

"THE SUNDAY A NECESSITY."

A Plea for the Preservation of the Sabbath Day.

Charleston News and Courier, June 15th.

"The Sunday a Necessity" was the theme yesterday of the discourse of the Rev. J. Keir G. Fraser, pastor of the second Presbyterian Church.

Why am I under obligation to observe one day in seven as a day of rest? It will not do in answer to this question to say that the Fourth Commandment requires the observance of such a day, because the question still presses, why does the Fourth Commandment require it?

Now this Commandment which says to you and me "Remember the Sabbath, observe one day in seven as a rest day," takes its place among these moral laws. It is binding, not because it happens to be found written in the old Jewish Decalogue, but because it is inherently right.

It is fortunate for us, I think, that our Lord was compelled to pose this question in his day, fortunate that the basis of the Sabbath law was misunderstood by those of his days. The Jews placed that basis in the Fourth Commandment in the mere outward letter of the Decalogue.

I am well aware that in this complicated social life of ours, and especially in crowded cities, there must necessarily be exceptions, but these ought to be reduced to a minimum, while those who are compelled to work on Sunday ought to be given a day for rest during the week.

But to push the question back another step—why does a man need a rest day? What are the necessities of his nature which obligate him to the observance of such a day? These necessities are two-fold.

1. His physical nature makes necessary a rest day. The very preservation of the State hinges on the observance of the Sabbath. It is a law written away down deep in nature that the nation which disregards the Fourth Commandment must perish.

requires a Sabbath day in order to rearrange its distorted particles. But men are not machines, and all the more do they need a rest day. I recently consulted a great cyclopaedia of social reform, a work which never touches religious questions at all, and I saw the statement written there that economically the Sunday is a necessity, and in support of this position it gave the interesting fact that if a mason or carpenter takes a contract in Paris he gets the work done quicker, cheaper and better by employing English labor, because English persons work six days, while French workmen work seven days in the week.

My friends, this is a serious question. The loss of the Sabbath means infinitely more than the loss of a physical rest day. It means the dethronement of God and the loss of the spiritual nature. The words of the Great Teacher may well come home to us here with startling force.

No man can be true to himself who neglects the cultivation of his spiritual nature. Our very life is rooted in God and true living consists in recognizing this. And for this we need the Sabbath. It is a necessity of our spiritual nature. A recognition of this great truth is of special importance at a time like this, when many are seeking for the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of worship.

And now, before closing, I must speak very plainly on another phase of this question, viz., the right of the State to legislate on the Sunday. And here I may say that I believe that the improvement of the Sabbath must be sought through the improvement of man rather than the improvement of the Sabbath. Let men be taught their true dignity as spiritual beings and they will welcome the Sabbath as a great physical and spiritual boon.

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(2) The Sabbath was made for man because he needs it for the cultivation of his spiritual nature. To base the obligation of Sabbath observance simply on man's need of bodily rest is to place man on a level with the brute creation. Man is over and above everything else a spiritual being and unless he develops spiritually he fails to develop along the lines of true manhood.

That ground is not the repetition of creeds and commandments, but it is man's need. We must bring our lawmakers to see that as a mere condition of national health, as a condition of economical efficiency, they are not only justified, but compelled, to protect the Sunday as a day of rest.

I trust that our study of this question this morning may help us all to realize anew something of the tremendous value of the Sabbath to the individual, the nation and the race, and that it may lead us to give the whole weight of our personal influence to the work of preserving it.

Identified. His mother was giving a musicale and he had been put to bed even earlier than usual. The indignity rankled in his inflexible breast. He was very fond of music, and besides he wanted to see all the people who were down in the parlor.

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Under Shadow of Friday. A dispatch from Athens, Ga., to the Atlanta Constitution, says: Colonel Charles S. Webb, who has just returned home from Gainesville, where he has been for the past week assisting in the work of caring for the sufferers from the recent tornado, tells a very interesting story connected with Victor Montgomery, the owner of the mills that suffered in the Gainesville tornado and also the owner of the Paolet mills that were destroyed by the flood in South Carolina last Friday night.

Mr. Montgomery was talking to Col. Webb last Tuesday night in Gainesville about the disaster that had come upon his property there, and remarked that he had almost reached the conclusion that there was something in the superstition about beginning things on Friday.

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