

The Sabbath a Blessing to Mankind

by Gardiner Spring

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The design of these few pages is not to present the argument in favor of the divine authority and perpetuity of the Sabbath. These are subjects that, if entered upon at all, must be pursued to considerable extent. When I consider the original institution of the Sabbath, of which we have so explicit an account at the close of the Mosaic narrative of the creation; when I find the observance of this day enjoined in one of the precepts of the moral law; when I find throughout the Psalms and the Prophets this solemn injunction implicitly repeated; when I hear the Apostle John, long after our Lord's resurrection and ascension into heaven, speaking with particular emphasis of a particular day as "the Lord's Day"; when I find the apostles setting apart one day in seven for religious purposes; when I can trace the existence and observance of sabbatical institutions from the creation down to the present hour; and when to these considerations I add the natural fitness and propriety of such a day, and consider how indispensable it is to the existence of religion among men, I am compelled to believe that the Sabbath is of divine origin and perpetual obligation.

But there is one view in which the Sabbath may commend itself to the consciences of men who question its divine authority. The peculiar and appropriate employment of this day consists in the public worship of God and the duties of domestic and personal piety to the exclusion of idleness and sloth, secular business, and pleasure and amusement. It may be that there are advantages attendant on the observance of this institution that will give it a place in the affections of every man who identifies himself with the high interests of human society. I have often thought that some men disregard the claims of this day with a spirit that calls into question scarcely anything more than their patriotism, and who, if they were aware of the inevitable tendencies of its observance, would rejoice in its appointment, and greet its return with an enthusiasm like that with which they hail the birthday of their country's freedom.

Is it too much to affirm that the sabbatical institution is preeminently the means of intellectual advancement? In the performance of the appropriate duties of the Sabbath,

every person becomes either a teacher or a learner, and derives his instructions from the best and most important sources. He either reads or hears the Holy Scriptures; he listens to the instructions and counsels of wisdom from the house of God; he occupies a place in the school of Christ, either at home or abroad, and that with the professed object of becoming acquainted with subjects which interest his mind, elicit thoughts and inquiry, and produce that discipline of the understanding and capacity for intellectual comfort which are the proximate design of all education.

Ignorance and barbarism form no part of the character of men who revere the Lord's Day. It is impossible to condemn to meanness and obscurity the individual (or community) who rejoices in the light of the Christian Sabbath. Carry the privileges of this day to the most abject in the globe, and just in the proportion in which they are subjected to its influence do you elevate them from their intellectual degradation. The reason is obvious. There is no small portion of mankind whose only opportunity of information is derived from the Sabbath—and it is no contemptible opportunity. With the exception of a few years of infancy and, perhaps, sickness, it consists of one day in seven, and ordinarily one-seventh of an entire life. The child who lives but seven years is furnished, from this day alone, with one entire year of important instruction; the youth who dies at the age of fourteen is furnished with two years; the man of twenty-one, with three years; the man of forty-two, with six years; the man of eighty, with nearly twelve years of uninterrupted learning. You may suppose an individual, a family, or a community, either so faulty or so unfortunate as to be deprived of all instruction except on the Sabbath. But, if the instructions of the Sabbath are improved, it is impossible that they should be ignorant. One-seventh part of human life, even with persons thus abject, is devoted to the attainment of knowledge.

The Sabbath, in this particular, affects the great mass of mankind. It addresses its obligations and presents its privileges to all orders and classes of men, the low as well as the high, the poor as well as the rich. Conceive, then, the great mass of the community devoting one day in seven searching the Holy Scriptures, assembling in the house of God to hear the instructions of its ministers, and then appreciate the importance of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath also furnishes the world with instruction in the most tender and docile age. That great precept in the decalogue, which enforces the observance of this day, has a

particular direction for masters and heads of families. It contemplates the assiduous and indefatigable instruction of the rising generation, and through those domestic instrumentalities that are invested with powerful persuasion, and that are usually attended with happy success.

To what a multitude of children does the Sabbath present the best time, the best opportunity, and the best motives for attaining instruction. And with what inconceivable force may we make this appeal when we advert to that blessed expedient of the age in which we live, the establishment of Sunday schools! Scarcely do our children come into existence than they are encircled by the light of Sabbaths. From their early years they look toward the Sabbath and the sanctuary as the appointed means of instruction. They grow up under the cheering influence of this day of knowledge, and, whether they become improved or degraded in a spiritual view, intellectually, and that through the whole course of their existence, they are under obligations to the Sabbath.

There is something, too, in the kind of instruction that the Sabbath communicates, which has a happy influence on the human mind. It relates to themes on which are staked our dearest interests for this world and the world to come. It calls the soul away from the hustle of this vain world to contemplate the wonderful works of God in creation, providence, and redemption. It casts a veil over what is seen, and uncovers to the eye of the mind what is unseen. It throws back into oblivion the lying vanities of time, sense, and creatures, and brings forward the solid and permanent realities of eternity, faith, and the Creator, everywhere disclosing facts, principles, and results which arrest the wandering intellect, and which are fitted to expand it forever.

It is the incessant occupancy of the mind by objects of sense and the pursuits of this world that unfit it for sober thought and the attainment of useful knowledge. Exclusive immersion in the perplexities and cupidity of business debase the intellectual nature of men, and it is only by being conversant with objects and truths of a more exalted kind that the soul projects her noblest achievements and makes her most rapid progression. I am persuaded that more is accomplished, directly or indirectly, by the various institutions of the Sabbath to enlighten the mind than is accomplished in any other way. As the means of mere intellectual advancement, I would not exchange the Sabbath for all other means of instruction. The Sabbath is the great day of light to this darkened world. The earth would scarcely be darker

without the sun than the intellectual hemisphere without the Sabbath.

There is another thought not unworthy of our notice: the Sabbath lies at the foundation of all sound morality. Morality is a matter of principle. "Out of the heart are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Let the principles of moral obligation once become universally relaxed and the practice of morality will become loose and unhinged in the same proportion. A man cannot preserve his own morals, and a parent cannot preserve the morals of his children, after he has taken away the sanctions and erased the impressions of religious observation. Take away these sanctions and you will soon see how much is owed, and how much the morals of his family owe, to the sacredness of good principles. It is impossible for any community to maintain a wholesome morality without an active impression of religious obligation. If you can persuade a community to reject the grand principles of moral obligation; if you can lead them to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, to question the reality and obligation of natural religion, to hesitate whether there are any such things as virtue or vice, or whether the soul will have any future existence, and, if it has, whether there is an eternal state of rewards or punishment, or whether there exists any such Being as God; if you can bring this community to this direful point of skepticism or infidelity, you are sure to have broken down the barriers of moral virtue, and to have hoisted the floodgates of morality and crime.

There is one institution that opposes this progress of human degeneracy and throws an impenetrable shield of moral virtue in our troubled world. It is the Sabbath. In the awful struggle between virtue and vice, notwithstanding the powerful auxiliaries which the cause of iniquity finds in the bosom of men, in the force of self-indulgence and the influence of the popular example, wherever the Sabbath has been allowed to live and exert her benign authority, the trembling interest of moral virtue has always been revered and supported. The great business of this day is to explain, demonstrate, and enforce the leading principles of a sound morality. Wherever the Sabbath is observed, you behold a nation assembling one day in seven to become acquainted with the best moral principles and hear the best moral precepts. And where this is the case, in defiance of the love of sin, the authority of moral virtue must be acknowledged, and the influence of the Sabbath must be felt. We may not at once perceive the effects that the recurrence of this day has up-

on human society. Like most moral causes it operates slowly but surely, but wherever it comes it gradually weakens the power and breaks the yoke of profligacy and sin.

And here let it be remarked that in perfect accordance with these suggestions will be found the history of individuals and associations of men. No villain regards the Sabbath. No vicious family regards the Sabbath. No worthless and immoral community regards the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a barrier that must be broken down before men can become giants in iniquity. Lord Chief Justice [Matthew] Hale of England remarked that of all the persons who were convicted of capital crimes while he was on the bench, he found a few only who would not confess, on inquiry, that they began their career of wickedness by a neglect of the duties of the Sabbath, and vicious conduct on that day.

I would like to see an authentic and correct history of all the prisons in the land; and, unless I am much deceived, such a statement would not present one instance of an individual who had not broken the restraints of the Sabbath before he was abandoned to crime, and who could not mark the profanations of that day as forming an advanced stage in his downward career. You may enact laws for the prevention of crime; you may frame them with judgment and execute them with promptness and impartiality; but the secret and silent influence of the Sabbath is a greater preventative of crimes, and of itself constitutes a stronger shield to the vital interest of a community than any code of penal statutes that was ever enacted. Sound morality has no such foundation as the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the keystone of the Temple of Virtue which, however it may be defaced, will survive many a rude shock, and retain much of its pristine magnificence, as long as its foundation remains firm.

As a general remark, I would say that the Sabbath is a distinguished means of national prosperity. The God of heaven has annexed very great and precious promises to the sacred observance of this day, involving emphatically "the life that now is as well as that which is to come." In Isaiah 58:13-14 He told His ancient people, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And in Jeremiah 17:24-25

He says, "If ye will diligently hearken unto Me, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day to do no work therein, then shall there enter into the gates of the city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain forever."

You will not often find a notorious Sabbath-breaker to be a permanently prosperous man, or a Sabbath breaking community to be a prosperous and happy community. "Them that honor Me I will honor," said the Lord in 1 Samuel 2:30.

It is obvious that temporal prosperity would be the natural result of the observance of the Sabbath if it procured nothing more than the blessings to which we have already referred. But there are other particulars in which the tendencies of this day exert a most salutary influence on human society. The provision which this holy day furnishes of a season of rest to laboring animals, the rest and refreshment secured to mankind, the neatness and cleanness which it promotes, especially among the lower classes of men, the softness and civility of manners which it diffuses throughout a community, the tendency of the Sabbath to abase our pride and remove our native ruggedness of disposition, the self-respect and elevation of character to which it so successfully invites those who observe it with decency—all these evidence that the Sabbath was made for man, and is instrumentally the great dispenser of prosperity and happiness.

In addition to these advantages, the influence that the Sabbath exerts on social order and civil liberty is by no means of little importance. It may be questioned where a nation of slaves was ever found where the institutions of the Sabbath have been enjoyed in their purity. It is impossible for a people to be hoodwinked and misruled by either kings, princes, or priests where the Sabbath proclaims its legitimate immunities or insists on its felicitous obligations. The yoke of tyranny and superstition cannot bear the influence of the Sabbath. Let a nation be composed of men who sacredly revere the Sabbath and they are no longer the fit subjects of unlawful authority or irresistible usurpation. And what do you think would become of the liberties of a nation where all its inhabitants were Sabbath breakers? How long would freedom survive the extermination of the Sabbath?

Nor is the influence of the Sabbath to be disregarded, since it respects the means of a comfortable subsistence. It would be well if men who are interested in elevating the condition of the poor—and who would lessen the sources and

diminish the amount of human poverty and wretchedness—would soberly think of the advantages of the Sabbath as one of the most efficient expedients for the prevention of poverty. It would be no useless information if a statistic account could be furnished of the commerce, agriculture, manufactures, arts, tranquility, affluence and elevation of particular communities which have been abandoned to a general profanation of the Sabbath, and contrasted with a similar view of communities in which this holy day has been observed with the reverence due to its divine authority. I have no question what the results of the contrast would be. To men and communities who profane the Sabbath (to say nothing of the cognate vices of this profanation, and the waste of property in maintaining them), this day is not only the most expensive of the seven, but not infrequently of itself consumes the earnings of the other six days' toil!

Upon the poorer class of the community especially, the observance of the Sabbath will be found to have an incalculable influence in rescuing them from want, and elevating them to the decencies of a comfortable subsistence. Neither a poor man nor an impoverished community can afford to indulge in the neglect of the Sabbath.

Nor is what I say merely theory. You cannot find the abject poor among those who pay a serious and reverential regard to the Sabbath. The most filthy, starved, and wretched of the human family will be found among those who habitually and always disregard the Sabbath. The host of mendicants that infest the community, especially in our larger towns, will be found to issue from cellars and garrets that have never been consecrated to the observance of the Lord's Day. Let a man look around the world with the eye of a philanthropic economist merely, and he will see abundant evidence that the Sabbath was instituted in kindness to man, and that a sacred and strict observance of it tends to directly promote the temporal prosperity of mankind.

But there is another consideration of still weightier import that I may not suppress: the Sabbath is the great means of perpetuating the knowledge of true religion on the earth. Very few men, if any, are universal skeptics. All nations have some impressions of a religious sort, be they ever so erroneous. The moral and intellectual constitution of men in this matter is very clearly disclosed in the number and diversity of religions that find a place on the earth. To limit the prodigious increase of errors on a subject so interesting to mankind, God early on gave them the Sabbath as the means of perpetuating the true religion. Hence this day,

wherever it has been duly observed, has been the great preservative against polytheism and idolatry. God said to the Israelites, "Surely My Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 31:13).

The events that the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian Sabbath commemorate are the original creation, the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—events which have ever been considered characteristic of the true religion. If these three events can be established, the religion founded on them must be acknowledged to be of divine origin. Now the observance of the Sabbath transmits these events down to the successive generations of men as matters of incontrovertible reality, so that the Sabbath is a "sign" between God and man, recurring every week, and a sign of such singular significance that the religion of which these events constitute so prominent a part must be the true religion.

You have seen coins, pillars, and monuments, and have observed holidays which were unequivocal demonstrations of the events they were designed to commemorate. Of the same general nature is the Sabbath. It is a public observance of matters of fact, the reality of which could be easily ascertained which was derived from the period in which the facts themselves took place, and as such has come down through successive centuries to the present hour. We would have known nothing of the Sabbath but for the events themselves that this day commemorates.

When we speak of the Sabbath, we at once recur to the reasons for this institution. When our children witness the observance of this day, and inquire why one day in seven is set apart from a secular to a religious purpose, we are at once led to a disclosure of the events of which this day is the memorial. And when their children, and their children's children, find themselves the possessors of such an observance, they will also be possessed of the events which the observance commemorates, and in these possess an epitome of the evidences of the favor of the true religion.

Wherever the Sabbath exists, therefore, and is observed, there exists the knowledge of the one God and the one Mediator. To this institution it is in a great measure owing that the knowledge of the true religion has been and is still preserved in the world. If you find a spot so abandoned as to be a stranger to the Sabbath, there is, you may rest assured, no knowledge of the true God. France, in the age of her great moral as well as political revolution, abolished

the Sabbath, and with it abolished her religion, declaring that there was no God but reason, and no hereafter except the grave.

The same result will follow the same premises wherever the experiment shall be made. The nation that disowns the Sabbath is necessarily a nation of infidels and atheists. You may look where you will—whether among individuals, families, or communities—and if the Sabbath is a desolation, there you will find a gradual and certain decay from true religion to infidelity and paganism. Let the Sabbath be forgotten for half a century in our own favored land and in vain you may look for a single Christian temple throughout this western hemisphere.

There are towns and villages on this continent where, for half a century, the Sabbath has been neglected and despised; and if you visit them you will see that you have no necessity of going to India or the southern ocean to find immortal beings who are ignorant of their immortality, and men who must soon appear before God in judgment who have seldom heard of God and His Christ. There is just as much importance, therefore, attached to the observance of the Sabbath as there is to the preservation of the true religion among men.

Allied to this thought, I might add, the Sabbath is the great means of holiness and eternal life. Man is by nature dead in sin and under the curse of God's righteous law. Such he must remain unless transformed by the Spirit of God in all the moral character of his soul, and justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The great means of this moral transformation is found in the institutions of the holy Sabbath.

Not only does this day perpetuate the knowledge of the true religion on the earth, but secures the existence of vital religion in the hearts of men. The various means of grace, so abundantly blessed by God, are all, by His own appointment, brought into action on this holy day. Were it not for the Sabbath, those means of grace would not once be thought of on other days; were it not for the Sabbath, they would soon be erased from the recollections of men and blotted out from the record of human affairs.

Is the soul enlightened, convinced of its sin, humbled, renewed, invigorated, comforted, assisted in its struggles with this conflicting world, brought forward on its spiritual pilgrimage, sanctified, prepared to triumph over death and the grave, made meet for heaven, clothed as an angel of light, and presented before the throne of God without spot,

wrinkle, or any such thing? All this light, purity, consolation, honor, and glory she owes, instrumentally, to the Sabbath. Is this the happy allotment of the church of God collectively? Are such the possessions of the nations of the saved, composed as they are of a great multitude that no man can number, from every kindred, tongue, and people? With one voice they must ascribe this inestimable inheritance to the influence of the Sabbath.

Blot out the Sabbath and you blot out the last beam of hope from the troubled and desponding heart. Blot out the Sabbath and no longer will the salutary lessons of the Bible lead ungodly men to repentance. No longer will the silver clarion of the gospel proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of death's prison doors to those who are bound. No longer will the voice of supplication ascend from this ruined world to draw from heaven the blessing now so magnificently imparted by the hearer of prayer. No longer will the Spirit of truth and grace dwell among men to dissipate their darkness and communicate that influence which makes the desert like Eden and the wilderness like the garden of the Lord. No longer will the temples of the Most High allure the heavy-laden sinner to the mercyseat. No longer will the sacred thanksgivings of the church on earth, intermingling with the sweeter and purer harmony of the church in heaven, ascend as a sweet-smelling savor before the God of the spirits of all flesh. No longer will the ordinances quicken, nor the soul be comforted, nor the unnumbered heirs of sin and perdition be conducted in the path that terminates at God's right hand.

No, blot out the Sabbath and darkness will cover the earth, and gross darkness will cover the people. Sin will reign; Satan will walk through the earth in all the frenzy of his long-wished-for usurpation, and death and hell will follow in his train. Blot out the Sabbath and, in one mighty crowd of pilgrims, this world's population would march quietly on to the gulf of remediless ruin.

Merely as a man of the world I venerate the Sabbath. I would not be the agent in the destruction of this benevolent institution for all that the earth can give. Indeed, this world would have very little to bestow when all that is illuminating and pure, elevating and noble, serene and holy, has become exiled from among men, as they must be with the extermination of this sacred day. That man has already lived too long who has survived the extinction of the Sabbath. But why should I speak merely as an inhabitant of the world? Immortal existence itself would be a curse if extended beyond

the blessings of the Sabbath. No, I would not be the witness of its extinction. I would not stand by and hear the dying groans of this day of mercy for all that the universe can give. I would rather yield my immortality than hear the knell that tolls the departure of this great day.

There is another thought which I purposed to submit: Does not the importance of the Sabbath, in a civil view, invest it with an undeniable claim of the protection of public law? The laws of all Christian states have, to a greater or lesser extent, given their authority and protection to the Sabbath. Men of wisdom, honor, and virtue have ever felt that it ought to be among the earliest objects of their solicitude to perpetuate the blessings of this holy day. And does not the importance of the Sabbath plead irresistibly for this paternal interposition? Is the Sabbath the great means of perpetuating in the earth the knowledge of true religion? Does it lie at the foundation of all sound morality? Is it not less a distinguished means of temporal prosperity than of holiness and eternal life? Then there is no institution around which a more impenetrable barrier of wholesome restrictions ought to be erected.

The Sabbath is the most noble and firmest pillar of a well-regulated society. It is the cornerstone of that noble edifice of morals, liberty, and public weal, which is the pride of every prosperous community. If our political institutions cannot be preserved unless the law and usages of the land are formed on the basis of sound morality; if morality cannot be maintained without the active impression of religious principle; and if neither can exist long where the Sabbath exerts none of its heaven-born influence, then is it not the truest policy of a state to enforce the observance of this day?

It is impossible for human laws to bind men to be religious, and nothing would be more preposterous than to attempt it. You may bribe them to be hypocrites, but you cannot force them to be the servants of God at heart. But it is surely no impossible thing to suppress the open and intrepid violations of the Sabbath.

I can hear you say, "It would be an infringement of the rights of conscience and personal liberty!"

But do the rights of conscience and personal liberty consist in allowing every man to do as he pleases, irrespective of what is right in itself and the best good of the state? You might as well affirm it to be an infringement of the rights of conscience and personal liberty to impose a legal restraint upon fraud and forgery. If you reply, "Crimes of

this sort are a violation of the divine law, and are at war with the best interests of the community," then I would reply, "So is the violation of the Lord's Day!" Nay, more, I seriously doubt whether the violation of the Sabbath is not vastly more injurious to the community than any act of fraud that you can mention.

The ground on which the Sabbath claims the protection of human laws is simply the ground on which any other institution claims that protection, and that is: it is an ordinance of God, and indispensable to the well-being of the State. "There is not," says a sensible anonymous writer, "a single position in political economy which can be more firmly established in the mind of every candid man than the strict and universal observance of the Sabbath is, in the highest degree, conducive to the public prosperity. On no subject whatever is the language of experience more explicit and decisive." God grant that we may not learn too late that the Sabbath is one of the most select gifts of heaven to men. When, like other nations and communities, we have watched virtue and happiness, and those social and civil privileges that are secured by this sacred institution, swept away, then we shall be taught that the Sabbath is the palladium of the dearest rights of man, and that the best interests of the community can no longer be consulted without enforcing its observance.

There is a single inquiry more. Does not the importance of the Sabbath bring home the obligation to the bosom of every patriot to support its authority by both his example and his influence? Nor can I too forcibly urge this demand. If there were no other considerations than those of private interest, I would not cease to urge the sacred observance of this day. No man, no community, ever lost anything by keeping the Sabbath day holy. God will bless the Sabbath to those who observe it, and He will curse all other time to those who profane it.

The profanation of this day is too bold and sacrilegious an invasion of God's property for it not to be followed with the malediction of the great Proprietor of time and Creator of men. Yet there are multitudes who think it no profanation of this holy day to convert it into a day of good-neighborhood and social enjoyment. Others have no misgivings of heart at an occasional journey upon business or jaunt of pleasure during these sacred hours. Others would not even revolt at this!

How many fields and streams are there which swarm with men, women, and children who devote the day to pleasure and

amusement! But who has authorized men to trample upon a divine institution for the sake of their own convenience or pleasure? Who has relaxed the obligations of eternal, immutable righteousness for the accommodation of men who serve mammon rather than God? I would like to see all the reasons for violating the Sabbath condensed and enforced with all the ability that man can give to them, and I will pledge myself in a single sentence to refute them all. And, anticipating a redemption of the pledge, I will here rehearse the sentence, once indeed rehearsed with memorable solemnity: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy!"

Allow me affectionately to invite the reader to a perpetual abjuration of all such violations of this holy day. If you would not be instrumental in bringing down upon our favored country the desolations of older and more degenerate states, beware how you sympathize with their profanation of the Sabbath! Oh, it is enough to sicken one's heart to survey the immoralities that are fostered by the neglect and abuse of this day in some of the states, even in modern Europe! If you are not a stranger to the ardor and enthusiasm which so justly beats high in the breasts of American citizens; if you have thought that the liberty, laws, and political institutions of this happy land are worth preserving, I entreat you to guard with a watchful eye a reproachless example and commanding influence the Sabbath, the first of all our moral institutions. Let it be your own practice, and that of all around you, whenever this day commences, to suspend all secular business. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates" (Exodus 20:9-10).

This is the divine command—a command that occupies one-tenth of the moral law—that was written by God's own finger on tablets of stone and, by His almighty voice, sounded out from Sinai so that it might pour its obligations upon every ear through every age of time.

Beware how you make His day a day of pleasure and amusement. The common sense of every man must teach him that the Sabbath was instituted for a higher purpose. There is no more insidious and, perhaps, no more fatal profanation of the day than this, though it may have found many a patron from Christian names—to regard the day simply as a pleasant relaxation from the severity of toil, and a temperate indulgence in whatever tends to cheer the fatigue and refresh the

languor of unabated diligence through the week. These are the very liberties with the Sabbath that, though commenced by a trembling conscience, and indulged by fearful gradation, in the result never fail to thrust out all the solemnity of its duties, and prevent all the preciousness of its blessings. This is that leaven of impiety which, the more it ferments and is diffused, does the more corrupt and demoralize the whole mass of civil society; this is that drop of poison which contaminates and pollutes the very fountains of grace and mercy to which this world owes so much of its purity and enjoyment.

On behalf of this holy day, therefore, and in the name of the God of heaven, I ask for your example and influence, to redeem this day from the invasions of a profanation that must be attended with affectingly-serious consequences. To you who are magistrates and invested with civil authority, permit me respectfully to say that the ordinance of God and the voice of a free people have elevated you to posts of dignity and power so that you may be the sentinels of public virtue. Their eyes are directed to you to maintain the sacredness and diffuse the blessings of the holy Sabbath. The voice of the King of kings to you is, "Remember the Sabbath day!" In your personal and official capacity, never lose sight of its appointment and design.

If, as our civil fathers, you would see your children rise up and call you "blessed"; if you would embalm your names in the remembrance of an elevated people, and transmit them with many a grateful sentiment to a distant futurity, then be entreated to become the exemplary and fearless guardians of the Christian Sabbath.

To you who are parents, allow me to say that on you devolves the sacred charge of perpetuating and extending the divine influence of this holy day. Let your children be instructed in the obligations of the Sabbath, and governed to a conformity with its reasonable requisitions in early life. Even if the men of the existing generation become demoralized, there is a redeeming influence lodged within the bosom of every family that may form a generation of another spirit and preserve the land from increasing corruption.

On you who are teachers rests the same sacred responsibility. Let your schools be nurseries of morality and piety as well as of learning. To you the community has a right to look for the influence of a moral restraint in qualifying our youth to be useful members of civil society.

To the individuals in private life, whom the God of heaven has destined to influence their fellow men, let me say,

interpose that influence on behalf of the sacred Sabbath. Let it be one of the great principles of your conduct, wherever and whatever you may be, to uphold the authority and plead the cause of this holy institution.

To you youth, particularly, let me say, let nothing tempt you to profane the Sabbath. No one external observance will exert a more powerful influence on your moral character than a strict regard for the Lord's Day. You cannot become abandoned while you revere the Sabbath. You cannot become useless members of civil society as long as you regard the Sabbath. You cannot put yourselves beyond the reach of hope and heaven as long as you sanctify the Sabbath.