

Pratt. Sermon, Fryeburg, Maine, 4th of  
July, 1828.

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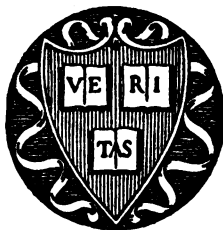
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# **SERMON,**

**DELIVERED AT FRYEBURG, MAINE,**

**ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1828,**

**BY REV. HORACE S. PRATT,**

**PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,**

**ST. MARYS', GEORGIA.**

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**"He is a freeman whom the truth makes free."**

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*March 10, 1938*

The Author of the following discourse, while on a journey from the southern country, was providentially detained a few days at Fryeburg, in the State of Maine, about the time of our National Anniversary. Being requested to preach a 4th of July Sermon, and at the same time, assist in the formation of a Society auxiliary to the "General Union for promoting the observance of the Christian Sabbath," he did not feel himself at liberty to decline, notwithstanding his time for preparation was very limited.—He therefore deems it justice to himself to say, that nothing was farther from his thoughts, than the appearing of his hasty production before the public, and that it was with great reluctance he at length listened to the request for its publication. He commits it, respectfully, to those who have honored him by this request, accompanied with his earnest prayer, that the divine blessing may attend it.

## **SERMON.**

### **JOHN VIII. 36.**

**IF THE SON THEREFORE SHALL MAKE YOU FREE, YE SHALL BE FREE  
INDEED.**

**T**HERE is a charm in the very idea of Freedom, which gives elasticity to the feelings of every man who comes under its influence. It buoys him up when bowed under the pressure of adversity, and gives him the aspect of cheerfulness and contentment, even when surrounding circumstances would make him sad. There is always a depressing and withering influence in the thought, that we must bow our necks to the will of despots, or crouch beneath the arm of human power. A feeling of degradation always exists ; and a sense of our importance, which is the real stimulous to action, is ever wanting, where freedom is restrained, and so long as we know that our happiness and destiny are dependent upon the capricious will of another.—But there is a freedom, which is the worst of bondage : and a liberty, more destructive of happiness, than the tyrant's chain : it is the freedom of sin—the liberty of licentiousness : And there are multitudes in this land, which boasts of more freedom than any upon which the sun shines, from his rising to his going down, who know not in what true liberty

consists, and whose bosoms feel no glow of that sacred independence, which constitutes the dignity, as well as the happiness of man.

The Jews, to whom our Lord addressed the words of our text, supposed that they were in the enjoyment of perfect freedom ; and in the illusion of their minds, they exclaim : “ We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man ; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free ? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Here, brethren, is recognized the great, and only efficient principle of freedom. It is the freedom of virtue—of purity and holiness.—It is the freedom of heaven—the freedom of angels—the freedom of God himself. And it was to give this principle to immortal man, that the Spirit of the Lord God anointed the Redeemer, “ to preach good tidings to the meek—to bind up the broken-hearted—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

In pursuing the subject, I will endeavor to shew :

I. That Divine Revelation alone, is the foundation of real liberty.

II. Point out some of the means, by which our civil and religious liberty may be preserved and perpetuated.

If we cast our eyes upon the world, and survey its history from the commencement of time, we shall immediately perceive, that there has never been a particle of virtuous freedom—not a day of rational liberty, but where the great governing principles of divine revelation have been known and acknowledged. The Bible is the only soil that has produced the Tree of Liberty in this revolted world, and it is only where its free principles are felt, that man can breathe the air of freedom, and feel the thrilling glow of hallowed independence. This is now, and will forever be, the only certain base, which can support the pillars of our civil institutions—which can preserve our nation and our freedom—our religion and our laws—our fire-sides and our altars, from the overthrow and ruin of other lands. Perhaps it may be thought, that the Republics of former ages—that the freedom of ancient Greece and Rome, form exceptions to the position I have taken. So far from being exceptions, they afford strong and striking illustrations of this truth, that no nation can be free, that is not made so, by the redeeming power of the Son of God. The Roman Republic, with all her power and splendour—with her victorious armies and blood-stained banners, was a nation of slaves. The great mass of her immense population were ignorant, degraded, dependant vassals of their lords.—That virtue, which forms the very base of freedom, and gives the spring of liberty to the soul, was utterly unknown; there was no word in all their rich, beau-

tiful language to express it; and the most exalted idea they ever formed of virtue, was, that courage which would not quail at the pains of torture—that fortitude which would not shrink from death upon the rack.—All the finer feelings of our nature were obliterated; and being destitute of those governing principles which flow from an unseen and eternal world, they gave the reins to every unhallowed propensity, and reveled with awful freedom in the indulgence of every sin. This was, indeed, a species of independence, but not such as any wise or virtuous man would choose. It was a freedom which rendered their bondage the more complete, and their chains the more degrading. The government was obliged to use the popular superstitions of the day, to subsist at all, and yet, it constantly carried in its very constitution, the principles of decay and dissolution.—The same was true of the Republic of Greece, and the more modern Republic of France; and in the latter, we were taught the striking and awful lesson, that Republicanism and Freedom, are far from being synonymous, and that in no nation under heaven, was tyranny ever so monstrous and insupportable, as in that wretched country during the reign of *Freedom*. It needed no prophet to predict, that such a government could not long continue. It was utterly impossible, in the very nature of things, that a nation could exist within the dominions of the Righteous Governor of the world, that discarded the Revelation of God, and declared



“death to be an eternal sleep.” What shall restrain a man, or a nation, when once they have relinquished the dignity of immortality, and brought themselves to believe that they perish like the brutes!—There is nothing so withering to the virtuous energies of the mind, as uncertainty, in regard to its immortality—or if immortal, what shall be its destination in a future world. And whence is the source of any information on this infinitely momentous subject? Is it not the Bible, and the Bible alone?—What but the “Gospel brings life and immortality to light;” and what but the assurance of an immortal existence, places any principles of self-government in human bosoms?—And if every individual in a whole nation be destitute of the principles of self-government, by *what*, or by *whom* shall they be ruled;—Now if the patriotism of a whole nation of infidels could not save that country from destruction, it follows that no man, who rejects the great governing principles of Revelation, can be a true Patriot. Just as soon as men begin to reject the idea of an overruling Providence, that moment they sink in their own estimation, and in the estimation of all who think like them, to a level with the beasts, with no other difference than that which arises from reason and intelligence. How different would be our feelings toward our fellow men, if we believed that death ended their existence! Human life, when viewed in disconnection from immortality, would be compassed with no solemnity, and its extinction would be but little

regarded. In Greece, and Rome, when in the height of their power, and polish, the lives of men were no more regarded, than that of the trees of the forest ; and the death of even the greatest, was only regretted as occasioning a chasm in the State, which, perhaps, it were difficult to fill. There was no lingering about his grave, because he was believed, immortal ; no shuddering sensation, through fear, that a deathless spirit was lost forever ! How was it in Republican France, when the Bible, and the Sabbath, and the soul's immortality, were banished from the country by a national decree, and when over every church door, and in every graveyard was read this terrible inscription, "Death an eternal sleep?" What was the moral effect of such a reigning principle as this ? Did it not open the flood-gates of iniquity and crime, to prostrate every thing that was valuable in liberty, and every thing that was holy in religion ? Were not the common feelings of humanity utterly extinguished, and did not the whole nation witness the slaughter of hundreds every day without a pang ? Did not parents deliver up their children, and children their parents—husbands their wives, and wives their husbands, to the guillotine, to be sacrificed with as little remorse as they would have led their beasts to the altar ? And why did this state of things exist in a nation professedly free ? What made such monsters of human beings, and banished from those breasts which had once been human, all the strongest, and most endearing principles of our nature ?

It is this, and this alone; they renounced the revelation of God, and the immortality of man, and with them, all the great governing principles of the heart; and set the whole nation afloat upon the wide sea of uncertainty, and atheistical conjecture. They took away the only distinctive difference between man and a brute; and thus left him without any thing to fear, and without any thing to hope. It will be easily perceived, that as soon as a man loses from his soul the dignity which immortality confers, and brings himself to believe that the Eternal God has so little regard for him, that he has given him no more direction for the regulation of his conduct, than he has "to the beasts that perish"—that moment he gives up every incitement to virtue, and every principle of good order and self-government;—that moment, he relinquishes all that can bind the conscience, or give sanction to the laws; and consequently he subverts the stamina of civil liberty, and saps the very foundation of all government.—This period in France, although baptised with the name of Freedom and equal rights, was emphatically the reign of Terror.—It was not that Liberty which the Gospel gives—but the licentiousness of Atheism—the dreadful liberty of demons—the same which the lost spirits of perdition enjoy, while they sink under the chains of darkness which bind them over to the judgment of the great day. It needs no great sagacity to perceive, that when the thoughts, and wishes, and aims of men, are all confined to this world, there can be none of

those grand and ennobling principles, which constitute the true Patriot and the Christian. There will always be as much difference between the patriotism of the believer in the Gospel, and the mere worldly politician, as the value of the soul is more estimated by the one, than the other. And, on this subject, the one is as much more elevated than the other, as the hope of mounting up to heaven, and through the whole round of eternity, increasing in the knowledge of God, and of drawing nearer and nearer to the perfection of Deity, is more sublime and ennobling, than the withering expectation of going down to the grave to perish forever, by a dreadful annihilation. What is it that furnishes motives and incentives to action—that awakens our joys and our hopes—that elevates and purifies the soul—that makes us love our homes and our country—our laws and our institutions—our religion and our God? Is it not, that there is an after-world, where immortal man will live in happiness or misery, as he was influenced and affected by his principles and practice, during the day of his probation? And are not his pious character and preparation for eternity, in a great measure, dependent on the institutions of his country? What, then, must be the difference between the patriotism of the man who believes that he will meet his children, and all the dearest objects of his affections in a future world, whose eternal destiny has been influenced by his country's institutions, and the man who acknowledges no God, and fears no future state?

The highest good of the one, is measured entirely by this world :—the other, stretches his faith beyond these dying scenes, and grasps eternal good.

It has been asserted, that the elements of freedom, and all the substratum of rational independence, are contained in the Bible alone.—Iniquity, the great opposing principle of the Bible, is the source of all the slavery and bondage under which the world has ever groaned. It is sin, that has forged our chains from the very beginning, and it has ever been the grand object of divine revelation, to break these accursed fetters, and set the prisoners free. Wherever the redeeming influence of the Bible has been felt, there the principles of freedom have sprung up ; and men have become impatient of the tyrant's chain, and strained every nerve for emancipation. How was it, when Luther became acquainted with that Gospel, which had been buried under the superstitions of a thousand years ? Why, he rung a peal so loud, that he was heard through all Europe. The voice of freedom sounding from the trumpet of the Gospel, made the proudest monarchs tremble, and even the Pope himself, who had drenched the earth with blood, to crush this rising spirit of the Bible, was well nigh shaken from his seat. In every country, since the Reformation, where there has been the least spark of liberty, it was the light that darted from the Bible. And hence it is, that the Bible is so much feared and hated by the monarchs and tyrants of the world. His *holiness* the Pope, and his *sublimity*

the Porte, unite with the powers of darkness to stop the progress of the truth. They know that despotism, and the religion of Jesus, cannot live together; and therefore they use all their power and policy, to keep this heavenly light from beaming on the nations. They are more afraid of that Gospel which originated in Judea, and sprung from a poor, despised, and crucified Nazarene, than of the most powerful armies that ever carried victory through the world; and they tremble more at the sword of the Spirit, which carries freedom on its edge, than at all the systems of philosophy and human inventions, that the busy brains of mortals have ever yet discovered.

What, then, is the inference from these fears of wicked kings and spiritual despots? It is, that the liberty of the Gospel is a divine principle, intended to free a captive world from civil, as well as spiritual slavery, and make every one who feels its heavenly influence, eternally happy in the world of unlimited and boundless freedom.

If, then, my brethren, “the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

While, then, we rejoice, in common with our countrymen, in the blessings which this day commemorates, let us not be deceived in regard to the origin whence these blessings were derived. All this fair inheritance, which is, at once, the boast of our country, and the glory of the world—this noble fabric of civil and religious liberty—these goodly towns and villages—these cities and seats of learn-

ing—these beautiful churches and stately temples, consecrated to Almighty God ; and all those objects of beauty, and sources of enjoyments which make this land the glory of all lands, let it be remembered, are a patrimony, obtained by the tears and blood—by the prayers and exertions, of a class of men, whose virtues and privations—whose sorrows and hardships—whose unyielding principles and stern integrity—whose religion and whose God, are well nigh forgotten by us, their unworthy descendants.

There are some, who affect to sneer at the Puritans of former days ; but, my friends, the world has never seen another such race of men, as that which left us this goodly heritage. All that we have of freedom and intelligence—of religion and virtue—of peace and independence, was derived, under God, from these men.—We are wont to speak of the Fourth of July, as the day when Freedom was born, and when the Jubilee of Independence was first proclaimed ;—Why, the men who sought a refuge in this country—who so bravely fought and bled, were *always free* ! They had that within them, which the chains of despots *could not* bind. They brought the principles of freedom with them, and planted here, the Tree of Liberty ; not by their laws, and constitutions, and civil regulations—but by the religion which glowed in their hearts, and the spirit, which they transmitted as a legacy, to their descendants. Even Hume, the elegant writer of English History, acknowledges, that

whatever of freedom there is in the British constitution, it is in a great measure owing to the exertions of the Puritans, whose free spirits could not be subdued by persecutions, nor torture, nor death; and this testimony is the more important, as coming from an Infidel, and the mortal enemy of these men. If we look at the government and church of England in former days, we shall find them constantly uniting all their wisdom and power, to destroy the liberties of the people, and enslave the consciences of their subjects.—But these men of God, whose hearts were filled with the spirit of the Bible, constantly resisted these oppressions, until they were compelled to find an asylum from a tyrannical government and domineering priesthood, in this Western world. It was *religious* liberty which they principally sought; and it is this spirit of liberty that springs from the Gospel, which has originated all the *civil liberty* which we now enjoy. What kind of Patriots, then, are those, who make so much bustle and display on our National Anniversary, and yet deny the truth and reality of that religion, whence all freedom springs? And of what value is that patriotism which looks not beyond the laws and regulations of this temporary existence, when man is immortal, and his endless happiness, or misery, is measurably connected with the institutions of his country? When the delusions of the world shall have fled, and the never ending day of realities shall have come, which will be found the greatest Patriot, to have most benefitted his coun-



try and the world, the pious founder of the Sunday School institution, or he that brought the lightning from heaven, and figured in the political world in the eventful days of our Revolution? The instruction of children and youth in the divine science of revelation, will do more to preserve our civil and religious liberty, than all the constitutions which mere human wisdom ever framed. I do not intend, my brethren, to wrest a single laurel from the brow of the great Patriots, and Statesmen of our country. I have not the disposition, had I the power, to tarnish the glory which they so justly wear, but at the same time, we have reason to fear, from the example of other nations, and the inherent nature of Infidelity itself, that if our whole population had possessed the same religious opinions as some of our greatest men, our Independence could never have been achieved; or if by mere dint of power, it had been effected, it could not long have been maintained. No government can long exist without religion, much less, one that depends entirely upon the morality and intelligence of the people. When, therefore, we hear a class of men, whom we have reason to fear, were destitute of those principles of self-government which true religion alone can give, extolled as the Fathers of our freedom, and the sole procurers of our Independence; we ought to look back, and remember those noble spirits, who first brought liberty to our land, and have left us their Sabbaths, and their sanctuaries—their Bibles and their hopes—their God and their heaven.—We may

consider the great politicians of every country, those men of giant minds who seem to wield the destiny of nations, while they regard not the operations of divine Providence, as the mere instruments in the hands of God, in carrying forward the great interests of his kingdom. And these men,—“if the Son shall never make them free,” when the great temple, composed of all the emancipated children of God, shall be completed, will be laid aside forever, as mere scaffolding, for which the master builder, has now no further use.—The only really free people on earth, are those, who are delivered from the bondage of sin, and have burst “into the liberty of the children of God”—“He is” emphatically “a freeman whom the truth makes free,” and the only true patriots, and those to whom may be safely committed the high, and amazingly important interests of our country, are those, who fear God—reverence the Bible, and recognize the kind Providence of heaven in ruling our destinies, and bringing this great and happy people to assume a high place among the nations of the earth.—Those are the only sincere lovers of their country, who have been released from the chains of sin by the emancipating spirit of the gospel, and who are disposed to bring all their talents and attainments—all their honor and glory, and lay them at Immanuel’s feet. Men of this spirit, know what freedom is—they recognize the source from whence it came, and the elements of which it is composed—that it was not

by might, nor human prowess, but from the bosom of ETERNAL LOVE, and that it first shed forth its cheering influence on the world, when the cross was raised on Calvary with its blood-stained banner, waving, "Peace on earth, and good will to men."

With this view of the subject, with what feelings of shame and indignation, shall we look upon the manner in which this day has usually been celebrated, or rather desecrated, by our countrymen! If this nation, redeemed from despotism by the immediate interposition of heaven, had resolved to cast the greatest indignity and contempt upon Almighty God, in their power, they could scarcely have discovered a more effectual method. What scenes of riot and confusion—of profaneness and intoxication—of fighting and bloodshed, have these Anniversaries witnessed in our land! I confess I have often trembled for my country, when I have considered how much contempt she poured upon God in these celebrations. What infidel orations and blasphemous sentiments have been uttered, and how little have the goodness and providence of God, in all our blessings, been recognized by those, who, with burning patriotism, have kept the day! God himself has given manifest tokens of his displeasure, by the many distressing accidents that have occurred in our land during the celebration of this national festival. It has been asserted by those who have paid some attention to the subject, that the number who have perished by the immediate

hand of God, in these celebrations, bears no inconsiderable proportion to the whole number that fell on the field of battle, during the National struggle for Independence. How, then, does it become every Patriot and every Christian, to bless God that he is blotting this foul disgrace from a Christian nation, and that he is putting it into the hearts of the good people of our country, to keep this day in a manner more consonant to reason—more conducive to morality—and infinitely more expressive of the gratitude of a grateful people. When we remember what God has done for us as a nation—how he has delivered us from the most imminent dangers—maintained our cause and defended our rights, when invaded by foreign foes—how he has gone “before us in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night”—how he has led us on from victory to glory, and made us the freest and the happiest people on the earth; surely, gratitude should be the united feeling of every heart, and one general burst of thanksgiving and praise should go up from every temple in our land, and the universal voice of this whole people should be, “Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits.”

II. What are some of the means by which our civil and religious liberty may be perpetuated, and our National prosperity promoted?

1. By maintaining a deep sense of our dependence on the God of providence, and a thorough

conviction that the grand principles of liberty, whether civil or religious, come from the Bible alone.

If we consult the history of the Jews, God's chosen and peculiar people, we shall find, that while they acknowledged God, and regarded his providence, they were kept as "in the hollow of his hand," and all their enemies, however numerous and powerful, were utterly unable to prevail against them. But as soon as they "forsook the God of their fathers," he gave them up to be carried away captive by ungodly nations. So it will be with us, if we "forget the God that made us, and lightly esteem the Rock of our Salvation." If, like Jeshurun of old, we wax fat, and kick, through the abundance of our prosperity, God will reject us, as he did his people, and say of us, "Their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them, make haste."

Our fathers, who came to this country, maintained this constant feeling of dependance on divine Providence; and they and their children, were blessed above any people that dwell upon the earth; "The eternal God was their Refuge, and underneath them were the Everlasting Arms:" truly, it might have been said of them, as Moses once said of a people similarly situated: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved of the Lord, the shield of thy help, and sword of thy excellency!"—But now, although no nation, externally, is more prosperous than ours, yet the

seeds of dissention and disunion are sown among us, and already the discordant, and infinitely diversified materials of which our nation is composed, threaten a speedy dissolution. And it is all because we have "forgotten the rock whence we were hewed, and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged." We have said, with Nebuchadnezzar, in the elation of our pride, "Is not this great Babylon that we have built for the house of the kingdom, and by the might of our power, and for the honor of our majesty?" While this spirit of haughty independence prevails, we have every reason to fear, that He that sitteth in the heavens, and is dishonored and provoked by our ingratitude, will reject us as a people, and give us up to suffer as our sins deserve. But if we awake to a sense of our dependance, and, instead of profaning this day, which commemorates the richest national boon that blesses any land, we pour out our hearts in grateful thanksgivings to God, we may hope that he will preserve our freedom—continue our National prosperity, and make us the envy and the glory of all lands.

2. We cannot expect that our civil and religious liberty will continue, unless genuine piety and religious intelligence be greatly increased and extended through our country.

This follows as a necessary consequence, if the fundamental principle with which we commenced is true, viz. That none are free indeed, but those whom the Son of God has liberated by the power

of the Holy Spirit. The blessings of freedom are, indeed, enjoyed by all in this happy country, but the great principles of freedom, which were brought hither by our pilgrim fathers, are possessed by none, who have not imbibed their spirit, and who are not the recipients of the same truth that animated their bosoms.—This whole nation is composed of individuals—these individuals, of course, form the great Body Politic—the character, then, of our government, and the principles which support its constitution, depend entirely upon the character and principles of the great mass of our population.—Our country, then, is free and secure in her Independence, just in proportion as the moral influence of the virtuous and pious shall prevail.—Christians, in this country, are the salt of the nation; were it not for the purifying and seasoning influence which they exert, the whole would become a mass of rotteness and corruption—of putrefaction and death. When once Infidelity, and a contempt of God's word shall preponderate, we shall witness again those tremendous scenes which were acted upon the bloody theatre of France, during the reign of terror; and shall behold all that is dear to the Patriot, and precious to the Christian, prostrated by the moloch of Infidelity and Atheism.

I tremble, my brethren, when I cast my eyes beyond the Allegany mountains upon the great valley of the Mississippi—a region of almost boundless magnitude—fertile beyond comparison—possessing incalculable resources, and see it filling with mill-

ions upon millions, who flow into it like a mighty ocean; the most of whom go without the Bible—without the Sabbath, and without the ministry of reconciliation,—and when I remember, that, in a few years these countless myriads will decide the great questions of peace and war, and direct the destinies of this mighty Republic, I confess my bosom is filled with the deepest apprehension. It is computed that there are already four hundred thousand of inhabitants peopling this boundless valley of the west; and the tide of population is rolling onward its unwearied course, and soon, very soon the balance of power will be on the other side of the mountains. What, then, shall be done to save this fair inheritance from the ungodly pillage of those to whom it will soon be committed? Shall our civil liberty, and religious privileges be under the direction of those “who know not God and obey not the Gospel of his Son!”—Our only salvation consists in an increase of genuine piety among ourselves; and in more systematic and persevering exertions to send its blessed influence through our whole country. Bibles, and Missionaries, and Tracts must be increased a thousand fold, and sent beyond the mountains, or our country, with all her liberty and religion, and all her bright and glowing prospects will be irrecoverably lost. The spirit of that liberty which the Gospel gives, must spread over our whole land—the banner of salvation must float on every breeze—the sound of redeeming love must be heard on



every mountain, and in every valley; or we are not safe from the ruin which has overtaken all other Republics. A sacred regard for the highest interests of our beloved nation, as well as a tender sympathy for our brethren who are "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," should induce us to pour the divine light, and spiritual intelligence of the Bible upon those distant regions, that that moral desert may bloom and blossom like the garden of the Lord.

3. A due observance of the rest of the Holy Sabbath, will be among the most efficient means of preserving our liberties, and of promoting our national prosperity.

This proposition is intimately connected with that which has just been considered; for in what way shall true piety be promoted, or the Christian religion exist at all, where this day of God—this emblem of the rest of heaven, is neglected? It has been shewn in the progress of this discourse, that the great principle of self-government, is the religion of the Gospel; and that unless this principle is possessed by a considerable portion of the people, no laws, nor regulations, nor constitutions, can bind them. Let a nation once discard the authority of God's law, and the awful sanctions which guard it; and there is no power that can keep it from dashing on to dissoluteness, abandonment and ruin. But the Sabbath, by keeping up the institutions of religion, and constantly bringing forward the laws of the Eternal to bear upon the

consciences and hearts of his creatures, becomes the most efficient Auxiliary in the support of free governments that God has ever appointed. It is the grand expedient of Heaven to bring all classes of men, whatever may be their relative inequality, to the same level, at least one day in seven; and before the altar of their common Creator, to teach them their habitual dependence, and in the light of Immortality and eternity, their entire equality. There is, perhaps, nothing, that so effectually sweeps away those petty distinctions which birth and riches create; and makes men feel, that the only important difference in the eye of heaven between them and others, is made by moral character, as their union on the Sabbath to adore the same God and hope for the same heaven. O it is most surprising, when we consider the high interests of our country which are involved in keeping this day of holy rest, and the inevitable tendencies of its observance in a political, as well as a moral point of view, it is wonderful, I say, that any who love their country, and desire to promote the universal happiness of man, should neglect it! It is the Sabbath that is pre-eminently the means of furnishing that intellectual furniture, which prepares for the attainment and preservation of civil liberty. No nation can long remain free and independent whose ignorance and barbarism, the light of the blessed Sabbath has not yet dispelled. It is yet problematical whether any of the Republics of South America, which have expended so much blood,

and treasure, can maintain their freedom, because they lack that spiritual vision which the Sabbath gives. And even Greece herself, for whom we feel so many tender sympathies, should she become emancipated from the power of Turkey, would probably fall a prey to anarchy, or the iron pangs of despotism, through ignorance and a want of the principles of self-government. But let any people enjoy the pure and unobstructed light of the Holy Sabbath—let all its sacred privileges and immunities pour their influence upon the unfettered spirit, and you may as well attempt to bind the planets in their course, as the march of such a people to intellectual freedom and political Independence. And it is perfectly natural that it should be so. Ignorance and intellectual bondage cannot exist, where the Sabbath pours its instructions upon the mind, for under the ministry of reconciliation every man who spends a seventh portion of his time, enjoys the best school for the attainment of the best knowledge that Heaven has ever vouchsafed to man. Here, in this school of Christ, are brought to view those interesting and awful subjects, which awaken the energies of the mind, and produce that intellectual effort by which the soul emerges from ignorance, and soars upward from mental degradation. The loss, then, of this divine institution, or its negligent observance, by inducing ignorance, immorality and every species of crime, would seal the inevitable doom of all that is splendid in our national prospects, and of

all that is precious to the patriot and the Christian. I trust this audience will indulge me a moment on this subject, as one part of our object in meeting you this day, was to set forth the legitimate claims of an institution, which many seem to have forgotten that God has commanded us to remember. Think of the amazing influence this day of God, if observed, must have on the great mass of the community. It sends forth the most precious and awful considerations drawn from the eternal world, into the hearts and consciences of the highest and the lowest—the richest and the poorest. It makes its appeal, which is equally applicable to him that sways the destiny of the nation, and to the wandering beggar in the streets. It calls upon every one, as he values his immortality, to think of those truths, and ponder well those objects of faith, on which are staked his dearest interests in this world and his sublimest hopes in that which is to come. It summons the soul away from these transitory scenes, to contemplate the infinite Jehovah in his work of Creation, and especially to behold those richer and more affecting displays of his glory, and his grace, in the great work of saving sinners. This holy day brings to the good man's recollection, that sacred morning which consummated the plan of redeeming love, and restored the rising and ascending Saviour, to the "glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the world was." It casts a shade over the deceitful glare of this vain world, and gives reality to the infinitely im-

portant objects of eternity. It throws the veil of oblivion upon those earthly scenes which so much dazzle and bewilder the human intellect, and fixes the vagrant attention upon those divine objects which are fitted to expand and exalt the soul forever. Is it possible, then, that a day which furnishes such means of improvement, is not intimately connected with the preservation of the liberties of this country; and is it not eminently calculated to promote the prosperity, and advance the best interests of this great people? The Sabbath is undoubtedly the great day of light and purity to this dark and polluted world. O that it might shine brighter and brighter, till every fallen immortal shall be blessed in its beams!

It will doubtless be admitted by all, that the Sabbath is the great bulwark of religion in every country, and that without it, she would soon take her everlasting flight: and can liberty long survive the departure of the only principle which gave her birth?—If the sanctions of religious obligation be once removed from the minds of men, the preservation of private and public morals would be utterly impossible. The ruler and his subjects—the father and his children, and every class and grade of persons, would be let loose from every possible restraint; and disorganization and anarchy would reign without limitation and without control. What shall oppose a barrier to the ungovernable passions of men, and stop the floodgates of iniquity, when the bands of moral virtue are broken, and infidelity

and atheism are the only governing principles of the bosom? The Sabbath stands in the way of this downward course of licentiousness, and wherever its blessed influence is felt, there, peace, and order, and religion reign. It is acknowledged that the Sabbath does more in restraining men from crime, than all the laws that ever were enacted. And it has been found, that rarely, if ever, has any one, who has been faithfully taught the principles of morality and religion in the Sunday School, been convicted of any capital crime. What, then, must be the influence of the holy Sabbath, with all its sacred privileges, on civil liberty! Immortal man cannot remain in bondage, where the Sabbath of the Lord proclaims its privileges, and tells him that he is free to devote it entirely to his Maker, and to none other. Our pilgrim Fathers were devoted to the Sabbath, and rejoiced in it, as the day which gave them peace, and hope, and heaven; and no power on earth could enslave such a people. Here is the grand spring which gave us freedom, independence, and all the blessings we now enjoy. Suppose they had all been Sabbath-breakers—where would freedom have found a resting-place on earth! Suppose we, their children, should exterminate this holy day—how long would liberty remain! Is religion pure and undefiled, essential to the maintenance of our political institutions? Look at the example of wretched France, and you will answer, *YES*. But, by what means, did she banish religion from the country, and make the people believe there was no-

thing beyond the grave? She began by renouncing the christian Sabbath; and with it, she extinguished the last hope of man. Should the Sabbath be abolished in our own happy country, not half a century would elapse, before you would find innumerable immortal beings posting on to death and judgment, without a single ray of light to cheer their passage, and without the faintest hope of salvation through the merits of a Redeemer. Abolish this day of rest, and you extinguish the light of the moral world, and bereave the desponding heart of every hope. Remove this day of God, and you tear down the pillars of this republic; you sweep away the dearest rights of man, and cover this vale of tears with deeper sorrow, and intenser death.— Banish this great day from your calendar, and the precious gospel, which brings “glad tidings of great joy to all people,” would speak no more: there would be no more proclamation “of liberty to the captives,” nor “opening of prisons to them that are bound,” but sin and satan would rivet their chains with tenfold security, and drag along their victims to everlasting ruin. My brethren, if these things be so, you had better lose every thing else, than the Sabbath; and to maintain it inviolable, and to transmit it to future generations with all its blessed privileges and sanctifying enjoyments, ought to be the first, and last, and noblest effort of your lives. If, then, this sacred day is the firmest pillar of the State, and the corner stone of that noble edifice of morals and religion, which are our glory and our

boast—if our political institutions cannot be preserved, and our religious privileges cannot be maintained without a more strict observance of the duties of this day; I ask whether you are prepared to relinquish every thing that is precious, rather than make a single effort to rescue this day from longer desecration? Will you forego the means of grace, purchased for you by the blood of Christ—stop, in your families, the wells of salvation—put out the light of life, and teach your children to work out their destruction, instead of their salvation on the Sabbath day? “Will you,” continues the eloquent address of the convention in New York—“will you besiege the citadel of civil liberty, and undermine the pillar which sustains the entire superstructure, and bury yourselves and your country in the ruins of its mighty fall?”

“If you continue to violate the Sabbath, you may wear the livery of freemen, but it will be in the house of bondage—you may go through the mockery of voting for your rulers, but it will be under the powerful dictation of masters. God is wise, and you cannot mend his institutions, nor do without them: He is omnipotent, and you cannot flee from him: He is almighty, and you cannot stand before him: He is just, and will by no means clear the guilty.” Let us therefore fear him, and honor his holy institutions, that it may be well with us, and with our children, and with our beloved country, and all her blood-bought privileges, forever. You will perceive, my hearers, that I have



touched this subject, principally as having an important bearing on the liberty and prosperity of our common country, and I will only add, that, if you love your country and her freedom—if you desire her prosperity and continued existence—if you revere her religion and her laws, and wish to transmit them unimpaired to future generations, you will guard, by your example, your talents, and all your influence, this first and best of all her moral institutions. It is the command of your Maker and Judge, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;” he has written it with his own finger, and sounded it loud from Sinai, that the stupid world may hear, and feel their immutable obligations.

*Finally*—We live, my brethren, in a day of wonders, when the world is awaking from the slumber of ages, and the church is beginning “to arise and shine, her light being come.” We are cheered by the hope, that the principles of civil and religious liberty are finding their way through the world; and that the Son of God will soon ride forth in his conquering chariot, and subdue all nations to his peaceful sceptre. His service is perfect freedom: For they whom the “Son makes free, are free indeed.” Blessed and happy are all those whom his grace has delivered from the thralldom of sin, and “brought into the liberty of his dear children.” And may the God of all grace and mercy, prepare us to live like Christ’s freemen, and to die like redeemed Christians, and to rise and dwell in his kingdom of glory forever and ever.—AMEN.

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