

Christian Patriotism.

AN

ADDRESS

Delivered at Concord,

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ADDRESS.



CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS—

LET us welcome this day with gratitude to God. Next to the landing of the Pilgrims on the rock at Plymouth, it forms an era in our history, which must ever awaken the most interesting associations. The public acknowledgment of the Divine agency in the affairs of nations, is a dictate both of reason and religion; for it is still true, that Jehovah ‘ruleth among the nations,’ and that, ‘that people only is happy, whose God is the Lord.’

But in our case, the recognition of the Divine hand in all that distinguishes us, is peculiarly proper. “No people,” said Washington, “can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of these United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the

character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of Providential agency.”

For what did our Fathers fly their native land? What could induce them to bid a final adieu, not only to England, but to every cultivated spot in Europe; and to embark in frail vessels on a boisterous ocean, to look for a resting place in a distant wilderness, and among savages? Were there treasures to enrich them, or prospects of pleasure and honor to allure them? Their history and character give the answer. No—they forsook England and Europe, because there was not a spot where they could enjoy, undisturbed, the rights of conscience and the privileges of their religion. They came here, not so much to escape the oppressions of tyranny, and to found a separate political government, as to enjoy religious institutions of their own. The spirit which glowed in their hearts was that of RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. That spirit, first kindled at the altar of God, fanned into a flame by persecution, kept alive and glowing by the fuel of wrongs and of oppressions, lighted the pathway of our fathers to Independence. Their children heard the story of their sufferings, almost before their young minds could comprehend it: thus it became interwoven with the earliest and tenderest recollections; and down to the third and fourth generation, there was scarcely one but could tell some sad tale, of woes en-

dured by his pious ancestry. No wonder then, that when they saw the storm of revolution gathering;—the clouds rising and spreading and thickening on every side, all they had heard in their younger days came rushing on their remembrance. Hence, in their petitions to parliament; in their remonstrances; in their official documents, and in the sermons of ministers, the original design in the settlement of this country was strongly represented. It was urged as a motive to rouse the Americans to action; and perhaps more than any other, it invigorated them during that long and doubtful conflict.

The Declaration of Independence, was of course, political in its character. It was drawn up with reference to the establishment of a new government, and could not directly intermeddle with religion. But could we now convey ourselves into the midst of that august assembly, convened on the Fourth of July, 1776; could we see them listening in deep suspense to the declaration of their rights, and the enumeration of their wrongs; could we know the thoughts which shot quickest across their intellect, or the emotions which beat strongest in their bosoms, when the sound, never before heard, '*we are, and of right ought to be free and independent,*' breaks upon their ear; then should we know how religion was mingled with all their early and tender associations; how the impressions of wrong for

conscience sake, which they had received from their pious ancestors, from tradition and history, were reviving and concentrating in the daring resolution that they would 'put their hand to the great instrument of Independence, and write their name where all nations should behold it, and all time should not efface it.'

We will then on this day ascribe thanksgiving to God. He fitted our fathers for the work, which they accomplished by suffering, and blood, and prayer. Their character is drawn on the face of our Government, and their spirit diffused through all our institutions. The Constitution which they adopted, would not have suited Greece nor Rome in their happiest days; it is inapplicable to any state in Europe, because the intelligence and virtue of the people are insufficient to support it. France once attempted in imitation of our example, to mould herself into a Republic—but she fell into anarchy; was convulsed and torn asunder by the fury of her own elements, and was saved from utter ruin, only by welcoming back and placing on the throne her 'legitimate sovereign.' Give our Constitution to Spain, just as she is, and probably for a time it would be worse for her than the folly, jealousy and tyranny of Ferdinand, and the tortures and fires of the Inquisition. The civil liberty which we enjoy, you cannot yet impart to the brave and noble-minded Greeks, nor to the patriots of the South.

Bolivar, the Washington of South-America, when consulting on a Government for the people, whose liberties he has been instrumental of achieving, declared that the successful operation of our constitution for so many years, *is a miracle*, and that at present it is wholly unsuited to them. Had he better known the character of our fathers, he would not have pronounced the success of our government a miracle; but it does show the influence of religion. It proclaims to the nations while they look on and wonder, 'Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.'—At the same time it teaches us to respond, 'Not unto us, not unto us. O Lord, but unto thy name give glory.' To Him we offer our gratitude. Let it ascend pure from the altar of every heart. Happy, might it thus arise while the loud salutations of the morning echo along our coasts and plains, and reverberate among our hills and mountains; happy, if in every part of the nation, patriots should be seen crowding into the sanctuaries publicly to celebrate God's goodness; happy, if the thousands of voices echoing on this glad day from every quarter of the land, might mingle in one loud anthem, and ascend up to Heaven.

Here it is proper to remark on the *connexion between Religion and Patriotism*, and to show how they may be united in the same breast.

In introducing the subject of Patriotism, I am aware that I have touched a theme over which

poetry has thrown her finest embellishments, and eloquence poured forth her loftiest strains of declamation. No attribute of the human character sooner awakens esteem and admiration. You love the man who loves his country; who endeavors to promote the civil happiness of the community to which he belongs; whose eye is ever open on their interests, watchful to prevent evils, and quick-sighted in discerning methods to remove them. If at his country's call, he steps forward to a post of danger and sheds his blood in her defence, you embalm his name in your memory, and erect a monument to perpetuate his glory.

Conceive now of such a patriot discharging his social duties, without regard to the relation which he and his countrymen sustain to God. His eye is fixed on their temporal welfare, and his efforts unceasing to promote it. But let the love of God mingle with his love of country, and soon it will shed a holy influence over all his actions. He will not relax his efforts for their temporal good, but the motive that actuates him will be purer, and the end in view more worthy of accomplishment.

What then is the difference between the patriot who loves God, and the patriot who loves him not? The one regards his countrymen as sustaining a relation only to this world—the other, to heaven; the one, in his labors for their welfare, thinks of them and feels for them, only as

members of the civil community—the other, as subjects also of the divine government, and as destined to immortality.

Nor is it difficult to understand how religion may thus mingle in the same bosom with feelings of the most refined and ardent patriotism. You may conceive of their union as easily as you can of a love for natural objects, mingled with a purer love for the Author of them. When you walk forth in the freshness of a spring morning, or in the serenity of a summer evening, and your eye glances over the scenes of beauty and sublimity that surround you, may not your heart breathe forth its adorations to heaven.

“ These are THY glorious works, Parent of Good,
Almighty! THINE, this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable!”

Let no one suppose, from the illustrations of the above principle which I am about to introduce, that religion cherishes the spirit of war. On the contrary, its tendency is to prevent or remove, if possible, the causes of so great an evil. But if that cannot be done, then I would say, in the language of Patrick Henry, when he raised his voice to rouse his countrymen to the glorious contest, “ We must fight! an appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts, is all that is left us!”

You well know that in the struggle for Independence one spirit animated every class of the

community. Christians distinguished for piety, and even Ministers of religion, mingled together in the camp, and fought and died in the field, along with their countrymen. In doing this, did they forfeit their religious character? When they lay expiring on the battle-ground, must it have been with the feelings and anticipations of such as have no God to support them? I know that some have thought their conduct, in this respect, inconsistent with piety.--But is it not easy to conceive that the love which they felt in common with others for their country, was modified by a stronger love for their God? and that they engaged in the same contest with views far different from those of others? No doubt, that often during those days of peril, the hearts of those pious men were sending up devout aspirations to Heaven,—while others were reposing on the skill of their commanders, or on the valour of their arms, they were confiding in the strength of the Almighty, and saying, “If God prosper us,” ‘our independence shall ere long be firmly established; the churches and altars where we worship shall be preserved; the country which we love and for which we now bleed, shall be distinguished for its civil and religious advantages, and our posterity with a ‘double portion’ of the spirit that we breathe, shall rise up and call us blessed.’

Nor is this all. I can appeal to some who now hear me. Did not religion shed over that

whole enterprise her selectest influence? How was it, when the news spread, as if borne on the wings of the wind, that blood was shed on the plains of Lexington? While some seized their arms and flew to the scene of contest, 'many repaired to the closet, and many to the sanctuary;—the faithful of every name employed that prayer which has power with God—the feeble hands that were unequal to any other weapon, grasped the sword of the Spirit, and from myriads of humble and contrite hearts, the voice of intercession, supplication and weeping, mingled in its ascent to heaven with the shouts of battle, and the shock of arms.'

The foregoing remarks and illustrations, may suffice to show the connexion between Religion and Patriotism. United in just proportions, they constitute the highest perfection of human character. Let us then, in the genuine spirit of this occasion, aspire to the character of Christian Patriots. Let us consecrate our hearts to God. In our intercourse with our fellow-citizens, let us ever regard the interests of their immortality; do nothing which will diffuse a baleful influence over the soul; reflect that he does most for his country, whose life best accords with the principles of religion, and who is most efficient in removing moral evils, the principal source both of national calamity and national ruin.

Especially, Christian Friends and Fellow-Citizens, let the joyful emotions that now swell our

bosoms be modified and sanctified by the spirit of religion. During the year, events have occurred which will be marked in our history. Half a century has just gone by, since the war of the Revolution actually begun. On the 19th of April the Fiftieth Anniversary of the battle at Lexington was celebrated. And on the 17th of June,—forever blessed be the memory of that day; its events shall be recorded on a fair page of our history, and every eye that reads them shall be suffused with tears—the foundation of a monument was laid on the spot where WARREN and his comrades fell in the cause of Liberty and Religion. Let the honored Orator of that day describe the events of the ever memorable occasion; let him contrast the scenes of Bunker Hill on the 17th of June, 1775, and the 17th of June, 1825, but let our associations with both be sacred. Let the Monument which shall there rise, remind us, and those who shall come after us, of the religious character of our ancestors, and of our obligations to Him ‘who giveth the victory.’ There may it ever stand,—not like the Pyramids of Egypt, a monument of folly and of pride; not for the nations to turn an eye of scorn upon, and to point at, as a monument of the weakness of Republics; but as an everlasting proof that *‘that people is happy, whose God is the Lord.’*

In a similar light should we regard the visit of LAFAYETTE, the ‘guest of the nation,’ to our country. His name and his presence are suited to

awaken sacred associations in the minds of all who love their country and their God. He came to us first in his youth, and the news of his arrival sent a thrill of joy through the drooping and bleeding heart of the nation. Then, by his disinterested devotedness to the cause of freedom; by his noble sacrifices, and by his generous and affectionate disposition, he drew around him the hearts of the whole American people. We rejoice that after an absence of thirty-eight years, he has come to visit the sons of those with whom he fought in his youth; that instead of meeting three millions hard struggling for freedom, he is welcomed by ten millions, rejoicing in blessings which he assisted to procure. We recognize him as an instrument raised up by the God of our fathers, and sent in the hour of their utmost need. We rejoice that we have been permitted to look on his noble countenance, to hear his voice, and to greet him with the shout, "welcome, welcome!" But now he is gone from us. As we shall see his face no more—as he will in a short time bid farewell to our country, and return across the ocean, to the bosom of his own family, and after a little while, be laid down in the grave, where already sleep most of our fathers; we will follow him—we pledge ourselves to follow him, with our affection and our prayers. "The Lord bless him and keep him; the Lord make his face to shine upon him and be gracious unto him; the Lord lift up his countenance upon him and give him peace."

But amid the sacred and joyful recollections which we this day cherish, arise thoughts of melancholy hue, and demand an utterance.

On us, as Patriots and as Christians a duty is imposed, which involves the political and moral interests of our Republic. Let me presume on your attention, while I lay before you the object and the claims of **THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.**

This Society was organized at Washington in 1817, and is now patronized by many of the most distinguished in the nation. Its direct object is to colonize (with their consent) the free people of colour residing in the United States, in Africa, or some other place that may be deemed suitable. A territory has been procured at Cape Montserado, probably the best for the purpose, that the whole south-western coast of Africa contains. A colony, consisting at present of about 400 has been established. The name of the Colony is Liberia, which denotes a settlement of persons *made free* ; and the township which they occupy is called **MONROVIA**, in honor of the illustrious late President of the United States. A government is established, in which the colonists have a share, and which has hitherto been found sufficient for the maintenance of good order. Land has been distributed to the colonists ; and they have already made considerable progress in erecting houses, and clearing and enclosing fields. The climate is so well suited to their constitution.

that far less mortality has taken place among them than usually attends new settlements in other countries. Accounts recently received represent them as contented and happy—rejoicing in the blessings of freedom. They have their common and their Sabbath schools—their own place of worship; and, what must especially rejoice the heart of every Christian, God has recently blessed them with the special influences of the Holy Spirit.

There are now scattered over the United States about 250,000 free people of colour. But in what does their freedom consist? Go into our populous towns and cities; travel into the middle and southern States, and you find the free blacks, the most ignorant, degraded and vicious class in the community. They are objects of compassion and benevolence—too often, of contempt and insult. They minister to the vices and pleasures of the whites, and by those best acquainted with their condition, are regarded as even more wretched than the slaves themselves. Public opinion has set her brand of infamy and exclusion upon them. While they remain in our country, they must be cast out from the privileges of freemen, and subjected to hopeless degradation. As long as they retain the complexion which the God of nature has given them, their condition among us cannot be essentially improved. You may call them *free*; you may enact laws to make them free, but “you

cannot bleach them into the enjoyment of freedom."

In behalf of this unhappy class of the community, an appeal, Fellow-Citizens, is this day made to you; made to the spirit of patriotism which you cherish as Freemen and as Christians; made because the object is a national one, and the resources of the Society, inadequate to accomplish it; and made on this occasion, because connected as it is, with all that renders life most dear, the hearts of the truly patriotic must be quick to feel and their hands prompt to execute.

Remove this portion of the black population from our country, and establish them in a colony, and you not only free our nation of a great and rapidly growing evil, but confer on *them*, both the name and the reality of freedom. Soon they would emerge from the abyss of degradation in which they are now sunk—they would feel all the incitements of liberty stirring within them, and ere long would form an intelligent and happy community, with a government and institutions similar to our own.

But then with the colonization of the free blacks, is connected *the removal of slavery from our country*. I know that the very mention of slavery is enough to arouse the indignation of the free-born and high-minded sons of New-England. While they are ploughing the hard soil, and gathering the fruits of their labour from the

rocks and hills—there is not one, but can say from the heart,

“ I would not have a slave to till my ground ;
 To carry me ; to fan me while I sleep,
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold, have ever earned.
 No—dear as freedom is, and in my heart’s
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave,
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.”

While I speak, I remember too, that slavery is opposed to the first principles of our Constitution. It was not repugnant to the democracy of Greece and Rome. “ It is in perfect harmony with the systems of government which, excepting Great-Britain and Switzerland, prevail in every province of the old world.” But it stands in direct opposition to the acknowledged and boasted maxims, which are the basis of our political institutions. Oh ! what a solemn mockery—I speak it with deference—does it cast upon the great instrument of our Independence ! “ *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights ; and that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness.*”

But, Fellow-Citizens, slavery does exist among us. It was introduced when we were Colonies under England ; and has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength. It becomes us not now to waste time in criminating those

who more directly tolerate it ; but to unite our efforts to remove it. It is generally admitted, that great and alarming as the evil is, it will not do to proclaim universal emancipation. Set the slaves free, ignorant and degraded as they are, they could not take care of themselves, but would spread over and infect every portion of the country. The work must be done gradually, and it seems to me that the Colonization Society proposes the only judicious plan that can accomplish it. By colonizing the free blacks you open the door for gradual emancipation. Many slave-holders stand ready to give up their slaves, the moment they can be removed out of the country. Here then, pause, and look steadily at the object proposed. A way seems opened which ultimately may remove from our country the greatest calamity that ever afflicted a nation. In 1820, our slave population amounted to one million five hundred thousand ; their annual increase is estimated at thirty-five thousand, and their number doubles in less than 20 years. Things remaining as they now are, in 1840, we shall have *three millions* of slaves ; in 1860, *six millions* ; and in 1880, *twelve millions*. A nation of slaves, larger by four millions, than the whole white population now spread over this vast country, from Maine to the extremity of the Floridas, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains. But it will be a nation, ' scattered and peeled,' a nation ' meted out and

trodden down,' and "God forbid—that it should be written in the blood, and echoed in the groans of that generation, 'a nation terrible from the beginning hitherto.'" But *what is to be* their condition? Policy requires even now, that they be kept in ignorance. They may not be taught to read even the Bible, because they will learn their rights, and the means of asserting them. As their numbers increase, the hand of oppression must be laid heavier upon them, and their chains closer rivetted. But as year after year passes away, how much anxiety and terror must be endured by our brethren in the slave-holding States! Plots will thicken! servile insurrections spring up! and flames be kindled, which can be quenched only with blood! These, I know, are words of terror—but their terribleness is no argument against the truth of what I say. If things go on as they now are, words more terrible than these 'must be familiar in our mouths.' Can a million and a half of men, can *twelve millions* be kept in ignorance and bound in chains forever? Can you prevent them from learning that they are fettered, and that 'freedom is the birthright of humanity.' The air which they breathe is free—the soil on which they tread, and which they water with their tears, was once wet with the blood of freemen. Around them are the memorials of freedom. Every year, when the anniversary of our Independence is celebrated, they will hear the voice of Liberty, and

learn even from her discordant notes—that freedom should be theirs. Nor do I know what influence the independent government of Hayti may ere long exert over them: but unless something be done to remove them from our country, we must expect to witness scenes which will make the hearts of the mightiest recoil. The slave-holder, armed while he sleeps, shall be roused by the flames of his own dwelling kindled around him, or by shrieks of murder breaking on his ear. The moral and the physical strength of one part of our country will be gone; and not unlikely, a tragedy far more strange and fearful than that of St. Domingo, will be acted over. “I tremble for my country,” says Jefferson, “when I think that God is just;” and speaking of the probability that the blacks may assert their freedom, he adds, “the Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest.”

As the removal of slavery from our country, involves the interests of the nation, it is sincerely hoped and expected, that the general government will more liberally aid the Colonization Society; and take the Colony, established in Africa, under its protection. But, in the meantime, an appeal, Fellow-Citizens, is made to you. While assembled in this sanctuary, on this joyful occasion, offering prayers and hymning praises to Him who hath made of one blood all the nations, you are invited to evince your love of liberty, by affording relief to the enslaved. Will

you co-operate with thousands of your countrymen, assembled in similar circumstances, in different parts of the nation? Will you act in concert with the worthy and distinguished patriots whose names are enrolled on the records of this Society? Shall I remind you that this is the cause in which Samuel J. Mills, whose praise will long live in the Churches, laid down his life? that in England, Wilberforce and Teignmouth, lead on a marshalled host, resolved never to relinquish their object, till all the sons of Africa be free? Shall I tell you, that the first voice ever raised in France against slavery and the slave trade, was the voice of LAFAYETTE; that, with his own money, he purchased a considerable number of slaves, to educate them for emancipation; that he honored, with his presence, the last annual meeting of the Colonization Society, and is now one of its Vice-Presidents?

I know that in such a cause you are earnest to unite. But, before putting forth the hand of your charity, consider what influence you are about to exert, with God's blessing, on the millions of Africa. Through the influence of the Colony, of agents sent out by the government, and of vessels of war stationed along the coast, the slave trade, that "horrible traffic," which, for ages, has been the scourge of Africa, and the disgrace of civilized nations, may, in a great degree be prevented. I speak indeed of a horrible traffic—but I cannot detail to you its horrors. I

cannot tell what it is to be torn away from country and from home—to be carried in chains to a strange land, and doomed to a slavery worse than death. But I can tell you one plain fact that speaks louder than words. “Not less than 60,000 slaves, according to the most moderate computation, are annually carried from Africa.” And it is stated on good authority, that many of these are smuggled into the southern States and sold. In the latter part of 1823, a vessel arrived at Baltimore; with eleven slaves from Africa on board. These were rescued through the humanity of some of the active members of the Colonization Society, and provided for by being distributed among several families in the neighborhood, to remain till they should be able to express their wishes in regard to their future destination. Soon after, however, an interpreter was found by the name of Wilkinson, and they were examined as to their wishes to return, by the navy agent at Baltimore. The general question was put to them, severally, whether they wished to remain in this country as freemen, or be sent to Montserado, and thence if practicable to their homes. Dowrey was the first who was called to answer. He was a chief in his own country, of whom Wilkinson had some knowledge. He replied, “I wish to go home. I wish to see my father, my wife and children. I have been at Montserado. I live but three day’s walk from that place.” Barterou answered, “let me go home; I have a wife,

I have two children, I live a morning's walk from Dowrey." The next person examined had been living with Gen. Harper; (who was one of the most efficient members of the Society, but is now in his grave;) when asked if he was not disposed to remain and be instructed, and go home hereafter and teach his countrymen;—he replied, "Gen. Harper is a good man; he will give me clothes and food, but he cannot give me my wife and children." The reply of the next was, "Why do you ask this question over and over, I am so rejoiced at the thought of returning, that I want words to express myself. Do you not know that nothing is so dear as a man's home." Another said, "My mother is living, my father is living, I have two sisters, I shall be grateful to those who send me to my family and friends." Similar were the answers of all; and I am happy to state, that through the agency of the Colonization Society, they were all restored to their country and homes. Happy—thrice happy, he—who contributes but a mite to terminate a traffic, which besides its legion of other evils, thus rends asunder the cords of the heart.

But besides doing much to prevent the slave trade, the colonists which you help to establish at Montserado, will cultivate the arts, open their schools, and erect their churches. From them and from the English Colony at Sierra Leone, light will emanate on the surrounding

darkness. Probably "two centuries hence, the little band who are now cultivating their fields and building their houses at Montserado, and spreading over the wilderness around them a strange aspect of life and beauty, will be remembered by the thousands of their descendents with the same emotions with which the little band who landed at Plymouth two centuries ago, are remembered by the thousands of New-England." Ere that time Africa will have lifted her head among the nations, and beholding the means of her redemption, will have 'stretched out her hands unto God.' Instead of the groans which for ages have mingled with the sullen murmur of her rivers, or swept unheard across her deserts, 'joy and gladness shall be heard in her, thanksgiving and the voice of melody!'