

IN ILLINOIS.

From Carrollton to Quincy.
 Shawneetown to Jackson.
 Shawneetown to Carlyle.
 Carrollton to Springfield.
 Jacksonville to Rushville.

From Atlas to Louisiana.
 Vandalia to Paris.
 Kaskaskia to Vandalia.
 Vincennes to Union.
 Vandalia to Peoria.

IN MISSOURI.

From Jefferson to Fulton.
 Chariton to Independence.

From St. Louis to Jefferson Barracks.
 St. Louis to Springfield, Ill.

[21st CONGRESS.]

No. 87.

[1st SESSION.]

SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 4 AND 5, 1830.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Kentucky, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom had been referred memorials from inhabitants of various parts of the United States, praying for a repeal of so much of the Post Office law as authorizes the mail to be transported and opened on Sunday, and to whom had also been referred memorials from other inhabitants of various parts of the United States remonstrating against such repeal, made the following report:

That the memorialists regard the first day of the week as a day set apart by the Creator for religious exercises, and consider the transportation of the mail and the opening of the post offices on that day the violation of a religious duty, and call for a suppression of the practice. Others, by counter-memorials, are known to entertain a different sentiment, believing that no one day of the week is holier than another. Others, holding the universality and immutability of the Jewish decalogue, believe in the sanctity of the seventh day of the week as a day of religious devotion, and, by their memorial now before the committee, they also request that it may be set apart for religious purposes. Each has hitherto been left to the exercise of his own opinion, and it has been regarded as the proper business of Government to protect all and determine for none. But the attempt is now made to bring about a greater uniformity, at least in practice; and, as argument has failed, the Government has been called upon to interpose its authority to settle the controversy.

Congress acts under a constitution of delegated and limited powers. The committee look in vain to that instrument for a delegation of power authorizing this body to inquire and determine what part of time, or whether any, has been set apart by the Almighty for religious exercises. On the contrary, among the few prohibitions which it contains, is one that prohibits a religious test, and another which declares that Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The committee might here rest the argument, upon the ground that the question referred to them does not come within the cognizance of Congress; but the perseverance and zeal with which the memorialists pursue their object seems to require a further elucidation of the subject; and, as the opposers of Sunday mails disclaim all intention to unite church and state, the committee do not feel disposed to impugn their motives; and whatever may be advanced in opposition to the measure will arise from the fears entertained of its fatal tendency to the peace and happiness of the nation. The catastrophe of other nations furnished the framers of the constitution a beacon of awful warning, and they have evinced the greatest possible care in guarding against the same evil.

The law, as it now exists, makes no distinction as to the days of the week, but is imperative that the postmasters shall attend at all reasonable hours in every day to perform the duties of their offices; and the Postmaster General has given his instructions to all postmasters that, at post offices where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open one hour or more after the arrival and assorting the mail; but, in case that would interfere with the hours of public worship, the office is to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meeting. This liberal construction of the law does not satisfy the memorialists; but the committee believe that there is no just ground of complaint, unless it be conceded that they have a controlling power over the consciences of others. If Congress shall, by the authority of law, sanction the measure recommended, it would constitute a legislative decision of a religious controversy in which even Christians themselves are at issue. However suited such a decision may be to an ecclesiastical council, it is incompatible with a republican Legislature, which is purely for political, and not religious purposes.

In our individual character we all entertain opinions, and pursue a corresponding practice, upon the subject of religion. However diversified these may be, we all harmonize as citizens, while each is willing that the other shall enjoy the same liberty which he claims for himself. But, in our representative character, our individual character is lost. The individual acts for himself; the representative for his constituents. He is chosen to represent their *political*, and not their *religious* views; to guard the rights of man, not to restrict the rights of conscience. Despots may regard their subjects as their property, and usurp the Divine prerogative of prescribing their religious faith; but the history of the world furnishes the melancholy demonstration that the disposition of one man to coerce the religious homage of another springs from an unchastened ambition rather than a sincere devotion to any religion. The principles of our Government do not recognise in the majority any authority over the minority, except in matters which regard the conduct of man to his fellow-man. A Jewish monarch, by grasping the holy censer, lost both his sceptre and his freedom. A destiny as little to be envied may be the lot of the American people, who hold the sovereignty of power, if they, in the person of their representatives, shall attempt to unite, in the remotest degree, church and state.

From the earliest period of time, religious teachers have attained great ascendancy over the minds of the people; and in every nation, ancient or modern, whether Pagan, Mahometan, or Christian, have succeeded in the incorporation of their religious tenets with the political institutions of their country. The Persian idols, the Grecian oracles, the Roman auguries, and the modern priesthood of Europe, have all, in their turn, been the subject of popular adulation, and the agents of political deception. If the measure recommended should be adopted, it would be difficult for human sagacity to foresee how rapid would be the succession, or how numerous the train of measures which might follow, involving the dearest rights of all—the rights of conscience. It is perhaps fortunate for our country that the proposition should have been made at this early period, while the spirit of the Revolution yet exists in full vigor. Religious zeal enlists the strongest prejudices of the human mind, and, when misdirected, excites the worst passions of our nature, under the delusive pretext of doing God service. Nothing so infuriates the heart to deeds of rapine and blood; nothing is so incessant in its toils, so persevering in its determinations, so appalling in its course, or so dangerous in its consequences. The equality of rights, secured by the constitution, may bid defiance to mere political tyrants; but the robe of sanctity too often glitters to deceive. The constitution regards the conscience of the Jew as sacred as

that of the Christian, and gives no more authority to adopt a measure affecting the conscience of a solitary individual than that of a whole community. That representative who would violate this principle would lose his delegated character, and forfeit the confidence of his constituents. If Congress shall declare the first day of the week holy, it will not convince the Jew nor the Sabbatarian. It will dissatisfy both, and, consequently, convert neither. Human power may extort vain sacrifices, but the Deity alone can command the affections of the heart. It must be recollected that, in the earliest settlement of this country, the spirit of persecution which drove the pilgrims from their native home was brought with them to their new habitations, and that some Christians were scourged, and others put to death, for no other crime than dissenting from the dogmas of their rulers.

With these facts before us, it must be a subject of deep regret that a question should be brought before Congress which involves the dearest privileges of the constitution, and even by those who enjoy its choicest blessings. *We* should all recollect that Catiline, a professed patriot, was a traitor to Rome; Arnold, a professed whig, was a traitor to America; and Judas, a professed disciple, was a traitor to his Divine Master.

With the exception of the United States, the whole human race, consisting, it is supposed, of eight hundred millions of rational beings, is in religious bondage; and, in reviewing the scenes of persecution which history everywhere presents, unless the committee could believe that the cries of the burning victim, and the flames by which he is consumed, bear to Heaven a grateful incense, the conclusion is inevitable that the line cannot be too strongly drawn between church and state. If a solemn act of legislation shall, in *one* point, define the law of God, or point out to the citizen *one* religious duty, it may, with equal propriety, proceed to define *every* part of divine revelation, and enforce *every* religious obligation, even to the forms and ceremonies of worship, the endowment of the church, and the support of the clergy.

It was with a kiss that Judas betrayed his Divine Master; and we should all be admonished—no matter what our faith may be—that the rights of conscience cannot be so successfully assailed as under the pretext of holiness. The Christian religion made its way into the world in opposition to all human Governments. Banishment, tortures, and death were inflicted in vain to stop its progress. But many of its professors, as soon as clothed with political power, lost the meek spirit which their creed inculcated, and began to inflict on other religions, and on dissenting sects of their own religion, persecutions more aggravated than those which their own apostles had endured. The ten persecutions of pagan emperors were exceeded in atrocity by the massacres and murders perpetrated by Christian hands; and in vain shall we examine the records of imperial tyranny for an engine of cruelty equal to the *holy inquisition*. Every religious sect, however meek in its origin, commenced the work of persecution as soon as it acquired political power. The framers of the constitution recognised the eternal principle that man's relation with his God is above human legislation, and his rights of conscience inalienable. Reasoning was not necessary to establish this truth; we are conscious of it in our own bosoms. It is this consciousness which, in defiance of human laws, has sustained so many martyrs in tortures and in flames. They *felt* that their duty to God was superior to human enactments, and that man could exercise no authority over their consciences. It is an inborn principle which nothing can eradicate.

The bigot, in the pride of his authority, may lose sight of it; but, strip him of his power, prescribe a faith to him which his conscience rejects, threaten him in turn with the dungeon and the faggot, and the spirit which God has implanted in him rises up in rebellion, and defies you. Did the primitive Christians ask that Government should recognise and observe their religious institutions? All they asked was *toleration*; all they complained of was persecution. What did the Protestants of Germany, or the Huguenots of France, ask of their Catholic superiors? *Toleration*. What do the persecuted Catholics of Ireland ask of their oppressors? *Toleration*.

Do not all men in this country enjoy every religious right which martyrs and saints ever asked? Whence, then, the voice of complaint? Who is it that, in the full enjoyment of every principle which human laws can secure, wishes to arrest a portion of these principles from his neighbor? Do the petitioners allege that they cannot conscientiously participate in the profits of the mail contracts and post offices, because the mail is carried on Sunday? If this be their motive, then it is worldly gain which stimulates to action, and not virtue or religion. Do they complain that men less conscientious in relation to the Sabbath obtain advantages over them by receiving their letters and attending to their contents? Still their motive is worldly and selfish. But if their motive be to induce Congress to sanction, by law, their *religious opinions and observances*, then their efforts ought to be resisted as in their tendency fatal both to religious and political freedom. Why have the petitioners confined their prayer to the mails? Why have they not requested that the Government be required to suspend *all* its executive functions on that day? Why do they not require us to enact that our ships shall not sail; that our armies shall not march; that officers of justice shall not seize the suspected, or guard the convicted? They seem to forget that government is as necessary on Sunday as on any other day of the week. The Spirit of Evil does not rest on that day. It is the Government, ever active in its functions, which enables us all, even the petitioners, to worship in our churches in peace. Our Government furnishes very few blessings like our mails. They bear from the centre of our republic to its distant extremes the acts of our legislative bodies, the decisions of the Judiciary, and the orders of the Executive. Their speed is often essential to the defence of the country, the suppression of crime, and the dearest interests of the people. Were they suppressed one day of the week, their absence must be often supplied by public expresses; and, besides, while the mail bag might rest, the mail coaches would pursue their journey with the passengers. The mail bears, from one extreme of the Union to the other, letters of relatives and friends, preserving a communion of heart between those far separated, and increasing the most pure and refined pleasures of our existence; also, the letters of commercial men convey the state of the markets, prevent ruinous speculations, and promote general as well as individual interest; they bear innumerable religious letters, newspapers, magazines, and tracts, which reach almost every house throughout this wide republic. Is the conveyance of these a violation of the Sabbath? The advance of the human race in intelligence, in virtue, and religion itself, depends, in part, upon the speed with which a knowledge of the past is disseminated. Without an interchange between one country and another, and between different sections of the same country, every improvement in moral or political science, and the arts of life, would be confined to the neighborhood where it originated. The more rapid and the more frequent this interchange, the more rapid will be the march of intellect and the progress of improvement. The mail is the chief means by which intellectual light irradiates to the extremes of the republic. Stop it one day in seven, and you retard one-seventh the advancement of our country. So far from stopping the mail on Sunday, the committee would recommend the use of all reasonable means to give it a greater expedition and a greater extension. What would be the elevation of our country if every new conception could be made to strike every mind in the Union at the same time? It is not the distance of a Province or State from the seat of Government which endangers its separation; but it is the difficulty and infrequency of intercourse between them. Our mails reach Missouri and Arkansas in less time than they reached Kentucky and Ohio in the infancy of their settlements; and now, when there are three millions of people extending a thousand miles west of the Allegany, we hear less of discontent than when there were a few thousands scattered along their western base.

To stop the mails one day in seven would be to thrust the whole western country, and other distant parts of this republic, one day's journey from the seat of Government. But, were it expedient to put an end to the transmission of letters and newspapers on Sunday because it violates the law of God, have not the petitioners begun wrong in their efforts? If the arm of Government be necessary to compel men to respect and obey the laws of God, do not the State Governments possess infinitely more power in this respect? Let the petitioners turn to *them*, and see if they can induce the passage of laws to respect the observance of the Sabbath; for, if it be sinful for the mail to carry letters on Sunday, it must be equally sinful for individuals to write, carry, receive, or read them. It would seem to require that these acts should be made penal, to complete the system. Travelling on business or recreation, except to and from church; all printing, carrying, receiving, and reading of newspapers; all conversations and social intercourse, except upon religious subjects, must necessarily be punished to suppress the evil. Would it not also follow, as an inevitable consequence, that every man, woman, and child should be compelled to attend meeting? And, as only one sect, in the opinion of some, can be deemed orthodox, must it not be determined by law which *that* is, and compel all to hear those teachers, and contribute to their support? If minor punishments would not restrain the Jew, or the Sabbatarian, or the infidel, who believes Saturday to be the Sabbath, or disbelieves the whole, would not the same system require that we should resort to imprisonment, banishment, the rack, and the faggot, to force men to

violate their own consciences, or compel them to listen to doctrines which they abhor? When the State Governments shall have yielded to these measures, it will be time enough for Congress to declare that the rattling of the mail coaches shall no longer break the silence of this despotism. It is the duty of this Government to afford to all—to Jew or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, the protection and the advantages of our benignant institutions on *Sunday* as well as every day of the week. Although this Government will not convert itself into an ecclesiastical tribunal, it will practise upon the maxim laid down by the founder of Christianity—that it is lawful to do *good* on the Sabbath day. If the Almighty has set apart the first day of the week as a time which man is bound to keep holy, and devote exclusively to his worship, would it not be more congenial to the precepts of Christians to appeal exclusively to the Great Lawgiver of the universe to aid them in making men better—in correcting their practices, by purifying their hearts? Government will protect them in their efforts. When they shall have so instructed the public mind, and awakened the consciences of individuals as to make them believe that it is a violation of God's law to carry the mail, open post offices, or receive letters on Sunday, the evil of which they complain will cease of itself, without any exertion of the strong arm of civil power. When man undertakes to be God's avenger, he becomes a demon. Driven by the frenzy of a religious zeal, he loses every gentle feeling, forgets the most sacred precepts of his creed, and becomes ferocious and unrelenting.

Our fathers did not wait to be oppressed when the mother country asserted and exercised an unconstitutional power over them. To have acquiesced in the tax of three pence upon a pound of tea, would have led the way to the most cruel exactions; they took a bold stand against the principle, and liberty and independence was the result. The petitioners have not requested Congress to suppress Sunday mails upon the ground of political expediency, but because they violate the sanctity of the first day of the week.

This being the fact, and the petitioners having indignantly disclaimed even the wish to unite politics and religion, may not the committee reasonably cherish the hope that they will feel reconciled to its decision in the case; especially as it is also a fact that the counter-memorials, equally respectable, oppose the interference of Congress upon the ground that it would be legislating upon a religious subject, and therefore unconstitutional?

Resolved. That the committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

MARCH 5, 1830.

Mr. McCREERY, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom were referred sundry memorials and petitions upon the subject of transporting and opening the public mail on the Sabbath day, submitted the following as his view of the subject:

All Christian nations acknowledge the first day of the week to be the Sabbath. Almost every State in this Union has, by positive legislation, not only recognised this day as sacred, but has forbidden its profanation under penalties imposed by law.

It was never considered by any of those States as an encroachment upon the rights of conscience, or as an improper interference with the opinions of the few, to guard the sacredness of that portion of time acknowledged to be holy by the many.

The petitioners ask not Congress to expound the moral law; they ask not Congress to meddle with theological controversies, much less to interfere with the rights of the Jew or the Sabbatarian, or to treat with the least disrespect the religious feelings of any portion of the inhabitants of the Union; they ask the introduction of no religious coercion into our civil institutions; no blending of religion and civil affairs; but they do ask that the agents of Government, employed in the Post Office Department, may be permitted to enjoy the same opportunities of attending to moral and religious instruction or intellectual improvement on that day which is enjoyed by the rest of their fellow-citizens. They approach the Government, not for personal emolument, but as patriots and Christians, to express their high sense of the moral energy and necessity of the Sabbath for the perpetuity of our republican institutions, and respectfully request that Congress will not, by legislative enactments, impair those energies.

Among the many reasons which might be advanced that it is both expedient and a duty to grant the prayer of the petitioners, the following only are submitted:

The petitioners ask the enactment of no law establishing the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath; they only ask the extension and application to one Department of Government a principle which is recognised, and has, since the foundation of our Government, been acknowledged in every other Department. The principle embraced in the petitions has been recognised by Congress, by adjourning over the first day of the week. At the first session of the first Congress a law was passed establishing judicial courts, and in that law Sunday is excepted from the days on which that court may commence its sessions. All the other Executive Departments of Government are closed on that day. Congress has never, by this, considered itself as expounding the moral law, or as introducing any religious coercion into our civil institutions, or making any innovations on the religious rights of the citizens, or settling by legislation any theological question that may exist between Jews, Sabbatarians, and other denominations. The good of society requires the strict observance of one day in seven. Paley, and other writers on moral philosophy, have shown that the resting of men every seventh day; their winding up their labors and concerns once in seven days; their abstraction from the affairs of the world, to improve their minds and converse with their Maker; their orderly attendance upon the ordinances of public worship and instruction have a direct and powerful tendency to improve the morals and temporal happiness of mankind.

The wise and good Ruler of the universe made the appointment, not by a mere arbitrary exercise of authority, but for our good; and, whatever difference of opinion may exist in respect to the proper day to be observed, almost all agree that one day in seven should be devoted to religious exercises. That being admitted, can any thing be more reasonable than the request of the petitioners, that at least so much of the law should be repealed as requires the post offices to be kept open every day of the week. Does not the enactment of that law plainly imply that mankind is under no moral obligation to refrain from secular labor on any day of the week? Is it not in direct opposition to the received opinion of almost all professing Christians? It is to that part of the law, more particularly, which requires, in terms, all the postmasters throughout the United States to deliver letters, packets, and papers on every day of the week, to which the minority of your committee object, and which is most offensive to the petitioners. In this statute is at once seen a palpable encroachment on the rights of conscience. It either drives every man who feels himself morally bound to observe the Sabbath in a religious manner from the service of his country, and equal participation in her favors, or subjects him to the hard terms of remaining in office at the expense of his principles. It is freely acknowledged that the works of necessity and mercy are not forbidden; and if the transportation of the mail on Sunday could be justified on that ground, (which is not admitted,) it cannot be contended that the keeping open offices where no mail arrives on that day is the work of necessity.

The arguments which have been urged for the transportation of the mail, &c. on the Sabbath are mainly derived from commercial convenience, and from alleged derangement of business and intercourse. This doctrine militates against the first principles of good morals. If these are important at all, they are paramount to the claims of expediency; but this plea makes them subservient to the pressure of worldly business, and converts them into mere questions of profit and loss.

Granting the prayer of the petitioners cannot interfere with the religious feelings or consciences of any portion of the citizens, because they ask no service to be performed, no principle to be professed. It is only asked that certain duties be not required on a certain day. Were it imposing any service, or requiring the profession of any opinions, those whose religious sentiments were different might justly complain. But he who conscientiously believes that he is bound to observe the seventh day of the week in a religious manner can have no just reason to complain, because Government takes nothing from him in permitting all classes of citizens to observe the first day of the week as a day of religious rest. The case would be quite different, did the privilege of resting on that day impose any thing on any class of citizens contrary to their conscience. Therefore,

Resolved. That it is expedient to grant the prayer of the petitioners.

WM. McCREERY.

[The following memorials pray a repeal of the law authorizing the mail to be transported on Sunday.]

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America: The memorial of the subscribers, inhabitants of Newark, in the county of Essex, and State of New Jersey, respectfully sheweth:

That your memorialists conscientiously believe that the people of these United States, in their national capacity and character, constitute a Christian nation. If a Christian nation, then our Government is a Christian Government, a Government formed and established by Christians, and therefore bound by the word of God, not at liberty to contravene his laws, nor to act irrespectively of the obligations we owe to Him. That the Government of the United States was formed under the influence of Christian principles, is most emphatically proved by the protection it secures to the right of conscience in matters of religion, and in denying to Congress the power of passing any law prohibiting the free exercise thereof. It was, as your memorialists verily believe, the benign influence of the Christian religion that dictated this salutary provision—a provision that at once secures to every man the free exercise of his religious opinions, and forever places the high claims of Christianity beyond the reach or control of the secular power. This is as it should be, and as your memorialists hope and pray it ever will be; for nothing would they deprecate more than the exercise of any governmental power or influence either in favor of or against any sect or denomination of Christians. And yet it is just such an influence, (indirectly, at least,) exercised by Congress, of which your memorialists would respectfully complain. Should your honorable body pass a law, saying that no man shall be concerned in the transportation of the mail, or be the keeper of a post office, who did not religiously observe the Christian Sabbath, would it not be a flagrant violation of the constitution, and justly excite the cry of religious persecution? But when Congress pass a law requiring the secular concerns of Government to be transacted on the Christian Sabbath, do they not, in effect, say to the people, You must give up your religious notions about the sanctity of the Sabbath, or you shall have no share in the honors or emoluments of office? When the laws of the United States require the mail to be transported, and the post offices to be opened, on the Christian Sabbath, do not those laws, in their spirit and power, exclude from any share in that department of public service every conscientious believer in the sanctity of that day? Is it not, in effect, saying to every man, religiously believing himself bound to keep holy the Sabbath day, that he shall not enjoy the privileges common to American citizens, unless he will abandon his religious opinions, or do violence to his conscience? And is not this, then, a law “*prohibiting*” or, at least, *greatly interfering* “*with the free exercise of religion?*” Must not a Christian postmaster either abandon his religion or his office? and is this religious liberty? Your memorialists respectfully conceive that that alone is “*religious liberty*” which permits a man, in perfect consistency with his religious feelings, to enjoy all the rights, privileges, and immunities of an American citizen; and, among those rights, is that of serving his country in any situation in the Post Office Department for which his talents and integrity may qualify him. But your memorialists cannot conceive, if conscientiously religious men may be excluded from that department of Government, by requiring from them services incompatible with their religion, why they may not be excluded from every other post of honor or profit, by a like system of indirect legislative prohibition. This would be a system of religious proscription, instead of religious liberty. Require all your public officers to profane the Sabbath by the discharge of secular duties on that day, and you effectually proscribe and banish from your employment every consistent and conscientious believer in the sanctity of the Sabbath. Competent and faithful men may indeed be found to transact public business, who do not care for the Christian Sabbath; but they then will become the favored few, while the friends of the Sabbath will be politically degraded, proscribed, and oppressed!

Your memorialists have said we are a Christian nation. This assertion is founded not only on the admitted fact that a vast majority—nay, the great mass of Americans—were, at the formation of our Government, and still are, at least nominally, Christians; but your memorialists appeal to the constitution itself, as containing the most unequivocal evidence that it was framed by Christians, and adopted for their government. That noble instrument concludes with these words: “*Done in convention, by the unanimous consent of the States present, the 17th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1787;*” and who was then “*our Lord.*” but he who has declared himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath?

Your memorialists are aware that there are Christians who religiously observe the seventh day as the Christian Sabbath. But this is no objection to such a course of legislation as shall respect and leave unappropriated to secular concerns *one day out of seven*. If the question is which day shall be thus distinguished, your memorialists would respectfully answer, that day designated by the constitution as the Christian Sabbath; or, in other words, as the Sabbath of the American nation. In the seventh section of the first article of our constitution, your memorialists find that “*Sunday*” is expressly excepted out of the number of days allowed to the President for the consideration of the laws of Congress. And why was “*Sunday*” thus excepted, but because it was considered by the framers of the constitution as the Christian Sabbath? And why, your memorialists would respectfully ask, are our judicial tribunals, our legislative halls, our offices for public business, all closed on that day?—why, but because, by the general assent of the American nation, the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath? Your memorialists do not ask a legislative act, or any governmental declaration that Sunday shall be kept holy; they only ask that the existing laws requiring any part of that day to be appropriated to secular business in the Post Office Department, in time of peace, may be repealed. And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

DECEMBER 10, 1829.

To the honorable the Congress of the United States of America: The memorial of the subscribers, citizens of North Carolina, respectfully represents:

That, in a Christian community, where all the chartered rights and political institutions, as well as the legislative provisions of the country, recognise the authority of the Christian religion, your memorialists deem it unnecessary to employ any reasoning to prove that Sabbath breaking is sinful. They beg leave, therefore, in the exercise of a constitutional right, and under the influence no less of a patriotic than of a moral sense of duty, with great deference and respect, to remonstrate against the transportation of the public mails, and against post office duties, on the holy Sabbath.

The practice of thus violating one of the express commands of God having the sanction of the constituted authorities of the Government assumes a national character, and may be justly called a national sin—the awful consequences of which are so often detailed in the sacred volume.

That the labor here complained of is a profanation of the Lord's day, none, it is believed, will deny, unless there be found in it some overruling necessity to constitute an exception to the Divine mandate. But your memorialists can perceive no compulsion or indispensable need for such labor; without it, all classes of the community would enjoy equal rights; and the Government, it is submitted, would experience no real inconvenience. To put a stop to this practice is not to impose restraint on the rights of any, but rather to remove a restraint which is grievous to many: it is to give liberty to all to enjoy the rest and privileges of that sacred day; and to terminate a practice, the example of which your memorialists humbly conceive to be injurious to the morals of the people. Indeed, it will hardly be contended now, by any one, that there is an *absolute necessity* for this labor; the question seems to rest altogether on the *expediency* of the measure. And shall mere human expediency make void the law of God? God forbid! The great Apostle, to whom “*all things were lawful,*” held it not expedient to violate the law. There is safety in keeping the commands of God; to depart from them is unwise and highly perilous.

By the observance or profanation of the Sabbath, the standard of morals is regulated in every Christian land; and, in proportion as Christian morals prevail, the people are happy and the country prosperous; and if the bond of union which holds our beloved country together is ever dissolved, (which may Heaven avert!) it will be by first throwing off all religious and moral restraints. Religious intolerance and persecution, demons of sectarian bigotry, have indeed stained the fair escutcheons of a religious profession, and drenched the earth with the innocent blood of millions;

but the pure and benevolent principles of the peace-speaking Gospel of grace never have wronged any man. No nation has ever suffered by cherishing the spirit of Christ; but many have been ruined by giving place to a contrary spirit.

Your memorialists desire to be distinctly understood: they would not betray the monstrous absurdity of praying your honorable body to *determine* the Sabbath; that is already determined by a power infinitely higher than any earthly potentate. Nor would they invade the rights of any individuals; on the contrary, they sincerely wish to see the rights, civil and religious, of all classes of the community, secured to them according to the true spirit of the constitution. They hold it as a political axiom, in a land of free republican institutions, that no man shall be disfranchised from office by impositions of duty incompatible with the honest dictates of his conscience. Hence, to require a man to labor on the Sabbath under the Post Office establishment, against his conscience, is to lay on him the necessity either of committing sin, or of losing his support; and while many regard such an imposition as no restraint, others, entertaining a different view, may choose to deny themselves the earthly gain at such a cost, and enjoy the rest of that holy day.

Your memorialists would cautiously guard against all extremes; they are aware that exceptions to a general rule prove the rule; and they admit that the divine rule of keeping the Sabbath has exceptions; they only wish, therefore, to see a plain, practical, common sense fulfilment of it. It is indeed important, in their view, that all men in power should act under a becoming sense of their dependence on God; for, "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." But in your honorable body, your memorialists trust they have this guaranty.

Your memorialists solemnly protest against the union of church and state, and against all legislation which might lead to it; they would deprecate such a union as the death-blow to the liberties of their beloved country. But they apprehend no danger; all the public institutions of the country and the united voice of the people are opposed to it; and not until the utter prostration of that fair political fabric, which has cost so much blood and treasure, and is the result of so much toil and wisdom; not until the savour of the Gospel shall have spent its influence in the land, and the people are prepared by some dire fatality for self-immolation, can this political hydra show his deformity in this land. But while it is prudent to guard against the possibility of such an evil, it would seem to be the dictate of wisdom to guard also against the other extreme. It would be too much to say (and it is now too late to say it) that there shall be no legislative sanctions to enforce the laws of God; the statute book of the nation furnishes too many instances of such sanctions, now to call in question the right. And if, in copying the laws of God, your honorable body can say (without approaching the awful whirlpool of church and state) that murder is a crime, and shall be punished with death, where, your memorialists would respectfully ask, is the danger in saying, after the same example, that the violation of the Christian Sabbath is a sin, and ought not be countenanced? But, in truth, the subject-matter of this memorial does not involve the question of church and state, but of *morality* and state. And in such a union as the latter, your memorialists, and your honorable body, and all the people, would have much cause to rejoice.

Your memorialists, with these views and impressions, humbly pray that the burden herein stated may be removed by a suitable legislative provision. And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

DECEMBER, 1829.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The undersigned, inhabitants of the county of Williamson, and others, in the State of Tennessee, beg leave, respectfully and freely, to express their deep conviction that, while as a nation we continue by authority of law to transport our mail and open our post offices on the Sabbath day, we violate the law of God, provoke his displeasure, and inflict incalculable evil on our country. We usurp powers of the General Government to disturb the Sabbath's rest which the States have never granted; and we interfere with their constant use of powers to protect its rest which they have reserved to themselves. We brand our national character with a dishonorable inconsistency; virtually declaring it is from no regard to the authority of the Most High that we suspend, on the Sabbath, our legislative and judicial business. We drive conscientious men from the faithful service of their country in the Post Office Department and its dependencies; and, at the same time, give a premium to other characters to occupy their places. We entice thousands of our citizens from their duty to God, to their families, to society, and their own souls, on the Sabbath, to work for unlawful gain, or to amuse themselves and their acquaintances with the news just brought from a distance by the Sabbath's mail. We assume jurisdiction over religious concerns, in opposition to the genius of our free and tolerant constitution, and to our own profession; and, under the plea of avoiding a religious establishment, which no man asks for, and which the truly religious would most deplore, we make an irreligious establishment against the authority and observance of the whole decalogue; for, to offend deliberately in one point is to be guilty of all. Thus we spread a disastrous influence over our numerous population throughout the whole land; we entail a bitter experience of its direful effects upon the next generation; and tempt the God of the Sabbath to send down his fearful judgments upon our rising nation, without delay and without cessation.

In doing all this, we sin against light. Neither the people in general, nor those who represent them, are at liberty to plead ignorance. We all know, or may know, that the decalogue is the permanent moral law of the Almighty Ruler of nations in his uncontrollable government over us; that the four commandments which point out our duty to God lie at the foundation of the six which point out our duty to men; that the fourth, which requires our keeping holy to the Lord one day in seven, is as sacred and perpetual as any of the ten; and that, with the change of the mere day, clearly evidenced by the example and authority of Christ, his inspired apostles, and his primitive church, it fastens its solemn obligation upon the present inhabitants of the earth, without any more perplexity from a change of circumstances than either of the other nine, and is, in its essential nature, as unchangeable as any; always requiring one day in seven as a day of holy rest from worldly labor, and of special devotion to the great Author of all our blessings and of all our obligations. On its faithful observance, in every community favored with it, depends the prospect that the people will understand, love, and obey the other precepts of the decalogue; or that they will even be restrained from the most lawless and destructive immorality.

In the infinite benignity of the Deity, the Sabbath was made for man—for all mankind. It consults their best interests for time and eternity. It communicates their most important information. It originates and cherishes their best affections. It imparts the happiest direction to their moral conduct in all the relations of public and private life. It supplies the only adequate cement to human society. It controls the wicked, and protects the good. It is the anchor of the nation's safety and prosperity. Loose its moorings, and you involve millions in the consequent shipwreck. While God visits our world in mercy, it will be a sign and a witness between him and men how they feel and conduct towards each other. Sanctified by any people to its proper use, it will bring upon them a blessing in its train; or profaned, a curse; and such a blessing, or such a curse, as shall comport with the majesty of its Almighty Lord, and the importance he attaches to this signal institution. The united testimony of prophecy, history, and observation confirms this anticipation.

Hence it is manifest that, by the transportation of the mail and the opening of the post offices, by law, on the Sabbath, we make an incalculable sacrifice of principle, character, blessing, and prospect; while we are supported by no plea of necessity or mercy, and by no better than that of mere temporal convenience and worldly gain.

Your memorialists would, therefore, respectfully ask that Congress would determine by law to have all the post office business and mail transportation done on the six days on which God allows us to labor and do all our work. And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: The memorial of the undersigned, citizens of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, respectfully sheweth:

That your memorialists, on long and serious deliberation, are impressed with the conviction that the best interests of our common country loudly call for the repeal, by Congress, of so much of the existing Post Office law as requires the regular transmission of the public mail throughout the United States, and the opening of the post offices, on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday.

Your memorialists beg leave briefly to state the grounds on which they entertain the conviction that the law in question ought to be amended.

1. Because they view one of its present provisions as directly opposed to the law of God, expressed in the fourth precept of the sacred decalogue, and as thereby exposing our nation to the just judgments of the righteous Sovereign of the Universe. Your memorialists have no doubt that a large proportion of the population of the United States are with them in the opinion that, in the point contemplated, the law of God and the law of our country stand in opposition to each other. They waive, therefore, all reasoning on the rectitude of this opinion—reasoning which, in proper time and place, they would have no inclination to avoid—and respectfully appeal to Congress, whether sentiments so extensive, and so deep and solemn as are those which are entertained on this subject, ought not to be very seriously regarded by the representatives of the people. In asking for such a regard, your memorialists do not consider themselves as requesting Congress to legislate—or, at least, not to legislate *in the first instance*—on the subject of religion. Lamenting that such legislation has already, in their apprehension, taken place in fact, they declare that their utmost wish would be gratified if Congress would undo what, in this particular, they conscientiously think has been done amiss; and forever thereafter leave this, and every other subject of religion, untouched in the national legislation. Your memorialists yield to none of their fellow-citizens in an honest and entire aversion to any union of church and state; believing that such union would be pernicious to both church and state, as well as a manifest violation of the federal compact: But—

2. Your memorialists cannot but think that the enactment of which they pray the repeal is a virtual infraction of the constitution of the United States, and they ask no more than a restoration of its integrity. That constitution assures to all the citizens of the republic entire religious freedom and equal rights. But there are many of our fellow-citizens who cannot, in conscience, act under the law which requires the transportation of the mail, and the opening for business of the post offices, on the day which they believe has been consecrated by their Maker to a holy rest, and on which all servile labor is, in ordinary circumstances, explicitly prohibited. This large class of citizens—not, we humbly conceive, the least worthy of regard—are absolutely excluded, in consequence of their religious opinions, from nearly all the employments, offices, and emoluments appertaining to the Post Office establishment. A religious, or rather an irreligious, test appears to your memorialists to be in this case imposed, and equal rights to be plainly and injuriously denied to a large portion of the community.

3. In another particular, your memorialists apprehend that the part of the law for the repeal of which they petition is inconsistent with the federal constitution. That instrument declares that the powers not expressly given therein are reserved to the several States of the confederacy, or to the people. Now, we believe that nearly all, if not the whole, of the confederating States, at the time they adopted the federal constitution, had laws in existence, and which still exist, explicitly prohibiting such acts as constantly take place in the conveyance of the mail, and the transaction of business at the post offices on Sunday; nor has the power of repealing these laws ever been surrendered to the Federal Legislature. Yet they are in effect repealed; for they are completely set aside by that part of the Post Office law to which your memorialists refer. The example, moreover, which is every week exhibited of a total disregard to the day of sacred rest, in the travelling of the mail under the countenance of a national act, is of more pernicious influence than can easily be set forth. It renders impracticable the effectual execution of any of the State laws by which a due observance of the Lord's day is enjoined; so that the utter disregard and desecration of that day seems likely soon to ensue, if the example which has been, and still is, a principal cause of the evil shall not be withdrawn.

4. Your memorialists cannot but think that an invidious difference exists at present between the arrangements which relate to the Post Office, and those of all the other Departments of the General Government. In the federal constitution itself, (art. 1, sec. 7,) Sunday is expressly excepted from being reckoned in the ten days allowed to the President to deliberate on the laws submitted to him for approbation. All the courts of law throughout the land, and all judicial proceedings whatsoever, are intermitted; and Congress, as well as the Legislatures of the several States, regularly adjourn their sittings from the day that precedes to that which follows Sunday. From this, it seems palpably evident to your memorialists, that not only the entire and approved usage of our country, but the opinions and feelings of the people at large, are in favor of regarding Sunday as a day to be exempted publicly, as well as privately, from common secular business. And why, let your memorialists be permitted to ask, should the numerous individuals employed in the Post Office Department be deprived, as they are, of the rest and the other privileges which their fellow-citizens of all descriptions enjoy, by the suspension of their ordinary engagements for one day in seven? No necessity or sufficient cause for this peculiarity, your memorialists are persuaded, can be assigned, even if the paramount consideration of the sacredness of the day should be left out of view. It is readily admitted that there may be emergencies of a public kind, as there are incidents in private life, which will justify and call for secular labor on Sunday; and the sending of a special mail by express on such occasions would be free from all objection. This, and no more than this, was, it is believed, the usage during the revolutionary war of our country; when, if ever, a regular mail on Sunday would have been necessary. This, also, or a usage equivalent to this, is that which obtains in the country from which our population, laws, and habits of life, have mostly been derived—a country the most commercial in the world, and oftener and longer, perhaps, than any other engaged in war. This, too, was, for several years, the usage under the Federal Government; and we verily believe the usage was changed more by oversight than by design, in framing the Post Office law as it now exists. It is, your memorialists distinctly state, not against an *extraordinary*, but against the *ordinary* transmission of the mail on Sunday, that they remonstrate. Some of your memorialists have been extensively engaged in commerce, and their own experience and observation satisfy them that no commercial interests would really suffer if there were a known and legal prohibition of the transportation of the mail and the delivery of letters from the post offices on the Lord's day.

5. Finally, your memorialists are under the solemn conviction that the preservation of all our free institutions in their purity and integrity, if not in their very existence, is deeply involved in this subject. No maxim in politics is better established than that virtue and good morals are the only basis on which free government can permanently rest; and no truth is more clear or important than that which was inculcated in the farewell address of the Father of his country—that morality cannot be preserved without religion; and to this it may, with truth as unquestionable, be added, that, without a Sabbath, a day of sacred rest, religion cannot be maintained in an extensive community. Do we then ask that Congress should interpose to maintain it? No; we repeat that we only ask that Congress may not permit the law of the United States to destroy it. We entreat that the law of our country may not be permitted to undermine and prostrate the palladium of its freedom. On this ground, we believe that an answer, which ought to be entirely satisfactory, may be made to the only specious objection we have ever heard of the subject of our memorial, namely, that there are religious sects in our country who observe another day for rest from labor, and for the purpose of public religious worship, than the first day of the week; and that the privileges of those who belong to these sects would be abridged by the change your memorialists ask for in the Post Office law. To this we reply, that the sects in question, equally with your memorialists, admit that one day in seven ought to be religiously observed; and we doubt not they will also admit that it is hopeless, if not improper, to look for a national recognition of more than one day for this purpose. Which, then, should be the day? Should it be that which is already observed by ninety-nine hundredths of the community, or that which would best suit the small remainder? The answer is too obvious to require expression. But we may be allowed to add, and we do it with the utmost sincerity, that so thoroughly are we persuaded that the religion, morals, and liberties of our country are indissolubly linked together, and that the whole are so intimately connected with the due observance in this country of what we call the Christian Sabbath,

that could we, with the retention of these sentiments, become Sabbatharians, Jews, or Deists, we would still unite in petitioning for the amendment of the law which is the subject and prayer of this memorial. Viewing a day of sacred rest as indispensable to all that is most precious in our social relations, and seeing that all individuals could not be fully accommodated, we would yield our convenience most cheerfully to that of a vast majority, and join with them in earnestly praying that objects so invaluable, both to us and to them, might not be sacrificed, because their preservation would be attended with a slight disadvantage to ourselves. We would call to mind that, without a set season for the purpose, there would be no stated and public commemoration of the authority of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe; no celebration of that worship which impresses on the popular mind the remembrance of His all-seeing eye; and no feeling, consequently, of the responsibility which all men owe to Him—sanctioned by a retribution of reward or punishment, to be realized beyond the grave. And, in the absence of these, we would consider that all sense of moral obligation, and of course all hold on the consciences of men, would speedily vanish; and that vice and disorder, in every form and degree, would come in like a flood, sweeping from their very foundations all our free institutions, and leaving in their place, if any thing were left, an odious tyranny, worse than a state of nature itself. This, it will be recollected, is not a mere picture of the fancy; it is little else than the recital of an experiment, which, within the memory of the living, has actually been tried in Europe. And ought not the result to prove a warning to the world?

Your memorialists do, therefore, most earnestly beseech of Congress, by a regard to the command of God, and a just fear of his righteous judgments; by a regard to the constitution of the United States, under which they act; by a regard to the consciences and rights of a large portion of their constituents; and by a desire to preserve principles and institutions which sustain the whole fabric of our freedom and social happiness: by all these weighty considerations, your memorialists most earnestly and respectfully pray that so much of the existing Post Office law as requires the regular transportation of the mail, and the delivery of letters from the post offices, on Sunday, may be speedily repealed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: The undersigned memorialists, citizens of the State of Kentucky, would respectfully and earnestly represent:

That we avail ourselves of the privilege secured by the constitution to petition for a redress of grievances; and the grievance of which we complain is the national violation of the day esteemed by Christians the Sabbath, or Lord's day, which, in their opinion, ought to be kept as a day of rest, and in which no servile work ought to be performed. The violation alluded to arises, first, from the discretionary power vested by act of Congress in the Postmaster General to direct the travelling or carriage of the mails on any day which he may direct, the Sabbath not excepted; and under that discretion the mails are actually transported on the Sabbath; and, secondly, from an express direction, in the same act of Congress, given to postmasters to keep their offices open every day in the week.

Your petitioners will not attempt to discuss the moral obligation of the Sabbath arising from the law of God. We think this sufficiently evident to any who will read this law, and the force of the precept has been clearly demonstrated by writers who have attempted to discuss the subject. We do not waive the discussion of this question from a conviction of the truth of the hypothesis that legislators *ought not to decide questions arising out of the divine law*; and even if we should concede the correctness of that position, we see in the concession a clear argument in favor of our request: for if legislators cannot decide questions arising out of the law of God, certainly it does not become them to decide that carrying the mails on the Sabbath, and keeping open post offices on that day, is no crime, when tested by that law; and yet such is the decision of which your memorialists complain.

It is sufficient for the purpose of your memorialists that the fact exists of abstinence from labor on the Sabbath in all countries where Christianity or civilization has prevailed, and that the day has been recognised and respected in every Government in such countries, and almost every code of human laws there adopted has acknowledged the sanctity of the day. The example of the Government, whose organs we address, can be quoted on this subject. Congress cease from their deliberations, courts adjourn, and the President and all the Executive Departments close their offices on that day, except that portion of executive power placed under the Postmaster General, which, contrary to the general rule, is on that day in busy operation. To open all these offices, and to set all these Departments to the exercise of their duties on the Sabbath, would be resisted by the sense of the American people; and your memorialists cannot see that the exception alluded to, as practised, is any better in principle than such conjoint labor would be in every Department.

Your memorialists protest against the States supporting, aiding, or being united to the church; and they also protest against the civil power being used to trample down or persecute the church, or to weaken and destroy one church duty. The constitution of the nation wisely restrains Congress from establishing religion, or prohibiting the *free exercise thereof*; and it is a prohibition of such free exercise of which we complain. We know Congress cannot, and ought not, to enforce the duties of the Sabbath. We ask them not to do this; but we ask them to keep their hands from pulling down, destroying, and disregarding a day, the duties of which are established by another and infinitely superior power. It is no act of positive legislation in favor of the Sabbath, or any other religious duty, that we solicit. We ask the National Legislature to act negatively; to retire from this controversy, and to repeal a law which has violated what is admitted by Christians to be a religious duty.

Your memorialists plead that respect which is due to Bible duties, in all Christian communities, as a sufficient argument to induce the Government to abstain from Sabbath violations. Other countries in Christendom respect the day, even with their mail intercourse; and we regret that our own Government is, in this respect, almost a solitary exception to the practice of suspension from Sabbath labor. A question of policy, and one affecting deeply the sovereignty of the State Governments, is involved in this request. The State Governments may, if their constitutions allow, establish religion, and enforce its duties. To the credit of all, they have refused to do so; but still, in almost all, if not every State code, the Sabbath is recognised, and penalties inflicted on its breach; and civil process, if executed on that day, or judicial acts then done, are void; and even in the constitution itself of the State of Vermont the Sabbath is expressly named and preserved inviolate.

Now, your memorialists would urge the impropriety of Congress expressly authorizing acts to be done on the Sabbath which violate all these State codes. Can Congress, by one or two sentences in regulating her Post Office Department, virtually repeal and annul all these State laws? If they come into collision, which is to yield? If the State officer, in execution of a State law, stops the mail, which is forbidden by that law to travel on the State soil, will the discretion vested by act of Congress in the Postmaster General, to direct mails to travel at all hours, protect the traveller, annul the State law, and paralyze the power of the prosecuting officer? How such collisions of power between the National and State Governments ought to be decided, your memorialists do not pretend to determine. They know such collisions, whether travelling through the courts, or acting as a nucleus for political parties, are not only disagreeable, but often demoralizing, and may be dangerous, and are best avoided by the mode now solicited, to wit, a simple repeal of the act which produces the conflict. This will leave the respective States in the quiet possession of the power which they have long exercised, and no disagreeable collision can follow. One other consideration will be pressed in favor of the cause now advocated. While it is admitted that there are many citizens of this nation who disregard the Sabbath, yet there are a large number who do conscientiously regard it: and it is not admitted that the morality, integrity, or capacity of the latter class falls below that of the former. They are as capable of filling the offices of Government, or carrying on its operations, as their opponents; and they, by the law in question, are precluded, without violation of their consciences, from keeping post offices, or being employed in transporting the mails—a business that engages many citizens. Why is this privilege preserved to one class, and the other disfranchised? Why cannot all be placed on a level? As a repeal of the law, therefore, will wound the consciences of none, and restore equality among the citizens of the same Government, your memorialists earnestly solicit your honorable body to grant the repeal, and to terminate this grievous offence against the consciences of many citizens. And, as in duty bound, we will ever pray.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: The undersigned, citizens of the town and county of Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, respectfully state:

That they have, in common with many thousands of their fellow-citizens throughout the United States, witnessed with feelings of deep distress the profanation of the Sabbath, by the transmission of the mail, and opening on that day of the public post offices, as not only authorized, but commanded, by the laws of Congress.

Your memorialists regard the institution of the Sabbath as one of the most striking proofs of Divine beneficence, and as affording the only adequate means for preserving the fear of God, the sanctity of oaths, genuine personal integrity, the public morals, and our civil and political principles. Though there are too many in our land, even among those in high stations, who practically disregard the Sabbath, by making it not only a day of amusement but of business, yet there are few who would willingly see that sacred day abolished.

The friends of religion and virtue have witnessed the increase of immorality with deep regret and solicitude, and they are constrained to believe that it is in vain for the friends of good order to attempt to protect this holy day from profanation while the Government allows the mails to be carried on Sundays, and requires postmasters to deliver letters, papers, and packets "on every day in the week." We feel that we have a right to look for example to the Government of that people who have often called themselves *the most virtuous people on earth*, to hope that those whom they have clothed with power will not longer permit a practice which is continually undermining the morals, and consequently endangering the liberties, of the nation.

Your memorialists can look upon a disregard of the Sabbath in no other light than as the first step on the road to crime; and they believe, with that distinguished commentator Judge Blackstone, that the profanation of that day is an offence against God and religion. The records of the criminal courts of all nations will show that a disregard of the Sabbath and its sacred duties has been the commencement of a departure from those principles which are the best protection against crime. Moral delinquency in any country increases in a ratio with the profanation of the Sabbath. It has been said by the advocates of transporting the mail and opening it on Sunday, if this was not done, it would be violated by individuals hiring and sending expresses. This may be done, and no doubt has been done, and is still practised; yet, will the violation of the Sabbath by individuals excuse the Government of a people who call themselves Christians for giving sanction by their laws and practice to the profanation of a day set apart by the positive command of God for holy duties? With as much propriety might the Government excuse the passage of laws authorizing a violation of each of the other commandments, by pleading the practice of individuals. But the excuse of necessity is offered for this violation of the Sabbath. What is the necessity? It is nothing more than this: if the mail is not transported on Sundays, and the post offices not opened, and letters not delivered on that day, the mercantile part of the community will receive their letters one day later, and some injury may follow, either in avoiding a loss or obtaining an advantageous bargain. We readily admit occasions may exist, which, coming within the exceptions permitted by Divine authority, would excuse a relaxation of the general prohibition of labor on the Sabbath; but have they arisen, or are they likely to arise in a state of peace?

This transporting the mail on the Sabbath is a direct violation of the laws of a part, if not of all the States, prohibiting in general terms labor of any kind, except in cases of necessity and charity, on the Sabbath. In Virginia, the law imposes a fine on *any person* who shall be found laboring on a Sabbath day at his own or any other trade or calling, or shall employ his or her apprentices, servants, or slaves in labor, or other business, except in the ordinary household offices of daily necessity, or other works of necessity or charity. We do not solicit you to put a stop by police laws to private sins; but, by example, to arrest a great national sin, founded in a practice sanctioned and commanded by the Government, which practice is in opposition to the best interests of our country, to the law of a holy and merciful God, to the rights of the religious portion of the community, and even to the rights of the brute creation.

We therefore pray your honorable body so to change the laws regulating the post office establishment as, *in time of peace*, to prohibit the transportation of the mail and opening of post offices on the Sabbath, and thereby afford to that portion of our fellow-citizens, the postmasters, and their clerks, the enjoyment of that rest which is a *privilege* guaranteed to every human being by the laws of God.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: Your memorialists, inhabitants of Augusta, in the State of Maine, respectfully represent:

That no sentiment can be more remote from their political creed than that religion should be interwoven in the structure of our Government, or that any religious denomination should, by constitutional provision or statutory enactment, be entitled to peculiar privileges. Yet, in common with many of the most distinguished statesmen of our country, we are deeply impressed with the conviction that civil government and social order, especially where the sovereign power is in the people, can be permanently established only upon the basis of religious principle. We feel the value and the necessity of that influence which Christianity exerts in checking the violence of passion and the commission of crime, in promoting submission to the powers that be, and a cordial obedience to the laws, together with every other social and moral virtue. To secure this salutary influence to the community at large, your memorialists consider as indispensable a due observance of the Sabbath; for chiefly on this day, when religiously observed, is the attention of a community directed to their various duties, and to those powerful motives by which Christianity enforces them. Let the Christian Sabbath cease to be observed as a day of rest from secular labors and of devotion to the offices of religion, the influence of religious principle would soon be at an end. But public sentiment in favor of the Sabbath must be sustained and strengthened by the manifestation of respect for it in the official acts of the Government. In accordance with this opinion, the doors of the temple of justice, the halls of legislation, and of the offices of all the Departments of Government, (one only excepted,) are closed on that day. It would seem to your petitioners that the operations of the Post Office in all its branches should cease upon the Sabbath, in common with those of the other Departments, unless important and satisfactory reasons can be assigned for the difference.

No such reasons have your memorialists been able to perceive; and believing that very serious evils will result from a continuance of the present arrangement, *they do respectfully, yet earnestly, pray, not that any law may be passed to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, but that so much of the Post Office laws of the United States as requires any person to engage in secular labor on the Sabbath may be repealed.*

Is it objected to such a repeal that it would be an invasion of the rights of conscience in any portion of the community? We are not aware that the religious creed of any sect in our country *requires* them to engage in secular labor on the first day of the week. How, then, can the proposed suspension of labor on that day be an invasion of the rights of conscience? The duties of the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of the Government have always been suspended on the Sabbath. Of this suspension no citizen has complained as being an infringement of the rights of conscience. But we humbly conceive that, *as the laws now are, in relation to the transportation and opening of the mail*, there is such an infringement. Many individuals are required to do what they consider a violation of the law of God, and are prohibited "the free exercise of their religion," upon penalty of exclusion from offices of trust and profit in an important Department of Government.

Is it said that the measure requested would tend to give one denomination of Christians a pre-eminence over others? But what exclusive benefit could possibly accrue from it to any one denomination? or what is the evidence that any sect are intending by it, should the desired repeal take place, to promote their own peculiar interests? We disclaim such an intention ourselves; we do not believe that it exists in others.

Is it said that, should the prayer of this petition be granted, it will encourage applications for the exercise of legislative power, in relation to other objects of a religious character, such as the constitution never contemplated? In

reply, we think it sufficient to say that we simply request of the National Government that the arrangements of one Department in relation to the Sabbath may be made to correspond with those of every other.

Do any object that it is not within the province of the National Government to legislate in matters of religion? We wish it to be seriously considered whether there has not been such legislation in those enactments of which we pray for the repeal.

But it has been alleged that if the transportation of the mail, and the opening of the post offices on the Sabbath, should cease, it would occasion an interruption of public and private business, productive of evils which no justly-to-be-anticipated good can countervail. To this objection we reply, that if it had been usual to hold courts of justice and to transact legislative business on the Sabbath, it would be deemed a great detriment to the public and private interest to suspend their proceedings on that day; and arguments of as much weight might have been urged, and with equal confidence and zeal, as are now offered against the prayer of our petition. But will it be insisted that suspension of business in these instances should not have occurred, and ought not to be sanctioned? Is not the reason of the thing as strong and conclusive in the one case as in the other?

We rest our application upon the great principle that the measure requested is an act of solemn national regard for the being, perfections, and pleasure of the Lord of the Sabbath, which our nation especially are bound to render, in grateful recognition of his abundant mercies. We deeply feel that it is an object of the greatest import to propitiate the favor and blessing of Him whose smiles give prosperity to every enterprise, and whose frown rendereth abortive every purpose—the Governor of nations, the Sovereign of the universe. In honor of His name, in obedience, as we believe, to His will, we present this application to the rulers of our nation. * And may that Almighty Being, in whose hands are the destinies of states and nations, enlighten your counsels, and invigorate your exertions in favor of the best interests of our beloved country.”

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: The memorial of the undersigned, inhabitants of the city of Boston, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, respectfully represents:

That your memorialists, in common with multitudes of their fellow-citizens in all parts of the United States, regard the observance of the Christian Sabbath as pre-eminently conducive to the prevalence of good morals, intelligence, and happiness; as tending to secure and perpetuate all the blessings of a free Government; and as incomparably the best and most powerful means of preserving good order in the community, and of promoting the public prosperity. On the other hand, they consider the desecration of the Sabbath as a great evil, which, if it should become universal, or nearly so, would be followed by general ignorance, licentiousness, and vice; and, in such a state of things, it would be impossible to sustain our republican institutions, or those religious privileges which are more valuable than life itself.

Your memorialists cannot but lament that any thing should be done by the authority of the General Government which tends to diminish the sanctity of a divine institution, or to weaken the bonds of public morality. They respectfully and earnestly request, therefore, that so much of the Post Office law as requires post offices to be kept open on the Sabbath may be repealed; and that the laws of the several States, now in existence for the protection of the Sabbath, may not be violated by the Post Office establishment, nor by any branch of the public service.

Your memorialists would beg leave to state, briefly, some of the reasons on which their petition is founded.

In the first place, they complain that the present law, which requires post offices to be kept open on the Sabbath, is, as they conceive, unconstitutional. Of the constitution of the United States it is a fundamental principle that powers not given to the General Government, either expressly or by fair implication, cannot be exercised by that Government. But no power is thus given to the General Government to encroach upon the religious privileges of the people. From the first settlement of this country, the privilege of keeping the Sabbath without interruption has been esteemed most valuable, and would not, at any time, have been voluntarily surrendered.

Again: the Sabbath is not only an inestimable privilege, concerning which no power is given to the General Government, but it is expressly defended by the laws of this State, and, as has been frequently declared without contradiction, by the laws of every State in the Union. Manifestly, therefore, no law of Congress should be suffered to remain unrepealed which encroaches upon the religious privileges of the people, in a matter not confided to the General Government, and which violates the express and positive enactments of the several States.

Should it be said that the transportation of the mail and the keeping open of the post offices on the Sabbath are works of necessity, the assertion is sufficiently refuted by these facts, viz: that, during a great part of the period of our national existence, the mail has not been transported and post offices have not been kept open on the Sabbath; that many of our most enterprising merchants habitually refuse to take their letters from the office on that day; and that, in the greatest commercial emporium in the world, the post office is not opened, nor is any mail made up or received there on the Sabbath. There is supposed to be five times as much commercial intercourse between London and Liverpool as between New York and Philadelphia; and yet no mail leaves London for Liverpool between Saturday evening and Monday evening. This experience of the most actively mercantile community in the world seems to your memorialists to prove that there is no more necessity that the business of the Post Office Department should be conducted on the Sabbath than that the day should be given up to the transaction of every species of secular employment. If there is no necessity in the case, the present Post Office law clearly transcends the powers of the General Government, and is an invasion of the rights of the States in a matter deemed vitally important to the best interests of the community.

Secondly: Your memorialists complain that the present Post Office law prevents many conscientious men from accepting employment in that Department, and operates as a heavy burden on the consciences of others who are anxiously looking for relief in the stations which they now hold, either as carriers, clerks, or postmasters. It is to be remembered that the persons employed in this Department are very numerous, and that the sum of no less than a million and a half of money is annually expended in sustaining it. If Congress has power to make the servants of the public labor on the Sabbath in one Department, it has equal power in all other Departments. But would it be tolerated in this Christian community that courts of justice and custom-houses should be open on the Sabbath, and that all public offices under the General Government should be held by men who have no regard to that day, in exclusion of all who reverence the sanctuary, and remember the Sabbath to keep it holy? Is a conscientious attachment to religious observances a disqualification for office? And where is the difference between excluding a man from office on account of his religious opinions, and requiring him to do that, in case he accepts an office, which it is known he cannot do without violating the dictates of his conscience, and trampling on what he understands to be a law of God, as well as breaking up the habits of his education, and the known, established, universal customs of the country? The people of the United States will act very unwisely if they systematically exclude from public office men of strict religious principles.

The proper management of the Post Office requires the agency of men of integrity; and it cannot be good policy to lessen any of the sanctions by which honesty and fidelity are preserved.

Thirdly: The transaction of public business by the transportation and opening of the mails tends constantly and powerfully to increase the number of those who do not observe the Sabbath, and ultimately to destroy the public influence of that divine institution altogether. The number of postmasters, carriers, innkeepers, clerks, and servants, who are debarred the enjoyment of the Sabbath, by the transportation and opening of the mails on that day, swells to many thousands. Many other thousands are, as a consequence of this practice, led into habits of business; and many other thousands still are gradually enticed into habits of dissipation and idleness in those very hours which would otherwise have been consecrated to instruction and devotion.

If these habits and practices should continue to increase, nothing can be clearer than that the restraints of religion will be removed from the community at large, and either cease to exist, or be consigned to a comparatively small number of retired and obscure individuals.

Fourthly: No legislator should be ignorant that those members of the community who utterly disregard the Sabbath are soon brought to make it a day of dissipation and riot; and those who have thus desecrated the day for any considerable time are prepared for the grossest vices and the most disgraceful crimes. Who does not know that the perpetration of fraud, theft, arson, burglary, robbery, and murder has become frequent in most parts of the United States? Who does not know that these crimes are perpetrated, almost exclusively, by persons who have long been in the habit of violating the Sabbath? In one of our State prisons, containing five or six hundred convicts, particular inquiry was made on this subject. The history of one convict was the history of all. They had never observed the Sabbath, or had ceased to observe it before they committed the crimes for which they were suffering the vengeance of the laws. That system of government, then, which tends to increase the number of Sabbath-breakers, tends to fill our State prisons with felons and our streets with the cry of violence, and to stain our land with blood. Here is no mistake; there can be none; and the more this subject is examined, the more irresistibly will it appear that those who would promote the observance of the Sabbath, by removing temptations to violate it, are the true benefactors of their country.

Your memorialists are well aware that the General Government has no power to make laws for the support of religion. They rejoice that it has none. They would heartily deprecate the very idea that it ever should have such a power. But of this they do not perceive any danger. Within the year past, many thousands of our most intelligent citizens of all the principal religious denominations have seized public opportunities of declaring that they would indignantly reject the proposal of a religious establishment; and that they do not know an individual in the United States who would wish to invest the General Government with power in religious matters.

But your memorialists conceive that, while the General Government can make no law for the support of religion, it is equally true that the General Government ought not to make a law the tendency of which shall be the destruction of both religion and morality. On this ground the present memorial is offered. The existing Post Office law violates religious obligations; and, so far as it has this effect, it ought to be repealed.

Your memorialists do, therefore, by the love which they bear to their country, wishing it may become the joy and glory of the earth; by the reverence which they feel for the memory of their ancestors, who toiled and suffered to secure the blessings of liberty and religion; by the affection which they cherish for their children, and the strong desire that these children may live in a community where good morals and enlightened piety prevail; and by the attachment which they feel for free institutions of government, which can never be maintained by an immoral and an irreligious people: by all these considerations, and many others which the occasion does not permit them to explain, do your memorialists entreat your honorable body that this their urgent and earnest petition may be granted; and your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Boston, *March 23, 1830.*

[The following memorials remonstrate against a repeal of the law authorizing the mail to be transported and opened on Sunday.]

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The subscribers, citizens of the United States, and inhabitants of Portsmouth, in the county of Rockingham, and State of New Hampshire, having been informed that petitions have been, and are about to be, presented to Congress by many of our fellow-citizens in various sections of the country, praying that the transportation of the mail upon the first day of the week may be discontinued, we beg leave respectfully to remonstrate against granting the prayer of said petitioners, for the following, among other reasons:

We believe that the measure proposed by said petitioners, if carried into effect, would operate unfavorably upon the interests of the Post Office Department, and would occasion much inconvenience to our citizens generally; that it would wholly fail of effecting its avowed object, and would, in the end, injure rather than promote the cause of true religion; that, however pure and patriotic may have been the motives in which it originated, the measure has found its support among a majority of its friends more in their zeal than in their knowledge: yet we cannot but regard the steps they are taking as movements hostile to the liberties of the people, and we are persuaded that the *original movers* of the measure designed it as a step-stone to more sensible inroads upon our religious privileges. By establishing the principle it involves, they hope to silence remonstrance against their future enterprises, and contend successfully with weapons furnished them by Congress. The supporters of the measure are sufficiently protected in their worship, and in the enjoyment of their religious privileges, by the laws of their respective States, and this is all they have a right to demand; while others are not permitted to disturb them, they should not, as we humbly conceive, be permitted to disturb others; they have not, to our knowledge, been appointed by the Almighty the defenders of his honor, or the avengers of his injuries. The experience of all ages fully testifies the deplorable consequences of arming religion with the power of the laws. Church and state were never united but the articles of their union were subsequently sealed with blood. In an enlightened community, blessed with free and liberal institutions, religious despotism can only be established insensibly, and by degrees. Every approach to it should be vigilantly guarded against by the Government. Knowing that in all ages, down to the present, the clergy have been enterprising and ambitious, seizing eagerly upon power, and exercising it without reason and without mercy, it would be arrogance in those of the present age to claim an exemption from similar propensities; and, even were they to claim it, their claim would not be credited by careful observers of their conduct. When we consider the number, talents, and influence of this body of men; their zeal and activity; the intimate union that exists among them, and the concert with which all their movements are accomplished; the astonishing credulity of many of their adherents; the support they derive from numerous religious corporations and societies, rapidly increasing in numbers and in wealth; the almost unlimited control which they exercise over our colleges and other literary institutions, with no power but the laws, which they are ambitious to control, to watch or check them—we see reason to dread even their unassisted efforts to deprive us of our liberties; but especially should we deprecate arming them with powers which properly belong only to the people and the rulers of their choice—powers which in other days have enabled them to tread on the necks of kings, dictate laws to nations, and murder millions with impunity. We cannot shut our eyes to the visible fact that the clergy are the prime movers, the life and soul of the measure prayed for by the petitioners. With these views and feelings, we deem it our sacred duty respectfully but solemnly to remonstrate against the measure prayed for by said petitioners; and we feel conscious that in so doing we shall best subserve the cause of true religion and the interests of our beloved country.

To the honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

The undersigned, memorialists of the town of Newark, county of Essex, and State of New Jersey, being apprized of the numerous petitions presented your honorable body, praying a repeal of the present laws for the transportation of the mails and the opening of the post offices on the first day of the week, beg leave (in accordance with their sense of duty) humbly to memorialize your honorable body, and pray that no such repeal be made, nor any law be enacted interfering with the Post Office Department, so as to prevent the free passage of the mail on *all* days of the week, or to exclude any individual from the right to receive his papers on the first, as well as on the seventh day.

Notwithstanding your memorialists have the fullest confidence in the wisdom and integrity of our National Legislature, they are induced to memorialize your honorable body at this time, from a fear lest the reiterated efforts of bigotry and fanaticism should finally prevail on your honorable body to legislate upon a subject which your memorialists consider is, by the constitution of these States and the laws of nature, left free; and which, for the

welfare of mankind, should be maintained so. Nor can they at this time refrain from expressing their astonishment at, and their disapprobation of, the reiterated and untiring efforts of a part of the community, who, through misguided zeal or ecclesiastical ambition, essay to coerce your honorable body into a direct violation of the principles of the constitution, by the enactment of laws, the object of which would be to sustain their peculiar tenets or religious creeds, to the exclusion of others; thereby uniting ecclesiastical and civil law, and leading ultimately to the abhorrent and anti-republican union of church and state.

Your memorialists would not presume to remonstrate, were it not that their opponents (after a most signal defeat in the last Congress) have renewed their petitions with a vigor increased by disappointment, and a spirit as perseveringly determined as their premises are illiberal and unwarrantable.

Your memorialists approve of morality, reverence religion, grant to all men equal rights, and are governed by the principles of our constitution and the laws of our land; but we deprecate intolerance, abhor despotism, and are totally opposed to all attempts of the religious of any sect to control our consciences.

Nor can your memorialists perceive wherein their opponents are deprived of their liberty of conscience by the uninterrupted course of the mails; for if it be right for them to travel on the first day of the week, it cannot be wrong for the mails; if it be consistent for them to do *their* business on the first day of the week, it cannot be inconsistent for the mails to be made up and opened, and papers delivered, on the same day; if the travelling *they* do, and the labors *they* perform, are matters of necessity, and therefore admissible, your memorialists humbly suggest whether the interests of a vast majority of the citizens of these United States, conveyed by mails, are not matters of as great necessity?

Your memorialists, in accordance with these views, beg leave to protest against any interference with the transportation of the mails, or the distribution of letters at the post offices, on the first day of the week. And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

JANUARY 8, 1830.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: The memorial of the subscribers, residing in Philadelphia county, Pennsylvania, respectfully sheweth:

That they approach the Supreme Legislature of their country, not for the purpose of infringing on the privileges of others, but to secure that liberty which, in their apprehension, is now endangered. When these United States became independent of the British crown, and assumed their just station among the sovereign states of the earth, the delegates appointed to represent the different provinces were not unmindful of the great trust confided to them by the people. To guard against any abuse in matters of religion and civil policy, the wise framers of the constitution of our Government, after defining with unexampled accuracy the rights of the citizens, and limiting the authority of Congress, expressly prohibited the latter from interfering with the religious opinions of the people.

Your memorialists have, therefore, regarded with abhorrence the diligent and untiring efforts of a combination of religious sects, made to obtain an ascendancy in the administration of public affairs. To them, it is obvious that the ultimate object proposed to be attained is the recognition by Congress of certain specific doctrines, and thereby to enslave the consciences of the free citizens of this great republic. It is now contemplated to fill all the public offices with men who shall, either directly or indirectly, accept the faith and doctrine of a powerful party. The subject of which they now speak, the memorialists are aware, has frequently been the occasion of much painful thought to some of the most eminent statesmen who have adorned our country with the lustre of their talents.

Your memorialists regret the necessity which compels them to intrude on your deliberations at the present juncture. Silence upon their part would be construed into approbation of the measures pursued by those whom they are resolved to oppose. They will, therefore, address you in language suited to the emergency, and with a sense of the responsibility thus voluntarily assumed. At the last session of your body, great efforts were made to induce you to pass a law, the object of which was to suspend the transmission of the mail on what is called the Sabbath. But a patriotic Legislature then decided that it was incompetent for them to approach an undetermined question in religion. It was with great astonishment your memorialists heard that the attempt was again to be renewed, and a new attack to be made on the rights of conscience. They have received with sorrow the information that petitions are daily presented to both Houses of Congress in relation to the present mail establishment. To have proposed an open union of church and state would have been so manifest a violation of republican principle, as must have drawn upon its authors the just resentment of an indignant people. But the subject now adopted as suitable for the legislation of Congress can be discussed with less danger and with an effect equally certain.

Your memorialists have in vain endeavored to discover any reasonable motive for the selection of the Sabbath as peculiarly proper for legislative support. There is no small diversity of opinion among mankind regarding the propriety of keeping one day in seven holy. The Jews, and some sects of Christians, aver that the *seventh*, and not the *first* day of the week, is the true Sabbath. A large number of pious persons believe that the Jewish Sabbath, with its ceremonial observances, has been abolished; and that, in its place, the first day of the week must be held equally sacred. Another class of mankind maintain that the institution is utterly abrogated, and that neither day should be observed.

Your memorialists believe that if Congress possess the power to designate what day shall be the Sabbath, and to define its appropriate duties, it would be equally within the scope of their authority to decide other disputed points. If the constitution has imposed on Congress the duty of discriminating what mode of faith shall be adopted, it must, as a consequence, give the power to compel obedience. Hence all the religious obligations of men must become the subjects of legislation, to the ruin of families and the destruction of personal comfort and convenience; for if the law can enforce one religious duty, it can, by parity of reasoning, insist on the performance of all.

Your memorialists would say that, when the Congress of the United States shall prefer an arrogant and domineering clergy, heaping upon them privileges and immunities not enjoyed by other citizens, there will be formed as powerful an ecclesiastical establishment as can be found in any other nation on earth. The doctrines of the favored party will then become the creed of the country, to be enforced by fines, imprisonment, and perhaps death. Superstition and bigotry will paralyze the steps of genius, and the further improvement of our now happy country must be suspended. If the sun of her glory shall now set, it will, perhaps, never again rise to cheer a benighted world with the splendor of its rays.

Your memorialists would further represent that, in their present appeal to the justice and magnanimity of the constituted authorities of their country, they are actuated by no irreverent motive. Nor do they cherish other than feelings of respect for their fellow-citizens who differ from them in sentiment. They do not ask you to throw any impediment in the path of those who, in sincerity of heart, would worship the God of their fathers. Their design in now appearing before you is to preserve the liberty of conscience inviolate; and to ask that the constitution of the Government may not be infringed in this particular.

On no consideration would they wish to restrain the right of free discussion in relation to the matter now pending before you. That liberty they ask for themselves, they devoutly desire may be enjoyed by all mankind. They are, however, aware that the Sabbath is a part of the Jewish law, and it is for that people to advocate its sanctity. These are, however, satisfied in the enjoyment of their own rights, without intruding on those of others. The declaration has gone forth from a sect of Christians, that the due observance of the Sabbath is essential to the moral health and existence of the nation. They have arrogantly usurped the right to determine in what the Sabbath shall consist, without any the least regard for those who conscientiously differ from them.

Your memorialists have considered the importance of your deliberations to the welfare of the nation, and that something more than an ordinary occurrence is necessary to justify them in thus obtruding on your attention. Their inclinations would have induced them to keep silence, had they not felt themselves urged by a sense of imperious duty to oppose the daring schemes of the day. The zeal with which the plans of different sectaries have been prosecuted, and the pertinacity of design manifested by their continuing to force their views of religion on the people,

must be accepted as an apology. The great political doctrine, that all men have a natural right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their consciences, is now denied. It is said that religion requires compulsory laws for its security, and the extension of its influence over the conduct and characters of men. The truth of this position is denied in the most unqualified manner by those who now address you. They are clearly of opinion that there is no just cause for complaint on the part of the petitioners, and that their intolerant zeal has evidently destroyed their judgment.

Your memorialists feel no disposition to submit to compulsion in matters which rest exclusively between themselves and the God who made them. Besides the attempt now made on Congress, numerous other arbitrary measures have been adopted, with the intention of holding up to public odium those who cannot think in conformity with the doctrines avowed by your petitioners. Whatever fanaticism may have anticipated in former days, or zealous bigots in the present may predict, no great danger is to be feared of the stability of our Government, except from the combinations of a corrupt clergy. More than half a century has elapsed since the day when a large and fruitful nation was given to the world. The prosperity of our country is unparalleled in the annals of history; peace and plenty have united to bless her inhabitants. Every description of creeds and endless varieties of faith have their votaries, and flourish under the protection of a generous system of laws. Learned institutions are encouraged and thrive among us; and there is reason to believe that the hour is rapidly advancing in which every individual in our extensive territory will be properly qualified to exercise the great functions to which he is eligible. From Maine to Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the western wilds, the same smiling scene is displayed.

Your memorialists would inquire if, in this general prosperity, the friends of religion and morality have any well-founded cause of discouragement? The countless evils that must flow from the least interference of the General Government with the view of favoring a religious party are such as, in their consummation, would prove destructive to our national existence. It is impossible, on an occasion like the present, not to advert to the misery which has flowed from the assumption of ecclesiastical dominion in other countries. There are regions where persecution even now erects her blood-stained banner, and demands unnumbered victims for her unholy service. The past history of the church furnishes a melancholy demonstration of the danger to be anticipated from an alliance of the ministers of religion with the civil magistracy. There is no language which can adequately describe the abuses which have been practised, the diabolical cruelty which has been perpetrated, and the immense amount of suffering which has been inflicted, under the plea of defending the cause of religion. The beauty of youth, the venerable decrepitude of old age, and the power of rank, were equally incompetent to relax the iron grasp of the church.

Your memorialists would also suggest that the liberal provision made by our constitution for the exercise of individual rights, and the encouragement given to enterprise and talent, have invited to our shores multitudes of honest and ingenious artists. Fleeing from persecution in the land of their nativity, they have sought a home in the only country under heaven where liberty can be said to dwell. Here they calculated to be delivered from those galling restrictions which had rendered existence wretched; and here they have not, as yet, been disappointed. We owe it to them, as well as to ourselves, to employ every energy to perpetuate our excellent Government, and to defend it from the attacks of insidious enemies.

Your memorialists repose, with the fullest confidence, in the wisdom and integrity of their representatives in Congress. They cannot, however, leave the subject without the expression of their sincere approbation of the manner in which the question now under consideration was disposed of in the last session of your body. They would, therefore, respectfully ask that, not only should the prayer of the petitioners be rejected, but that such order shall be taken on the question as will forever preclude its revival.

SIR:

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS, *February 15, 1830.*

In obedience to sundry resolutions of the Legislature. I have the honor of herewith enclosing to you "a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, on the subject of the Indians within her limits, and of certain Indian lands;" and "a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana on the subject of the stoppage of the United States mail on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday," which were passed at the late General Assembly of the State, and which you are respectfully requested to lay before the Senate of the United States.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

J. BROWN RAY.

WILLIAM HENDRICKS, *United States Senator from Indiana.*

The memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana respectfully represents:

That we view all attempts to introduce sectarian influence into the councils of the nation as a violation of both the letter and the spirit of the constitution of the United States and of this State, and at the same time dangerous to our civil and religious liberties, inasmuch as those charters secure to every man the free exercise of his religion and the right to worship the Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and inasmuch as any legislative interference in matters of religion would be an infraction of those rights; we, therefore, most respectfully remonstrate against any attempt, by a combination of one or more sects, to alter the laws providing for the transportation of the mail, and against the passage of a law to regulate or enforce the observance of religious duties, or which may interfere with what belongs to the conscience of each individual: that all legislative interference in matters of religion is contrary to the genius of Christianity; and that there are no doctrines or observances inculcated by the Christian religion which require the arm of civil power either to enforce or sustain them: that we consider every connexion between church and state at all times dangerous to civil and religious liberty; and further, that we cordially agree to and approve of the able report of the honorable R. M. Johnson, adopted by the Senate of the United States at its last session, upon the petitions for prohibiting the transportation of the mail on Sunday; and while we protest in the most solemn manner against every attempt to enforce, by legislative interference, the observance of any particular day, yet believe that both the spiritual and temporal interest of mankind is promoted by setting apart one day in the week for the purpose of rest, religious instruction, and the worship of God.

Resolved, That his excellency the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing memorial to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled: The subscribers, inhabitants of the county of Salem, in the State of New Jersey, respectfully represent:

That your memorialists belong to various religious denominations of Christians, and some of them are conscientious in the belief that the *seventh* day of the week, commonly called *Saturday*, is the true *Sabbath*; that they have learned with regret that attempts are simultaneously making in different sections of the country to get up petitions and memorials to Congress to pass a law for stopping the United States mail on Sunday. While your memorialists acknowledge, with the most devout reverence, that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and do most solemnly disclaim all idea of "robbing Jehovah of the worship which is his due," as Christians and republicans they

are constrained to remonstrate against the passage of such a law, which they believe would be pregnant with serious evils to our country. We are of opinion that the report of the committee of the United States Senate of the last year, on this subject, is conclusive, and that the first article of amendments to the constitution which declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press," has virtually prohibited Congress from legislating on this subject. In the opinion of your memorialists, errors of opinion, whether of religion or politics, may be safely tolerated in our country, and no *surveillance* is required to control them other than that of "reason, a free press," and "the free course of the Gospel." From the judicious arrangement of the Post Office Department, there is no reason to dread any disturbance of religious societies in their devout worship on that day; and the passage of such a law would, in the opinion of your memorialists, by occasioning numerous *expresses* and other modes of conveyance, defeat the *ostensible* object of the law itself. Such a measure would be the result of a "zeal not according to knowledge," and is not warranted by the benevolent spirit of our holy religion, which is "gentle" and not coercive; which is "without partiality and without hypocrisy;" which inculcates an *active* benevolence; which discovers to us a Deity who delights not in "sacrifices and vain oblations," but in the offering of a humble and a contrite heart, and whose goodness is over all his works. The proposed measure would tend to circumscribe and restrict the benefits of a free press, which is the palladium of our liberties, and to check or retard the diffusion of knowledge, which, in the order of Providence, is the surest means of spreading the Gospel, and would obscure or render less refulgent "the light of Bethlehem star." Works of *mercy* and of *private* and *public necessity* are always excluded from the general prohibition. The Divine Author of our religion has shown us, by his own example, that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. The proposed measure would lessen the good man's opportunities of doing good. Many religious tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers "devoted to the interest of Zion and the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom," are transmitted by mail; and why may not "mail carriers," equally with "illiterate fishermen," become the heralds of salvation? Why attempt to restrict or limit the Almighty in the methods of his grace? To stop the mail would, in the opinion of your memorialists, be repugnant to a wise maxim, which applies to *morals* and *religion* as well as to *economics*, "not to put off till to-morrow that which can be done to-day," and would resemble the conduct of "the slothful servant who hid his talent in a napkin."

It is an invaluable privilege, for which, as Christians and republicans, we cannot be too thankful, that the constitution of the United States guaranties to every one the rights of conscience and religion; and, in the opinion of your memorialists, the proposed measure would operate as a violation of these rights; would be made a precedent for others of the same kind, and more alarming; would pave the way to a union of "church and state," against which our horrors are excited by the awful admonitions of history; which would be the deathblow to our *civil* and *religious liberties*, purchased with the virtue and valor, and sealed with the blood, of our fathers; and end in the worst of all tyrannies—"an ecclesiastical hierarchy."

JANUARY 20, 1830.

21st CONGRESS.]

No. 88.

[1st SESSION.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE POST ROAD FROM ZANESVILLE, IN OHIO, TO FLORENCE,
IN ALABAMA.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 9, 1830.

SIR: . GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *March 9, 1830.*

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 24th ultimo, directing "that the Postmaster General inform the House over how much and what part of the route between Zanesville, Ohio, and Florence, Alabama, *via* Maysville, Lexington, and Nashville, the United States mail is transported in stage coaches; and what period of time is taken up in the passage of the mail between those points at different seasons of the year; and report what information he may have as to the saving on the part of the United States; and to what extent the advantage of a regular mail may be increased by having said route improved by a Macadamized turnpike," I have the honor to report:

The distance from Zanesville, *via* Maysville, Lexington, and Nashville, to Florence, is 536 miles.

The mail is transported over the whole of the route in stages, except that during a great part of the winter season the miry state of the roads is such as to render it impracticable, especially between Maysville and Lexington, in Kentucky, where a stage carriage can seldom be used during three months of the year. In other parts, the interruption is frequent, but not so permanent, during the whole winter.

From Zanesville to Lexington, the mail is carried daily; thence to Nashville and Florence, it is carried three times in each week.

The time occupied in running the mail over the whole distance, 536 miles, is ten days during the winter season, and nine days during the remainder of the year.

The present sums which are paid for transporting the mails on the whole of that route, including the additional distance of five miles from Florence to Tusculumbia, (being a part of one of the contracts,) amount to \$30,808 92.

The Department has no certain means of ascertaining what reduction could be made from this expense, if the whole route were improved by a Macadamized turnpike. This would depend much upon the rates of toll. If free of toll for the United States mail, it may be safely estimated to effect a saving of \$5,000 a year in the expense.

The increased advantage of regular mail accommodation would unquestionably be very great. The mail might be transported over the whole route, and at all seasons of the year, in six days, even if the distance should not be shortened by straightening the roads. The communications would be more certain during that part of the year when intelligence from the seat of Government is most interesting.

The intercourse could be made daily each way, with increased expedition, and probably at about the same expense which is now incurred.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. T. BARRY.

HON. ANDREW STEVENSON, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*