

MINUTES

OF THE

SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

AT THEIR

SESSIONS, IN WINNSBOROUGH,

FAIRFIELD DISTRICT, S. C., NOV. 1851;

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
STEAM-POWER PRESS OF A. S. JOHNSTON.

1852.

MINUTES

OF SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

WINNSBORO, S. C., Nov. 6. 1851. }
Thursday, 11 o'clock, A. M. }

The Synod of South Carolina met, according to adjournment, in the Presbyterian Church, Winnsboro, on Thursday, Nov. 6th, 1851, at 11 o'clock, A. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Moderator, Rev. J. B. Adger, from Rom. v. 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Constituted with prayer. Upon calling the roll, the following members were found to be present.

Presbytery of South Carolina.

Ministers.—A. W. Ross, J. F. Gibert, T. L. McBride, J. McLees, S. S. Gaillard, J. C. Williams, J. B. Hillhouse, W. B. Telford, R. H. Reid.

Elders.—W. B. McAllister, Midway; S. N. Evins, Nazareth; T. C. Perrin, Upper Long Cane; A. Walker, Providence and Rocky River; W. N. Blake, Rock Church; J. Cowan, Greenville; A. G. Campbell, Spartanburg C. H.

Presbytery of Bethel.

Ministers.—J. H. Saye, J. R. Gilland, W. Banks, J. R. Baird, E. P. Palmer, W. T. Savage, A. W. Miller, A. A. James, A. M. Watson.

Elders.—D. G. Stinson, Fishing Creek and Cedar Shoals; John Knox, Catholic and Pleasant Grove; Eli Meek, Beersheba; Robert Wylie, Purity; G. H. Miller, Concord; James Johnson, Mt. Olivet; Abraham McJunkin, Cane Creek; John Foster, Lancaster, Waxhaw, and Six Mile; William Wylie, Hopewell.

Presbytery of Harmony.

Ministers.—W. Brearley, T. R. English, W. M. Reid, J. J. DuBose, M. D. Fraser, S. Donnelly, G. C. Gregg, S. H. Hay, W. W. Wilson, A. E. Chandler, T. A. Hoyt.

Elders.—W. T. Wilson, Hopewell; T. Lauderdale, Salem (Lit-

1851.

Oct. 28. To paid Executive Committee's order, to remit the balance of funds in hand. Remitted in James Adger & Co.'s draft, on Brown, Brothers & Co., N. York, favor of Wm. Rankin, Jr, Esq., Treasurer, payable on presentation for \$3044 01, at 3-4 per ct. prem.,..... 3066 84

\$3166 84 \$3166 84

E. E.—Charleston, 28th October, 1851.

JAMES ADGER, *Treasurer.*

We have examined the above account and vouchers for the same, and find them correct.

W. C. DUKES,
J. M. CALDWELL.

Charleston, October 28, 1851;

Pastoral Letter on the Observance of the Sabbath,

To the Churches and Church members

within the Synod of South Carolina :

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHERN—In drawing your attention to the subject of the Christian Sabbath, we only fulfil the duty of a faithful Pastor, who bringeth out of his treasure, things *old* as well as new. "*Gutta cavat lapidem*"—and upon the operation of this law, by giving line upon line, must we chiefly rely to wear an abiding moral impression upon the face of society. It is a consolation to know that what is old is not necessarily trite; as it is no slender proof of the divine origin of Christianity, that no reiteration of its sacred topics can exhaust their interest or importance. While, therefore, it may not be possible to throw light upon the *doctrine* of the Sabbath, it will perhaps be easy to enforce its *practical observance*, by much that is peculiar to the age in which we live.

In the discussion of a familiar subject, this special advantage will sometimes accrue, that its fundamental principles may be assumed as already proved and acknowledged. We shall not, for example, pause at the threshold to establish the divine institution of a day of rest. It is a fact now distinctly recognized by the Christian world, that God did cease from the work of creation at the close of the sixth day, and did thus consecrate the seventh as a

holy rest to man. Even the light labours of Paradise, which never brought fatigue, were, on this day, remitted; and man's constant worship became more emphatic and devout as, on this day, he contemplated the glory of the Creator in the glory of His works.

It is equally unnecessary to array the physiological proof, that a weekly vacation from toil is required to repair the energies both of man and beast. To the skeptical it must suffice here to say, that a large induction of particular facts has fully established the natural law, that the sons of toil, in addition to the hours of repose which night affords, need the supplemental rest of a weekly Sabbath. In all departments of labor, whether mental or mechanical, both the schemer and the operative, and the very beasts of burden, wear out the faster for unremitting exertion. Even while retaining their physical capacity, there is cumulative evidence to show, that through a given term of sufficient length, the amount of productive labour will be in favour of those who intercalate one day of rest amidst six of toil. For a similar reason, we pass over the subordinate advantages of the Sabbath, in the cleanliness it promotes, the health it invigorates, its kindly influence upon the affections and charities of home, and the general benefits, intellectual and moral, which it diffuses through all orders of society. We omit these minor topics, for the sake of brevity, to ascend directly to the religious uses of this holy day.

It is worthy of note, that in every form of religion established by God among men, the Sabbath has stood forth its most conspicuous monument. In the religion of nature, which was strictly a religion of law, and had respect to man in his primitive holiness, the Sabbath was the only ordinance of worship. There was the law written upon Adam's heart; there was the tree of temptation for the proof of his obedience; there was the sacramental tree of life, the seal of the covenant and its blessings, instantly forfeited upon transgression; but amidst them all rose the Sabbath, itself the sign of a more perfect rest, the great comprehensive institute of natural religion, embodying the worship which man owes to God, and embracing that obedience to His law, which was its fundamental element. It was eminently proper that man should thus bring, in the *worship* of the Sabbath, a pledge of his soul's deepest homage to God. But this was not all; in its *repose* also, he brought a religious tribute of that very life and being which God had bestowed. In the

gift of Immortality, God set the seal of His own image upon the existence which He gave to man. If it was not self-being, since this could not be given, it was at least ceaseless being; and this natural endowment is placed as the stake of man's obedience, which the law covers with its mortgage. Now, it is of this very being, thus consecrated by the seal of God's image, and placed as the pawn to be redeemed only by perfect obedience to the divine law, that man, in the repose of the first Sabbath, offered the first fruits to God; and ever as this weekly day of rest recurs, is there presented a perpetual wave-offering before the Lord, by which our whole time and life are surrendered to Him, and anew received at His hands.

After the apostacy, the Sabbath was still left, the only portion of time exempted from the curse of labour, which doomed the transgressor to live by the sweat of his brow. Thus as a symbol of the grace which should effect a final and perfect deliverance from the entailed curse, it passed from the religion of nature into the religion of grace. It gleams with sufficient distinctness amidst the fragmentary records of the Patriarchal age, and was incorporated in the Mosaic dispensation, with such fullness, as to give occasion for the theory, that all earlier notices of it were in anticipation of this its only true inauguration. It has been remarked by another, that "the observance of the Sabbath was the first moral duty enjoined upon the Israelites after the Exodus, and was made the memorial of that event, as previously it had commemorated the creation of the world: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; *therefore*, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." (Deut. 5; 15.) While it became thus the memorial to the Israelites of a particular event in their history, it was also a public declaration before the nations, of their allegiance to the true God, and a renunciation of Idolatry: "verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." (Ex. 31: 12.) Indeed so manifestly did the Sabbath enter among the institutes of Judaism, that the boldest assault made upon it in after ages was the doctrine, that it was peculiarly a Jewish ordinance, and passed into oblivion with the other shadows of the same economy.

It can however be made apparent, that instead of becoming thus

obsolete, it passed over a permanent statute into the Christian dispensation. As in Judaism, the Sabbath was a monumental pillar bearing the record of Israel's redemption from Egypt, so Christianity engraves upon it the sinner's redemption from hell, through a Saviour's resurrection. By a change only in what was positive, and not moral, in the command, its transfer from the seventh to the first day of the week proclaims "this same Jesus hath God raised up, whereof I am witness." But the Sabbath which commemorates the consummating act, is equally the memorial of that entire redeeming work undertaken by Christ upon the earth. Thus in the religion of grace, as in the religion of nature, the Sabbath lifts itself like some proud obelisk, all covered with inscriptions of man's duties to his God, and of God's rich grace to man. So complete is the identity between the Sabbath and the gospel it attests, as to have extorted the confession, that till the former was destroyed, it was hopeless to overturn the latter; and infidel France was instigated to rob it of its sacred associations, by the substitution of a tenth day of rest and pleasure.

To neglect the Sabbath, therefore, is to ignore the Deity as the object of worship; while to cancel it, would be to efface all religion, whether of law or of Grace. It is upon this, the highest ground, we suppose, that God vindicates His Sabbaths with such holy jealousy. Said Nehemiah to the nobles of Judah after the captivity, "What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not the Lord our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath." (Neh. 13: 17, 18.) Or, if we prefer to read it in the language of blessing and promise, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: thou shalt then delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. 58: 13, 14.) Upon this, then, we build the strongest appeal to a pious heart, for the conscientious observance of this day. If in the rest of the Sabbath, we bring, as it were, a handful of our very life to consume it upon God's altar, who shall advocate the sacrilege

of withdrawing the sacrifice? If in its holy worship, we bring a pledge of perpetual homage to our maker, who that has a soul will cancel that devotion? If it is the memorial of our Saviour's rest in the work of redemption, who that has had fellowship with Him in his passion, will despise the token? If it be the earnest of final deliverance from sin and death, who that has a hope of pardon will refuse the guaranty? If it points the weary Christian through all his pilgrimage to the rest and worship of the upper Temple, who will not lean with comfort upon this staff and find support? In a word, if the Sabbath be thus blended with a Christian's most pleasant associations, with his present joys and future hopes, who that has been renewed by the Holy Ghost can be found to depreciate it? It must, therefore, be from superficial acquaintance with the obligations of this day, and from oversight of its relations to Christian life and worship, that all violation of it within the Church must be traced. We cannot believe that an enlightened conscience will surrender the Sabbath to the easy pleas upon which it is so frequently profaned.

But it is not enough by these Christian motives to enlist the Christian conscience for the regulation of individual conduct; we wish further, to form and express a public sentiment against Sabbath breaking by the world. In withstanding the doctrinal assaults of Infidel opposers, the Sabbath has only resisted one of its double dangers. The more fearful hazard of obliteration through the covetousness of men, it must perpetually incur. The mountain crag which has bared its head to the storms of forty centuries, may yet be undermined at its base, and sweeping downward with the avalanche, spread ruin in its path. So the Sabbath which, from the birth of time, has lifted its testimonial spire, pointing to the heavens amidst the howlings of Atheism, may yet be washed from its base, by the unchecked currents of worldliness and vanity. We allege that this danger increases with the advance of science, and the progress of art. Occasional breaches of the Sabbatic rest, may always be expected to occur; but the very circumstance, that they are exceptional and not stated, carries along with them a check upon the evil. The very departure from one's ordinary policy will suggest an inquiry as to its propriety. The man is immediately sisted at the bar of his own conscience, compelled either to repudiate the settled policy of his life in keeping the Lord's day, or else to

justify this occasional violation of its sacred rest. In the same way, the apparent inconsistency between the two, brings up the whole subject for adjudication before the Christian public, who are compelled to render a decision. Thus the usual observance of the day will be a standing protest against its occasional breaches. But in those employments where there is a foreseen and fore-pledged violation of the Sabbath, in which the din of labor is unremittingly heard, it may easily fall into desuetude, and, in course of years, be forgotten. In the march of civilization, and in the consequent multiplication of the mechanical arts, those occupations become more and more numerous. It would perhaps astonish those, who have paid little attention to this matter, to know how large the catalogue of such is already swelled. In the blowing of glass, the smelting of iron, the boiling of sugar, the printing of daily newspapers, the publication of legislative records, the postal arrangements of the country, the plying of steam vessels between contiguous ports, the working of rail-roads, and the operation of the telegraph, we have sufficient examples of a large class of employments, in which, upon the plea of a coercive necessity, the Sabbath is habitually violated.

The momentous question now arises, how shall the Christian world act in regard to these occupations? Can any broad principles be stated, which shall guide Christian men in their individual conduct, and direct the Church in the exercise of salutary discipline? God's reservation of the Sabbath to his own use is so clear, and his propriety in it so indefeasible, that the whole question must be remitted to his decision. According to the Scriptures, there are but two grounds upon which the Sabbath can be vacated, either *the law of necessity*, or *the plea of mercy*. These pursuits will scarcely be covered by the mantle of the latter, nor be successfully advocated upon the authority of the former. Grant, for example, that by the intermission of the Sabbath, the furnaces of glass and iron cool down to such a temperature, that an entire day will be consumed in heating them again to the working point; nothing more is proved than the disadvantage arising from the loss of one-sixth of time, during which labour and capital are unproductive. All kinds of business lie under peculiar disadvantages, of one kind or another, which are taken into account in estimating the value of their productions. If a Christian man, labouring productively five-sixths of his time, cannot compete with those who labour seven-sixths, there is perhaps

no alternative but to exchange his calling for another, in which he may have less profits, and a sounder conscience. In other words, we uncover an important distinction, that to make out a sacrifice is not to prove a necessity. We greatly fear that a large proportion of Sabbath breaking, especially on the part of professing Christians, is traceable to the neglect of this distinction. A man, for instance, is unexpectedly delayed upon a journey, perhaps almost within sight of his home—to tarry by the way will involve much inconvenience and discomfort, and perhaps pecuniary risk or loss—then add the anxieties he may feel about wife and children, and he is at once flattered into the belief of a stringent necessity upon him to violate God's law. Beloved brethren! How often must it be repeated, that a Christian profession, from first to last, involves sacrifices frequent and severe! Whoever assumes it, does in act and in form place himself on God's altar, a whole burnt-offering. He is "bought with a price," and the vow is taken with awful solemnity, as in the court of Heaven to "glorify God in his body and his spirit, which are God's." And surely we are inattentive observers of Divine Providence, if we do not discover many circumstances in our life ordered expressly to test the sincerity and value of this profession. We have offered all in sacrifice to God, our time and life and being, and when an emergency shall arrive, putting our religion to the proof, shall we plead against the claims of God upon His own day, the sacrifice involved in some partial loss of interest or comfort? Shall we not rather feel that God affords us a fit opportunity of practically renewing our covenant, and fulfilling our vows of self-consecration; and that ample compensation is enjoyed in the privilege of bearing an honorable testimony in behalf of all religion, in the testimony which we bear for the Sabbath?

So much for those employments, in which the issue lies only between larger and smaller degrees of profit, and where the intermission of labour one day in seven is not an insuperable bar to their prosecution. In those few and insulated cases, where this result would accrue—as, for example, in those mines where the pumps must be incessantly engaged to prevent their filling with water—a lower ground, may perhaps be taken. If a Christian man is not constrained to forsake the employment, let him perform no other labour than is required. If he must work the pumps, let him not work the mine. It is a wide leap from the necessary

labour which will only keep the mine open, to the voluntary labour which adds to his wealth. And let the former be so arranged that neither man nor beast shall be entirely defrauded of the rest which God has secured to them, by the most sacred of all charters.

The cases which have been considered, are supposed to lie wholly within the individual choice and discretion; the question of duty, however, becomes more complicated when we are implicated in a joint violation of the Sabbath, with others over whom there is little or no control. Take as examples the breach of the Sabbath, by a Stock Company, in the operations of a rail road or steam ship, and the transmission of the mail by the direction of Government. The Church and the world are so bound together by the common ties of society, that perhaps the interests of both cannot entirely be separated. The resources of a country cannot be developed, nor internal improvements conducted upon any large scale, without combining the pious and the profane, as citizens, in the same associations. The violation of the Sabbath is moreover oftentimes so collateral a result, that it could not readily be anticipated. How far Christian men should make the observance of the Lord's day a condition precedent of their co-operation, we will not here undertake to say; though we must believe the numerical importance of pious men, in this country, could they only be united in this matter, would control the whole subject. In this aspect, we cannot feel that pious stockholders in our Sabbath-breaking corporations are guiltless, unless each man can appeal to conscience, that he employs his influence in a ceaseless struggle against this injurious practice. It is freely granted, that in very extended operations, where the details are numerous and minute, and where the efficiency of the whole depends upon the nicest harmony of a great many parts, it is not easy to secure the letter of the Sabbath; and that in attempting this, the spirit of the Sabbath will sometimes be in danger of betrayal. Take, as the best illustration of this, our postal arrangements, which like a fine network, cover this continent. It will be glory enough for that Christian statesman, who shall display his administrative talent in fitting together the nice adjustments of this system, so that the whole shall come instantly to a dead pause, without derangement or shock to any of its parts. But suppose only six days in the week, and the year shortened by the subduction of its fifty Sabbaths; who can doubt but that a schedule would be framed with reference

to this curtailment; and that, in this diminished period, the week's work would be done harmoniously as now? Yet in fact, man has but six days in every week. The seventh is God's, by the special reservation of it to himself, and by his solemn interdict upon all human appropriation of the same. Stock Companies and Governments, therefore, precisely as individuals, should cast their plans of labor, as though the Sabbath was not. Save for the purposes of rest and worship, the Sabbath indeed does not exist. While, however, governments continue to offer a premium for Sabbath breaking, by the temptations which they present, it only remains that Christian men shall guard carefully against individual participation in this guilt; and that the voice of remonstrance shall go out from every heart, waking the echoes of conscience in the breasts of ungodly rulers, until the Sabbath shall be crowned over the days, even as Christ is crowned over the creatures.

In connection with this topic, it may be considered a subject of congratulation, that in this State there has been no legislation adverse to the Sabbath day; although in the successive constitutions which have been adopted, the formal notices of it have been less and less distinct. In the famous "Fundamental Constitutions," drawn up in 1669, for the Lords Proprietors, by the celebrated philosopher, John Locke, but which were never ratified by the General Assembly, no man was permitted to become a freeman in Carolina, or to hold an estate, who did not acknowledge the divine existence, and the necessity of solemn and public worship; and no assembly of men could be considered a Church, except upon the recognition of these three principles: that there is a God—that He is to be publicly worshipped—and that all men, upon the call of their rulers, are to bear witness to the truth, with such religious formalities as shall be prescribed by the communion to which they belong. The recognition of the Sabbath was equally implicit in the Constitution of 1778, which tolerated all persons and societies that acknowledged a God and a future state of retribution, and practised public worship. It moreover declared the Christian Protestant religion to be the established religion of the State, and refused to incorporate any religious society which did not subscribe the five following articles: the existence of God, and a future state of rewards and punishments—that God is to be publicly worshipped—that the Christian religion is the true religion—that the Scriptures

of the Old and New Testaments are of divine inspiration, and the rule of faith and practice—and the duty of all men to bear witness to the truth in Courts of Justice. The Constitution, however, of 1790, which is now of force, simply allows the freest exercise of religious profession and worship to all mankind; provided, that this liberty shall not degenerate into acts of licentiousness, and justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State.

If we turn from written Constitutions, which are of course the paramount law of the land, to special enactments, we shall discover the same general favour towards the Sabbath, together with the same gradual enlargement of individual liberty in its observance. All those Statutes framed during our Colonial history, enjoining upon certain penalties, attendance upon the Parish Church, have been abrogated in the dissolution of an Established Church. Other Statutes of the same date, without formal repeal, have probably become obsolete; such as the Act forbidding all travel on the Sabbath—all sports and pastimes—and the working of a slave, except for necessary household purposes. Still, other laws, of the same venerable age, (1712,) are unquestionably operative at this day: as for example, those forbidding merchandize to be cried on the Sabbath, or exposed for sale; and that restricting all warrants, or writs, or processes, from being served on this day, except for treason, felony or breach of the peace. In the most recent published volume of Law Reports, may be found a case which excited at the time of trial a profound interest, because of the principle involved. An appeal was carried up from the Court of Law, and was argued before the Court of Errors, upon the single plea, that the verdict was rendered 50 minutes after 12 o'clock on Saturday night, and was therefore void. Although the verdict was sustained, and the decision seemed to be rendered against the letter of the Sabbath, it is gratifying to notice throughout the opinion rendered by the higher Court, a clear recognition of the legal maxim "*dies Dominicus non dies juridicus*," and a desire to carry out the spirit of the Sabbatic rest. It will be found upon investigation, we imagine, that the whole course of public legislation and of judicial decision has been to support the authority of the Sabbath, and that if our Legislatures and Courts of justice are offenders against this day, it is not so much by their formal deliverances, as by their practical arrangements. Their public sittings have been so appointed as to necessi-

tate sometimes, the travelling of judges, lawyers, jurors and witnesses, certainly further than a Sabbath day's journey. This evil, however, will be considerably abated, by the facilities of travel which every day become greater; as unquestionably it might have been always abridged by greater tenderness of conscience in the parties implicated. While, however, acknowledging the wholesome drift of legislation, in this State, upon this subject, it will avoid misapprehension to mention the ground upon which this legislation is based. If we mistake not, the Sabbath is brought under the shield of the law, and its authority upheld, solely upon the footing of a municipal institution. To enforce its claims as a religious ordinance, would, in the opinion of our civilians, encroach upon that unrestricted liberty of conscience guaranteed to all men. We will not take up, on the heel of this letter, already too extended; so difficult a subject as the proper relations of civil government to religion. But as man's religious nature, and his subjection to the divine law, afford the only basis of human government, we do not see why our magistrates, our judges, and our law-givers, should hesitate in avowing themselves the representatives of a Christian people. Though it be civil government which they administer, it is the civil government of a Christian nation; and whatever be the statutes and decisions of rulers and judges, a government must practically bow to the deep religious convictions of the masses, or else sweep away the only foundation of its own power.

In conclusion, beloved brethren, we suggest, without attempting to expand them, several general motives, by which the strict observance of the Lord's day may be urged upon the consciences of Christian men.

1. The first is, as has been fully represented above, that this day is the memorial of all worship of the living God; under every form of religion it has been distinctly recognized, and must, therefore, be cherished as the munition and defence of Christianity.

2. The only pleas upon which the rest of the Sabbath can be invaded, are those of necessity and mercy; and these, from the nature of the case, must be left to the judgment and conscience of each individual. In the great majority of cases, the circumstances upon which the decision must rest, cannot be fully known, save to the person himself. This throws a Christian man upon his conscience, as men of the world are sometimes thrown upon their

nonor. Whenever we are called thus to defer to the conscientiousness of others, and to suspend our own right of judgment, this imposes a corresponding obligation upon all who are thus trusted, not to deceive the confidence which is felt in their integrity.

3. Sabbath-breaking, on the part of professing Christians, unquestionably falls within the proper discipline of the Church; and yet all such discipline is void, and perhaps hurtful, if not supported by a deep religious conviction underlying it. The forms in which the Sabbath is likely to be dishonored by members of the Church, are not those more gross and profane breaches of which ungodly men are guilty, but, on the contrary, violations in defence of which much can plausibly be urged. If, therefore, a deep and pervading conviction of the sinfulness of these has not obtained, the discipline of the Church will be set at naught. The Church is thereby thrown into this unpleasant dilemma: either by suppressing discipline, to connive at the breach of God's law in her communion; or else by enforcing it, to divide and alienate those whom she desires to restrain and guide.

4. There is no reasonable hope of rescuing the Sabbath from open profanation by the world, unless the Church shall be strenuous in its defence. The honest and unswerving convictions of pious men, must form the nucleus of a correct and powerful public sentiment, if it is ever created.

5. It is idle to expect the Sabbath to be kept even with decent external respect, when the institutions of the gospel are not enjoyed. Not to insist upon the fact fully developed in the preceding pages, that the Sabbath is appointed as a day of worship, as well as of rest, it does not secure even the latter, where the gospel is not preached, and its ordinances are not enjoyed. The great aim must be to provide ample means of religious instruction to every community; and by their silent yet resistless operation, to secure that reverence for this day, which the law of God requires.