

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.*