

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE

The French Philosopher, Voltaire, was once asked, "How can Christianity be destroyed?" and he replied, "By destroying the Christian Sabbath."

Evidence of growing concern over the turn that the observance of the Lord's Day is taking, has been appearing in the press, in statements of labor officials and in Church pronouncements.

In this critical hour of the world's History, when the forces of darkness threaten to extinguish the light of our Faith and overthrow our way of Life, we should be seeking to strengthen our ramparts rather than allowing for that which will weaken them. If Voltaire was convinced that Christianity could be destroyed through the destruction of our Christian Sabbath, it would be well for us to taken heed to modern trends.

New ways of life are creating new problems! One cannot be blind to what the Sabbath has become in our communities both during and since the last World War. There have been radical changes in our Social living in the past few years. There is a growing negligence toward the Church and its standards.

Materialism is rampant throughout the land and spiritual values are ignored or under estimated.

New modes of rapid conveyance have made the Sabbath a day to "run about."

Radio and television with their abundance of secular entertainment being broadcast on Sunday, are detracting from the atmosphere of the Lord's Day.

A sign "Men at Work" might well be placed before some homes on Sunday for we can see labourers everywhere. Gardens are being cultivated, lawns moved, cars polished, maintenance and repairs being attended to, as well as new houses being built.

In the realm of Industry, with men being displaced by machines, it has already become apparent that some people are favoring Sunday employment. Operators of industrial plants in some areas have stated their intentions of opening on Sundays in order to boost production.

A growing demand for commercial sports and entertainment appears to have been fostered successfully by professional promoters and prospective customers.

Merchants are opening their doors for wide open trade on the Lord's Day. The report of one such merchant was, "We were loosing some of our best customers by being closed on Sunday. We did more business on Sunday than on Monday". One grocery store manager commented that his biggest rush always come just after 12 o'clock when the Morning Church services were over and the church people stopped for a little shopping on the way home.

We should not think of these problems as remote. True, the situation is more serious in other sections of the country, but our area is invaded also. Drug stores which are permitted by law, to open on Sunday for the sale of medicinal supplies, are being patronized by people who can buy anything from "soup to nuts."

Patronage of such places may seem to be a minor offence, but actually it is a contribution to a trend that is responsible for the steady decline of respect for the Lord's Day. Our people should be alerted to this danger by Council and admonition from the pulpit.

Another trend in the pattern of modern living that is contributing heavily against the sanctity and virtue of the Lord's Day, is the prevalence of travel. Many people travel as freely on Sunday as on any other day of the week, stopping at gas stations and canteens enroute. Among these tourists are christian people who have joined the Sunday motorists without realizing that they are becoming a part of the throng who are breaking God's

commandment which says "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

One day of the week was always kept apart since man was created. This one day was not brought in through legislation. It was instituted by God and blessed by Him. In Lev. 19:30 the children of Israel were thus commanded, "Ye shall keep my Sabbath and reverence my sanctuary, I am the Lord." This command is not without a definite purpose. We find that this Day is for man's physical and spiritual benefit and a proper observance promises real blessing. In Isa. 58:13 & 14 we read, "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, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing thine own way, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words; then shall thou 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."

Jesus gave an example of Sabbath observance which ought to be a model for the Christian use of Sunday. In Mark 1:21-34 we have a journal of how Jesus spent a Sabbath. This was a day early in His Galilean ministry. He had just called his disciples and was giving a perfect example of how to spend the Lord's Day. We would do well to notice what He did in the morning, the afternoon and the evening of that day.

First, in the morning, "Straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the Synagogue and taught." Jesus was in the place of worship and study. Those who would follow Jesus belong in Sunday School and Church on Sunday morning.

The account of a Sabbath afternoon with Jesus begins with the words; "And forthwith when they were come out of the Synagogue they went to the house of Simon and Andrew", Jesus went with His disciples on an afternoon ministry of friendly helpfulness and relaxation. They visited Simon's sick mother-in-law. Visiting in Christ's name is a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

The final phase of the Lord's Sabbath in Capernaum begins with the description "And, at even when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased." Jesus conducted an informal service of healing and casting out devils. The Lord's people belong in service on Sunday night. God's day is incomplete without it.

Here is our example for Sunday. Christ calls for worship and study in the morning, visiting and relaxing in the afternoon, gathering for a service of healing and help in the evening.

If church members, who are supposed to form a majority of the country's population, would recognize the Lord's Day for what it should be, and observe it in the footsteps of Christ, they would contribute greatly to making a pronounced change in the whole picture. Merchants and others with commercial interests would soon recognize the folly of desecrating God's holy day.

In closing we would like to quote a comment made by Mr. Jules Reubens, a local Member of the Council in Middleborough, England, a theatre owner himself, he was speaking against a resolution to permit picture houses to be open on Sunday. Said he, "I love your English Sunday, your Christian Sabbath, and should be very sorry to see it pass away. If a Jew may be pardoned for making this suggestion to Christians, let me say this: "If you sacrifice the Sunday you have been brought up to respect, you will lose something you will be sorry for the whole of your lives".

Respectfully submitted,

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