except at the ship yards or on special occasions, until further orders. We may have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly."

General George Washington. "The President and commander-in-chief of the army and navy desires and enjoins the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the officers and men in the military and naval service. The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best (Continued on last page)



we must not forget that there is another "hero" "who volunteered when humanities' cause looked blackest." "He was rich, but for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich." For thirty three years He walked the rugged paths of Earth, was maligned, beaten, buffeted, spat upon and at last was thorn crowned and murdered on a cross between two thieves on Calvary's hill. He died for us the greatest "hero" of them all that we through his death might have Eternal life. He reinstated the Christian Sabbath and asked us to keep it holy. Shall we now be carried off our feet by a sudden wave of misdirected sentiment and forget Him who voluntarily died to save the whole wide world?

But, it is claimed, on the basis of their heroic service, "we owe these men anything that it is within our power to give them." We are told that if these men want the Sabbath for Base Ball we should let them have it. We answer, Sunday is God's Day. He made it and hallowed and sanctified it—set it apart as a day of worship and definitely commanded us to "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy." Therefore, it is not ours to give.

When we take this position we are accused of being "narrow." Well, if we are narrow, then Daniel Webster was narrow, and Wm. E. Gladstone was narrow, and George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were narrow. We believe with an ex-Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States that "Where there is no Christian Sabbath, there is no Christian morality, and without this, free government cannot long be maintained."

Again, we are quoted (by the people about town) as saying that all people who patronize Sunday Base ball are bad people. What we really did say was as follows: "It will attract an undesirable element, but not all people who will go are bad people. Some good people will go who have loose, low, or unsettled moral standards."

Then there followed a list of undesirable citizens that we have reason to believe will be there.

We can readily see how one might take umbrage at this particular paragraph as it did not convey the impression we wished to make.

Had there been no Christian Sabbath there would have been no war to make Democracy safe for the world and these splendid young men would not be returning today as heroes worthy of the acclaim of all the world. It is the church that has been the great conservator of morality all these years; that has kept alive in the worlds consciousness the desire for the largest liberty and freedom. Without the Christian Sabbath the church would perish from the earth.

Let the thoughtful, intelligent voters of Downers Grove go to the polls on Saturday afternoon, August 9, and cast their ballots against the repeal of the ordinance which now secures for us the Christian Sabbath.

We honestly believe that in doing so, they will perform one of the greatest possible services for the ex-service men as well as for all other citizens of Downers Grove.

(SIGNED)  
Rev. R. H. Fleming.  
Rev. Wm. Grotefeld.

The article published in the Downers Grove Reporter in its last issue over the signatures of the reverends Fleming, Grotefeld, and Owens is an insult to the people of Downers Grove.

It is not an argument—it is abuse—and I for one would like to have an honest and sincere expression from their respective congregations on this question.

Not especially the opening paragraph of their article. The undersigned has been an ardent follower of sports—baseball, football and basketball—whether played on Saturdays or not, for years and as for being peaceful, law abiding or respectable, I take no back seat for any of the reverend gentlemen; nor do I feel that my moral standard is any looser, lower nor unsettled than theirs.

I am sure that the same crowds who have followed the different Downers Grove teams' fortunes on Saturday or Friday afternoon and evenings will follow them on Sunday afternoon and I do not believe that because the game is being played on a Sunday afternoon the crowd will suddenly turn into that characterized state of morals mentioned in the ministers' article. If they do, it does not speak well of the sermon preached to them during the forenoon.

force? How many of the reverend gentlemen attend any of our games? And if they did, they would get the thrill or the heartache of the game, they would become one of us and not place themselves as judges of our moral standards.

Close business on Saturday afternoon and give us a Saturday afternoon game so church folks can go, they ask. I am tempted to say in view of the clergymen's article that it would be missionary work on the church folks part to attend the Sunday afternoon games and try to raise the moral standard of the lowbrows who are supposed to attend Sunday afternoon games. The merchants of Downers Grove close their stores on Wednesday afternoon, they have undoubtedly have come to the conclusion that it is impractical to close on Saturday on account of the farmers and other reasons sufficient to them, so that disposes of that question.

The swimming pool which is being agitated is a splendid thing, but will the reverend gentlemen allow that to be open on Sunday, and will that be noiseless? I have never come across a swimming pool or a bathing beach that was noiseless but perhaps that is respectable.

We have the playground now and a credit to Downers Grove but they did not come thru the effort of the clergy, except one.

Chautauqua—fine—the more play you can bring into the people's lives, young or old, the better.

Concert—yes, why not? But would it be noiseless?

In another passage the following statement is made: "They say the boys will go to Chicago and else-

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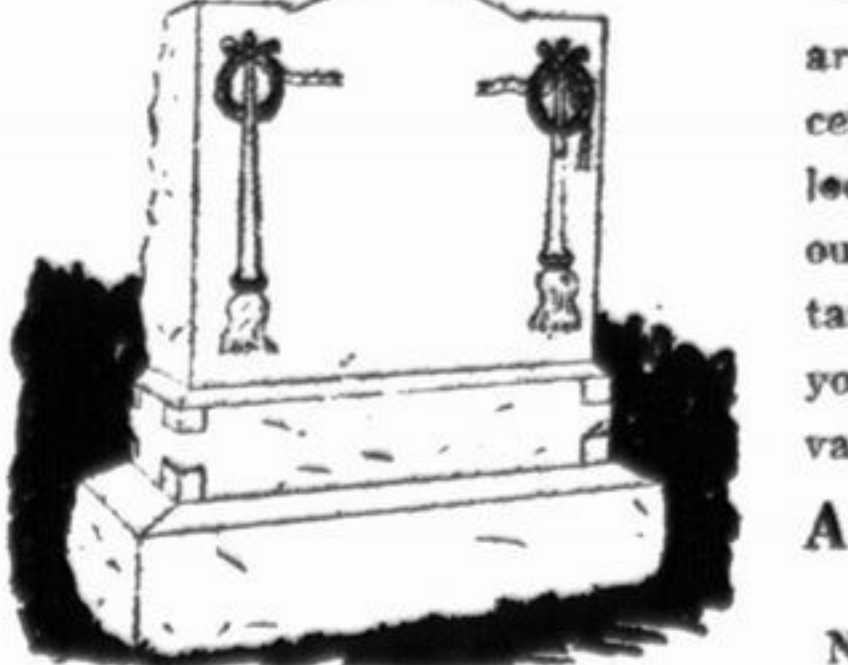
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