

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT NORTHAMPTON,

JULY 6, 1807.

ON THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

OF

American Independence :

AT THE

REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

.....
BY JONATHAN H. LYMAN.
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NORTHAMPTON, [Mass.]
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1807.

NORTHAMPTON, JULY 6, 1807.

AT a meeting of a very large number of Federal Republicans, assembled to celebrate the Anniversary of American Independence in this place,

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY—That the Committee of Arrangements present the thanks of this meeting to JONATHAN H. LYMAN, Esq. for the elegant and spirited Oration, by him this day delivered, and that a Copy thereof be requested for the press.

ATTEST, JOSIAH DWIGHT, { *Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements.*

.....

GENTLEMEN,

IN compliance with the request of the Federal Republicans, as expressed in the above resolve, I submit a Copy of the Oration to your disposal.

Respectfully,

Your obedient servant.

J. H. LYMAN.

The Committee of Arrangements.

AN
ORATION.

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THOSE epochs in the political history of nations, which have been marked by signal blessings, have customarily met with public and grateful remembrance. Anniversary festivals in commemoration of such events are not only sanctioned by common practice, but they are consonant with the principles of our natures and the dictates of policy. While they flatter the proud feelings of our hearts, they also excite that dignified and independent spirit, that warm love of our country, which promise the surest protection to its rights and freedom.

AMONG such distinguished epochs in *our history*, fellow citizens, that, which we are at this time assembled to commemorate, holds the highest rank. It gave us political birth. It annexed a new name to the calendar of nations. It exhibited to the admiring world a novel spectacle—that of an infant people, disconnected in its members, destitute of experience and resources, unallied, unbefriended, suddenly ce-

mented by a holy bond of union, and boldly seizing the gauntlet of defiance. The perseverance, the fortitude, the heroism with which the struggle was maintained, could be equalled only by the value of its object and its unexampled success.

THE historian may narrate, the politician may descant, the orator may declaim, the poet may hymn pæans in praise of freedom, but its true panegyric alone can be read in the silent emotions of the heart. Look then, my friends, to your own bosoms for its eulogium ; and let the sweet incense of gratitude ascend from the pure altar of your hearts to the throne of God.

As freedom in the *abstract* is a mere nullity, so it is a subject no less worthy of congratulation, that after the prize for which we had contested was won, and our independence was acknowledged by our foes, we were enabled successfully to combat renewed difficulties, and to establish a system of government and finance which promised us the unadulterated enjoyment of all those accompaniments of freedom which give it its true zest. Often has the mind contemplated with astonishment the rapid steps of our progress from a feeble, diseased infancy, to a vigorous manhood. The close of the revolution found our country exhausted, perplexed, bankrupt. With the immediate cause, which had united its several members, the union itself ceased. Private passions, local and contending interests boded a dismal futurity. But in the counsels of eternity, prosperity was awarded us.

Those, who had been first in war, became first in peace. By their wisdom were planned, and by their skill and judgment were carried into effect, those measures which restored confidence in public faith, united discordant interests, established the sure and gradual reduction of our debts, replenished our treasury, ensured the friendship and respect of foreign nations, fostered learning and the arts, promoted private wealth and virtue, and sanctioned the public support and respect of our holy religion. The annals of ages do not afford a parallel instance of public felicity. But with Olivia we may exclaim, "Felicity, how transient! transient as the day-dream, which plays on the fancy in the bright morning of love."

OUR exultations are stopped mid-course. They are succeeded by an anxious solicitude, lest we should be called to exchange our garlands for weeds, the timbrel and the harp for the funeral knell. God be thanked that the "*demons of wild misrule*" are not even now, chaunting a profane and discordant requiem over the ashes of our independence.

IGNORANCE may cast the jeer of incredulity and crafty design may hurl the shafts of ridicule, but they cannot change the immutable nature of truth. Though conscious that we have swallowed deadly poison, shall we deem ourselves safe because we are not yet in the last struggles of death? Ruin is progressive. It follows the general laws of nature, and like other effects is consequent of causes.

It is a question which has been much controverted among the learned, whether *moral* or *physical* causes, have the greater influence in producing those surprising changes in society, with which the history of the world abounds. In *some* instances, we trace the rise, decline and fall of empires to the almost sole operation of *physical* causes ; in *most* instances, *physical* and *moral* causes have a *combined* agency ; but *rarely* do we find instances like our own, where *moral* causes *alone* have effected such a fatal degeneracy.

THE year 1776, is rendered memorable, not merely by the great events, which we are this day commemorating. It witnessed the organization of a systematic conspiracy, in the heart of Europe, against the throne of God and the happiness of man—a conspiracy which has scattered a moral pestilence over the fair face of nature.* The polluted dogmas of Atheism have supplanted the benevolent spirit of the gospel. Man has been taught, that every thing, once considered honorable and virtuous, is rebellion against the sovereignty of reason, and that *crime* consists alone in a reverence for Jehovah, and an indulgence of the social affections and the sweet charities of life : that an abstract benevolence, unadulterated by any definite attachment, is the sum total of his duty : and that his views of futurity must rest on annihilation. These doctrines have been propagated with a zeal worthy a better cause ; it has been done too under the imposing pretext of consulting his happiness.

* Vide, Robison, Barruel, &c. The Illuminati are supposed to have been first embodied as a society A. D. 1776.

But it is most feelingly remarked by the elegant Mackenzie, that “ He who would undermine those foundations, upon which the fabric of our future hope is reared, seeks to beat down that column, which supports the feebleness of humanity. Let him but think a moment and his heart will arrest the cruelty of his purpose. Would he pluck its little treasure from the bosom of poverty? would he arrest its crutch from the hand of age, and remove from the eye of affliction every solace of its woe? The way we tread is rugged at best; we tread it lighter however by the prospect of that better country, to which we trust it will lead; tell us not that it will end in the gulph of eternal dissolution, or break off in some wild, which fancy may fill up as she pleases, but which reason is unable to delineate; quench not that beam, which amidst the night of this evil world, has cheered the dispondency of ill requited worth and illumined the darkness of suffering virtue.”

EVERY thing, rendered sacred by the experience of ages, was marked as the victim of this desolating spirit of innovation. As the light of true learning was soon found to oppose a formidable barrier to its progress, a secret and deadly blow was aimed at the established principles of science. “ Logic in learning” has been called “ what the compass is in navigation—the guide by which our reason steers in the pursuit of true philosophy.”* This compass has been broken and reason has been left to the guidance of chance upon the wide ocean of investigation. Modern dia-

* Fielding. *Temple Beau.*

lectics are an amalgam of chicanery and absurdity, which would disgrace the reasonings of a mad-house. Language itself is confounded anew amongst these visionary Babel-builders. The vocabulary of science is crowded with abstract terms, to which no definite idea is attached, and with him, who labors to understand, *confusion* becomes *worse confounded*.

THE elements of moral science have been exploded, and a system of ethics and metaphysics has been substituted, more chaotic and corrupt than the philosophy of the heathens—a system which Seneca and Epictetus would reject with contempt and abhorrence. The laws of nations, which had grown out of the exigencies of mankind, and by common consent had extended their jurisdiction over the civilized world, are discarded as worm-eaten codes, and they are succeeded by the law of *will*, supported by physical power.

It is very justly remarked by Mr. Locke, that “there cannot be done a greater mischief to prince and people, than propagating wrong notions concerning government.” The theory of government and civil polity, formerly held high rank in the circle of sciences. Maturity of understanding, enlightened and invigorated by a long course of study and observation—a familiar acquaintance with the moral and political history of man were deemed accomplishments indispensibly requisite to the statesman and civilian. More, Harrington, Bacon, and other great men, did indeed occasionally indulge the follies of a

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sportive imagination, in framing ideal commonwealths; but to the enterprize and wisdom of our own days, was it reserved, to found practical experiments upon such a basis. We are no longer necessitated to resort to the fictions of romance for the republic of Barataria or the able administration of a sapient Sancho.

THE odious aristocracy of talents, learning and experience is expunged and every citizen aspires to the labors of legislation. Thousands who have neither natural discernment or acquired information adequate to the most cursory view of national policy, have assumed the station of lecturers. Indeed there is not a village, but produces its political Stagyrte and every tippling house is a ready Lycœum.

SUCH, my countrymen; is the system of moral and intellectual degradation, which has pervaded our own country in common with the rest of the world. Effects must follow their causes. From an embittered fountain must flow bitter waters. Feeble at best is the resistance which reason and principle make against the natural tendencies of our passions, but throw down that mound, feeble as it is, and furnish additional arms and new incitements to the assailant, and the citadel of human happiness sinks in ruins.

THE page of history has ever exhibited to the philanthropist abundant matter for melancholy reflection; but the events which have transpired during the period which we have just contemplated, have led

on the successive scenes of a tragedy whose catastrophe bids fair to be the dissolution of society. Cast your eyes over the map of Europe. You find one huge charnel house. The sword of the destroyer has covered her fields with putrescent carcasses and swollen the current of her streams with blood. Do you enquire for those kingdoms and republics with which her fair face was once variegated? They no longer exist but as tributary provinces of a vast military despotism. The old dynasties of Europe which by their reciprocal jealousies, formerly preserved the balance of power, have successfully become immersed in the new dynasty of France. Political liberty is no longer known on the continent; it has fled proscript, and sought an asylum on the white cliffs of England. Every thing succumbs before the omnipotence of the Corsican. The old wonders of the world no longer attract notice. Cæsar, Alexander, Genghis Khan dwindle into petty marauders, before this Colossal conqueror. Rapid as the lightning of his own mind, he marches but to subdue; the subtle policy of his cabinet precedes his camp, and victory is ensured before his arms are visible. Versatile as Proteus he has expedients adapted to every exigency. Master of half the wealth and population of Europe, the sinews of war are his own.—Restricted by no tie of honor, destitute of even the semblance of faith, and remorseless as the grave, no minor considerations shake the purpose of his soul. His ambition is boundless as his resources. Universal empire is his object, and to the God of the universe must the anxious world look for salvation.

In the earliest stages of this dreadful revolution, did the prophetic voice of wisdom foretel its issue—with few however was the augury accredited. The asserters of our independence and the wise founders of our federal government who had spilled their blood and expended their treasure, in the acquisition and establishment of substantial freedom, were early alarmed at the threatening aspect of this baleful meteor.— While the passions and affections of the great mass of our countrymen were propelled with a fatal impulse towards an intimate union with the leading actors in this great drama, our political pilots with a prescience and skill which marked their superiority spanned the illusion and shunned the fatal inticements. This was the favorable moment for the germ of faction and cosmopolitanism to expand itself.— Many names conspicuous in our country had long since stood on the catalogue of the new school.— Our revolution had eventuated in a manner abhorrent to their ambitious designs. In despite of their Intrigues and opposition, a free and energetic constitution of government, had met the approbation and acceptance of the people. But the passions of the people were *now* favorable to their views. Under the name of democratic societies they organized their forces throughout the union; and assisted by the open influence and secret machinations of the French court, they swore on the altar of anarchy the destruction of our political charter and the overthrow of our independence and happiness. Faction now reared her hydra head. A spirit of falsehood and delusion went abroad through the land. Darkness became light, and light darkness. No means were left unes-

sayed, no measures untried to accomplish their purpose. These means and measures have again and again been detailed: they have renewedly met with the execrations of good men: their disastrous result our eyes have witnessed, and posterity will have abundant cause to reprobate.

A CERTAIN portion of party spirit, by exciting a vigilant attention to the conduct of those who exercise the delegated power of the people, is not only consonant with the nature, but propitious to the well-being of a representative republic. But the breath of faction, is blasting as the arid Simoon of the desert.

IN this brief sketch, my countrymen, we find the parentage of the democratic faction. Engendered by atheism and anarchy, remorseless ambition and disappointed malice, facilitated its birth. To insure its acceptance the native ugliness of the nursling, was cautiously disguised in the stolen robes of patriotism and virtue.

“HYPOCRISY (says Burke) of course delights in sublime speculations; for never intending to go beyond speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent.” With such sublime speculations have our hypocritical demagogues, gulled the people. Forgetful of their first love, they have submitted to meretricious embraces. Jealous of their tried friends they have wrested from them the guidance of their destinies. Intoxicated with a new passion they have thrown their all into the bosom of the gilded deceiver.

POPULAR favor is a whirlwind which elevates its object to heaven, but to give it a more dreadful fall. The good man indeed meets his fate with composure, under the consoling reflection of conscious integrity, while the fallen demagogue, pillows his head on the agonies of remorse.

INORDINATE expressions of good will ought ever to excite vigilant circumspection. As good works are the only satisfactory evidence of faith, so the sincerity of professions must be estimated by the disinterestedness of conduct. But where do we find one of these *friends of the people* who is not an hungry expectant, or a pampered retainer of office? His end once attained he no longer recognizes the doctrine of rotation; we hear no more of exorbitant salaries, or of bread wrested from the mouth of labor. Does he remit *one jot or one tittle*, of his recits to the dear objects of his sympathetic affection? Does he bear with modesty his blushing honors thick upon him? or does he exhibit a port and stature unbloated by the insolence of power? If his station yield him an extensive patronage, who are the recipients of his favor and confidence? The independent freeman in whom are united the two cardinal requisites of honesty and ability? or the fawning sycophant, the miserable tool of his own purposes? It will not be denied that this ephemeral pomp of office, connected with its substantial emoluments, is a sufficient inducement, to elicit these hollow hearted professions, from men corrupted by avarice and ambition. As according to the ancient rules of reason-

ing it is unphilosophical to assign more causes than are necessary to the production of the effect, this enigma is of course satisfactorily solved.

NOTWITHSTANDING this faction has met with a spirited opposition from the honest and intelligent, yet it is a lamentable fact that it has still progressed. In every contest, *vice*, from the natural depravity of man, has the advantage over *virtue*. *Virtue* often places too great reliance on the good of her cause. She assumes the high and honorable ground of dignified controversy. She disdains to resort to chicanery, equivocation and calumny. These weapons of warfare are exclusively appropriate to her opponent. When once she has evinced the truth of her positions and the correctness of her principles, and has disclosed the errors of her antagonist, she rests the impression with the conscience and the understanding. But *vice* is erratic both from necessity and from choice. When she finds the ground she has assumed no longer tenable, she shifts it with facility. Again detected and exposed, again she resorts to her doublings. Ever retreating but never defeated, she maintains a parthian conflict. Obscured by her own darkness and mistress of all the windings of the mind, never hazarding open battle. she leads her adversary round the circle, 'till she regains her original position. Tenacious of her purpose she never yields, but graces her artifice with the name of victory. Such has been the controversy between the friends and the enemies of our real happiness. To enumerate and discuss the great points in dispute

would be an idle adherence to form at the useless expence of your time and patience. There is not I trust a person in this assembly to whom they are not familiar as his catechism.

THERE was a time, my countrymen, when those who are now the idols of popular adoration, found an interest in exciting groundless jealousies. Gag-laws, standing armies, oppressive taxes, and all the *etcetera* of monarchical machinations, with unremitted peals sounded the tocsin of alarm from the St. Mary's to the St. Lawrence. Though conscious that the subject of their labours was fictitious, yet their heated imaginations overwhelmed their understanding. Like the painter Spinello, the horrors of the picture, crazed the faculties of the artist.* Now indeed when real danger hovers around us, and private dissensions should merge in a united concern for the common safety, they cry, *peace, peace,* and would

“ ——beat the messenger who bids beware,
Of what is to be dreaded.”

A striking analogy exists between the body politic and the body natural. Wholesome nutriment and a judicious regimen produce vigorous health—a vicious diet and an irregular and intemperate indulgence of the passions, debilitate the constitution and induce a series of noxious distemperatures, which terminate in dissolution. The symptoms of health

* “ A Tuscan painter of great repute in his time. He painted a picture of the fallen angels, in which he drew so horrid a figure of Lucifer, that it frightened him so much as to affect his senses ever after.”

or disease are promptly discovered by a judicious attention to the habits of the patient. Man is prone to contemplate the bright side only of objects. His judgment, follows the lead of his wishes. The ardor of desire creates a strong assurance of possession.— Thus it happens that the specious flattery of the mountebank secures favor and confidence, while the friendly admonition which warns us of impending danger, meets with ungrateful suspicion. But the honest physician will not therefore cease to perform his duty with fidelity.

WITHOUT *virtue, wisdom and public spirit*, a free republic is a chimera.† How happened it that Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, Plutarch and many others, the best writers of antiquity, most of whom lived in republics, should ultimately have declared in favor of monarchy? They in vain looked for *these main pillars* of freedom. Let *us* for a moment hazard the interesting enquiry. Let *us* see how stand the columns which should support *our* political fabric.

† THIS maxim, so odious to the *vicious, foolish and pusillanimous*, has provoked the *Republican Spy* to hurl its *imbelle telum*.

A disgraced tyro of Leicester school, with characteristic consistency, has seasoned his *polite and sage* remarks, with the charge of *Sophomorphism*! Risum teneatis?

As to the ridiculous assertion, that the author has avowed *monarchical sentiments*, one word will suffice. Those, who are acquainted with him, and with his political opinions, will scout the idea; and those, who are not, will do well to read attentively, and to consider, whether he is to be deemed hostile to the republican institutions of his country, who would excite a cautious vigilance against those dangers, which threaten their dissolution.

WILL you dignify with the sacred name of *virtue* the sceptical philosophy of a Virginian illuminee? A philosophy which weighs the morality of actions, by their tendency to fracture limbs or rob the purse? Or will you look for virtue in the moral practice which flows from such principles? What think you of his *duplicity*, who would hold a language *official* and a language *confidential*; who would write against the importation of foreigners, and foster alien out-laws; who would strenuously advocate the principle of rotation in office, but exempt himself from its operation; who would discourse you sweetly of *honesty, capacity and friendship to the constitution*, but distribute offices to the *dishonest, the incapable and the enemies of the constitution*; who would promise to *avenge*, but prove the *vindicator of insult and habitual wrong*; who would profess rigid economy, while squandering millions for baubles; who would claim to be the champion of freedom, with the same breath that applauds the *enlightened government of Buonaparte*? Who would secretly stab the fair fame of our political father, and shed crocodile tears over his grave? What think you of his integrity who under his oath of allegiance would foment insurrections; who would swear to support the constitution, but pluck down its pillars to subserve his own interest? What think you of the *purity* of the natural father of a mongrel progeny or the intended violator of his friend's bed? What think you of his *piety*, who would cherish in his bosom the bold blasphemer of God and bestow on his accursed labors

sanction, to levy secret war against a nation with whom we were nominally in amity, and which, when disappointment balk'd the enterprize, threw the responsibility and the atonement, on the deluded instruments? Revert to the trial of Smith and Ogden.—Contemplate your friends, inhaling the mephitic vapors of a spanish dungeon, or suspended as a bait for kites upon a gibbet. What do our newly adopted brethren of the *West* say of our public faith? Consult the spirited language of their recent memorial. Assured of the free and legal enjoyment of all their rights, for which the constitution was pledged as the guarantee, they reposed confidence in our faith.—But their personal liberty has been trampled in the dust by a petty military despot, who, instead of meeting with merited chastisement, has hitherto received approbation and support from the fountain of his authority.

Do you discover symptoms of national sanity, in the boundless prevalence of detraction? Slander which

“out-venoms all the worms of Nile,”

has gorged her appetite with the fairest food; she has battered on the spoils of well-earned reputation; the beadroll of victims is crowded with names once dear to Americans. As no virtue has been too elevated, no services too meritorious, so no worth has been so humble and unassuming, no station so sacred or so remote from the jarring conflicts of ambition, as to secure their objects from this impious immolation. The *soldier*, who has fought his country's bat-

tics and won her freedom, the *statesman*, who has established her liberties by wholesome laws, the *magistrate*, who with dignity and impartiality has dispensed the decrees of justice, and the *priest*, who with meekness and purity has ministered before the altar of his God, have shared a common fate. Advert to the columns of those factious prints, which deluge our country. From those, which bask in the full sunshine of executive patronage, down to the petty dabblers in dirt, which infest our own neighborhood, you find them the blackened heralds of their own infamy. Restricted to the publication of truth, the press is justly called the palladium of liberty; but when it becomes the vehicle of corrupt principles and foul-mouthed calumny, it does indeed

“ Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.”

WILL you search the journals of Congress for the record of wisdom? As well might you look for it from a mock-senate of school-boys. Is it wise, or honorable, or virtuous to sap the foundation of a constitution of government, which twelve years experience evinced to be the best on earth? In a country, like our own, where the interests of agriculture and commerce are co-ordinate, and inseperable in their connection, will you call those measures wise, which throw the burdens of taxation upon commerce, and subject it to every species of embarrassment; which leave it, unprotected, the victim of rapine, insult and abuse?

THE contemptible imbecility of our gun-boa system, from the beginning betrayed the folly of its projector, but the recent event at the mouth of the Chesapeake speaks a language irresistible to the feelings and the understanding. Let him, who, without even taking constitutional advice, would rashly reject a treaty, formed in a moment favorable to the interests of America, be answerable for the consequences. Rashness is the prerogative of cowardice. The coward, who trembles at the harmless insect, does not unfrequently, in a fit of madness, brave the vengeance of the lion.

FAC-TION has but recently obtained the predominancy in our own Commonwealth; and lo! the work of innovation is already commenced. Our most cherished establishments of religion and of law have been for years the themes of increasing abuse, but they are now bound and filleted for the sacrifice.

CAN those men have our interests at heart, who to gratify their own malignity, would violate their oaths and outrage the decencies of common sense?—Who would warp the judicial and military establishments from their independence? Who would encourage a factious rebellion in *one* of our public seminaries of learning, and abrogate the charter of *another*? These are but the *first* fruits of democracy; in some of our sister states you behold the *maturity* of her counsels and the *perfection* of her operations. You *there* find rivalled, the servility, corruption and venality of the Roman republic in its most degenerate days. Freedom of election is no

longer known but in name. Bribery fears not to show her miscreant front in the bright glare of noonday. Tyrannical demagogues aided by those *choice spirits*, who have escaped merited punishment in their own country, have banished from the polls the small remains of virtue and integrity. The sacred obligation of the *jurors oath*, that “adamantine chain which binds the integrity of man to the throne of eternal Justice,”* is no longer felt or regarded. *Anarchy* sways the sceptre, and *myriads* of the *minor fiends*, await the execution of her orders.

TRAITOROUSLY surrendered by domestic sycophants, the destinies of our nation are no longer in the hands of Americans. Native born citizens may indeed be the *nominal* ministers of government, but *in fact* they are the senseless puppets of foreign jugglers.

To the base purpose of promoting *such* men, has the elective franchise been prostituted. My Countrymen, hearken to the warning voice of one, whose ken soared beyond the vulgar conceptions of mankind. “Woe to that country, which would madly and impiously reject the service of the talents and virtues, civil, military or religious, that are given to grace and to serve it; and would condemn to obscurity, every thing formed to diffuse lustre and glory around a state. Woe to that country too, that passing into the opposite extreme, considers a low education, a mean contracted view of things, a sordid mercenary occupation as a preferable title to command.”†

* Curran.

† Burke.

WHERE shall we look for that bold and manly spirit, which rose at the "great call of nature," braved the arms and artifice of Britain, and staked life for liberty; which with the olive branch in one hand and the sword in the other, upon every new aggression, stepped promptly forth in defence of those rights, which it had so gloriously rescued from the ravisher?— Which taught the nations of the earth to respect the power of a great, independent and sovereign people? Is it to be found in that abject pusillanimity, which suffers its beard to be plucked by a petty barbarian or an enslaved Spaniard; which pays the tribute of millions as the price of peace to a foreign despot? Like Hercules, in our cradle we strangled the serpents that sought to destroy us, and alas! like Hercules, in our maturer years, we find our limbs enveloped in the shirt of Nessus.

THE illusive phantom of human perfectibility has fascinated the senses, and the syren song of *liberty, equality and the rights of man*, has lulled into security the watchful jealousy of freemen. Thus entranced the sentinel has slumbered at his post, while the enemy has seized on the fortress. But deep as the sleep of death must be those slumbers, which the thunder of our approaching ruin does not break.

“Awake! awake! put on strength—; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.”

Isaiah.