

**DISCOURSE**

**DELIVERED AT**

**HAMILTON CENTRE, JULY 4, 1828,**

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**BY NATHANIEL STACY.**

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**1828.**

TO THE REV. NATH'L STACY.

Sir—We, as a special committee appointed by the joint committee of arrangements for the present occasion, do hereby, in behalf of said committee, tender to you our thanks for your patriotic discourse delivered this day; and request a copy for the press.

Very respectfully, yours, &c.

LUCAS CRAINE:

WM. LORD.

Hamilton, July 4th, 1828.

GENTLEMEN—I am not insensible of my inability to do justice to the important subjects introduced in the discourse, nor of the imperfections unavoidable, at least by me, in one thus hastily written: but relying on your superior judgement in regard to its merits, and with the hope that it may be a humble means to awaken a disposition among the candid part of its readers to inquire more minutely into the nature and design of the institutions noticed therein, under their present establishment, I cheerfully comply with your request.

Your obedient servant,

NATHANIEL STACY.

LUCAS CRAINE, & }  
WM. LORD, Esqs. } Committee.

## ADDRESS, &C.

From the earliest ages of Society, of which we have any record, it has been a custom to commemorate important and interesting events, by periodical celebrations, attended with appropriate ceremonies; by which the names, the virtues, and the deeds of the most active agents were gratefully cherished, and handed down to posterity.

And if ever a people were called upon to cherish the remembrance of an achievement of the greatest consequence to themselves and to the world, we are that people. Fifty-two times has the earth performed her annual revolution, since America was declared "*free and independent.*" The major part of the heroes of our revolution, sleep with their fathers. While the few that remain are trembling like the last leaves of Autumn ready to drop at the slightest increase of the blast. A few more years and we must be left wholly to the page of history, to learn in detail, those wonderful events.—Not one will be left to tell us of their solicitude, their fears, their hopes, their fatigues, their privations, their perils and their wounds.

We have met, then this day, my friends, as an expression of our unabating affection to the living, and our grateful remembrance of the exalted worth of the departed; not by indulging I hope, in inebriety and riot, but by endeavouring to awaken patriotic feelings in our own breasts, and inspiring in the rising generation a disposition to receive with gratitude, and a resolution to preserve inviolate, and to transmit uncontaminated the rich legacy bequeathed to them by their fathers. And as it devolves on me to address you on this occasion, I have chosen as the most consistent with my profession and feelings, a portion of the divine word as a foundation for my discourse.

Deut. 32—5, 6. "*They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children; they are a crooked and perverse generation.*"

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*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?*

In this memorable song of the Lord, Moses recounts in a highly figurative and sublime manner, before the assembled tribes of Israel the wonderful dealings of Jehovah towards that people.—And it will be seen by a careful examination of sacred history, that there is a very striking analogy between their history, and the history of these states.

If Israel were oppressed in a land that had adopted them as her children.—if they were there required to do service to strange Gods, and compelled to feel the relentless scourges of cruel task-masters; our venerable fore-fathers were doomed to suffer similar calamities. They were required, in the land that gave them birth, to assent to dogmas at which their consciences revolted, or be debarred the privileges of free subjects of the government that ought to have secured and defended their rights; and compelled to yield a tenth of their hard earnings to support a hireling, luxurious and vicious priesthood, who ministered at altars which they esteemed profane.

If God provided a means for the emancipation of Israel from Egyptian bondage; if he opened a passage through the Red Sea for their escape—the same God inspired our fathers with courage, with fortitude, with confidence, to gather together their wives and their little ones, and seek an asylum from oppression. He bore them in his hand across the bosom of the wide Atlantic—he rebuked the tempest—he calmed the surges of the mighty deep; until the frail barks, which contained the precious treasure reached this distant, and then, waste and savage shore.

If God caused the Canaanites to tremble at the approach of Israel, and drove out those nations that Israel might enter into his promised inheritance—the same God inspired terror in the bosoms of the savage tribes of America at the approach of our ancestors, and enabled them to gain a residence on this promised land of liberty.

If God overthrew the pursuing Egyptian host, who menaced the lives and liberties of Israel; if he raised up a Moses to commence, and a Joshua to complete the establishment of his people in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges—the same all-pervading and all-presiding wisdom, when Great Britain, the former oppressors of our fathers, pursued them with her avari-

cious, jealous and cruel designs to monopolize their benefits, to suppress their growing strength and excellence, and subject them to her own imperious dictation, prepared a Warren and a Washington for us. And though like Moses who only enjoyed a prophetic certainty of the establishment of his people in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges, and died on the top of Pisgah, the former fell, gloriously fell in the early day of our struggle for independence, on the memorable heights of Bunker, only enjoying the prelibations of that happiness reserved for the people whom he loved, and for whom he devoted his interest, his ease, his life, his all; yet Washington, like Joshua, and supported by the same Almighty Power, as miraculously, led on his armies to victory and to triumph.

If God gave Israel a sacred charter of rights--if by Divine inspiration, he gave them a law, which recognised them all as brethren; heirs by birth-right to liberty and equal privileges, forbidding extortion, tyranny and oppression among them: the same God inspired the sages of our revolution to declare with equal exactness, in the memorable declaration of independence, that *all men are created equal; endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;* and finally granted them wisdom to devise, and energy to establish a constitution, a sacred charter of rights, which guarantees these inestimable privileges to each individual of the community--where no king, or sovereign dictator, perpetual or limited, can exercise uncontrolled dominion over the people; where no aristocratical combination, or branch is allowed, arrogating to themselves titles of superior dignity, claiming reverence, of which they were never worthy, and honours that they never merited;--where no religious test is admitted to qualify a citizen for office, and consequently, no ecclesiastical hierarchy can be established, to dictate to the consciences, or tyrannize over the religious privileges of community--an instrument fraught with the highest testimonials of the divine inspiration of that bright constellation of genius who originated it--which stands and ever must stand, as a wonder of the world, an astonishment to kings, and an everlasting terror to tyranny, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

Israel was blessed with great prosperity while he continued obedient to the divine law. "He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that might eat the increase of the field: and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty

rock, butter of kine and milk of sheep, with the fat of lambs, and rams, of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape."

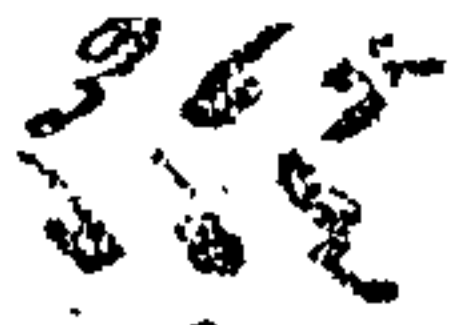
Not less conspicuous has been American prosperity. Fifty two years only have elapsed, since the groans of oppressed America were so heard by heaven, as to obtain from the hand of Divine Goodness the declaration of our INDEPENDENCE. Since that time the struggle for independence has been accomplished—a blow menaced by a neighbouring tyrant parried—A haughty piratical foe humbled. A second time has the American Eagle been grappled to the British Lion, and he has, been borne bleeding from the field: our ships now ride respected and safe o'er every sea, and our commerce extends to every clime.—While we have thus been riding upon "the high places of the earth," and of the sea, we have been made to eat abundantly of the increase of the field. Our population has increased with incalculable rapidity. Our forests have been transformed into fruitful fields, and our deserts to populous villages. Civilization, agriculture, arts and sciences, with gigantic strides, have penetrated the recesses and planted themselves in the heart of the, at that time, howling wilderness.

"Where nought was heard but beasts of prey,"

"Or men as wild and fierce as they,"

the debates of the statesman, the voice of the orator, the song of the bard, and the hymns of christian devotion are heard in pleasing response from the numerous legislative halls, academies, colleges, schools, seminaries of learning, and churches of worship, which have seemingly arisen by enchantment, and are scattered every where through this extensive country. That everlasting silence that then hung with fearful gloom over this dismal region, only interrupted by the yell of the Indian chase, the war-whoop of savage barbarity, or the nightly prowling of ferocious beasts, is now dispelled by the constant hum of business the whistling of the peasant, the clattering of factories and workshops, which are the fruits of science and industry when fostered by freedom. Instead of thirteen infant colonies who then united and achieved our independence, twenty four manly states now rear their towering banners attended by four children territories approaching fast to manhood.

A long season of uninterrupted success and prosperity had a tendency to corrupt Israel, and to make him unmindful of the



hand that bestowed on him the rich inheritance he possessed. It afforded a plausible pretext for an indolent, luxurious, wicked and monopolizing priesthood to arrogate to themselves all the sanctity and virtue of obtaining these peculiar benefits from Divine Providence, and hence, by obtaining an undue ascendancy over the minds of the people, gave them an opportunity to introduce the worship of strange Gods, the fruit of their own vile imaginations; Gods, whose moral principles favoured their own avaricious and wicked designs "whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."

For, says the inspired writer "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange Gods; with their abominations, provoked they him to anger: They sacrificed to devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up whom their fathers knew not." Instead of humble and watchful shepherds over the heritage of God, they became proud, making "broad their phylacteries and enlarging the borders of their garments; and slothful, "sleeping, lying down and loving to slumber." Instead of meek and faithfully instructing, comforting and admonishing the people, content with their allotted inheritance among their brethren they became "dumb dogs that would not bark" without extravagant commensation—they "prophesied for hire and divined for money;" and "he that would not put in their mouths, they even prepared war against him!" Instead of presenting on the altar of the Lord the pure offering of a grateful people, they made merchandise of the divine service.—They established a mart at the temple, at which they sold to the people for money, the lame the halt and the blind, (forbidden by God to be offered) with which they polluted the sacred altar of Jehovah! thereby wresting from the hands of the poor the fruits of their industry, under the most hypocritical pretences; and to use the language of the Redeemer they turned the house of God into a den for thieves.

Herein consisted the secret, but inevitable cause of their dreadful calamities and final overthrow. They corrupted the pure precepts of their holy religion by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." They subverted the wholesome maxims of their civil polity and "made void the law by their traditions." "Their spot was not the spot of his children."—

Envious jealousies and clandestine competitions embittered their feelings and alienated their affection. Intestine discords and civil commotions shook the foundation of their national establishment, and left them an easy prey to the Romans, who fulfilled on them the divine prediction by destroying their city, by razing their Temple to its very foundation, by scattering them among all nations, and making their name a *hiss*, a *byeword*, and a *proverb* in all the earth.

Such was the dreadful, the alarming catastrophe of God's ancient people! and such—I tremble—but such must be the dismal forebodings of those whose minds, enlightened by the faithful pages of sacred and profane history, are enabled to discern the growing causes of such fearful consequences, unless timely and patriotic measures are firmly and perseveringly interposed.

What remains is further to trace the analogy. I approach it with caution, but I do it with firmness. I feel a solemn responsibility—I behold before me a rising generation who will soon succeed to our places in society. That God, who is our Father, who has created us and established us, has, in his divine economy made us the guardians of the rich legacies, and of the sacred charter which bequeathes them, purchased by the death, and sealed by the blood of our fathers, and we are under the most solemn obligations to preserve them inviolate and transmit them unimpaired to posterity. It becomes our indispensable duty then, to seriously examine every measure introduced into society; to analyze its nature, to examine its tendency and its bearings, that we may be able to trace with the most perfect exactness, all its consequences. And while we have such examples, in the history, at least of past ages, of soul hypocrisy in those who minister at the sacred altar, the sacerdotal robe should not awe us into "passive obedience and nonresistance" to their dictation, nor frighten us from the most scrutinizing examination of all their movements, and their plans.

For, setting aside the perfidy and hypocrisy of Jewish priests, and passing by the history of the Pagan world, the history of Christian Rome, and the protestant nations afford too many humiliating and shocking proofs, that professing *christian* ministers of religion are not always destitute of ambition, avarice, and the most vindictive, cruel and bloody passions. That while they have professed to be the followers of Him, who declared his "kingdom was not of this world;" who required



his disciples not to interfere with matters of temporal government, to "be subject to the powers that be," have aspired to, and obtained the highest seats of temporal authority, have dictated to Emperors, to Kings and to Magistrates, the modes of their administration; have crowned them and deposed them at their pleasure; that, while they have professed to be governed by the precepts of him who taught to *forgive enemies, to bless and curse not, to exercise charity and forbearance toward the ignorant and those who are out of the way,*" have denounced the most awful judgements on all who dared dissent from their dogmas, or their cruel edicts; and have followed with the most relentless ferocity the unhappy victims of their fell revenge.

The human imagination has been racked to invent machines of excruciating torture. The swords of *Bishops and Prelates* have turned the earth to an "acoldama" and the luminaries of heaven have been obscured by the smoke arising from the funeral piles of heretics!!

It is not designed to insinuate that this is now the character of ministers of religion of any denomination among us. No, these are the effects of secular power controlled by ecclesiastical. And these evils, or similar and proportionate to the extent of the cause, have always resulted from the unholy and adulterous union of Church and State. If such things have been, under similar circumstances, such things may be, nay, they will be. Guard then with unremitting vigilance, guard; ye highly favoured, ye free-born sons of America, that sacred instrument which while it *lives*, will secure your civil liberties and religious rights by torpidizing the arm of that sectarian fanatic, who has the temerity to touch it; arrest in its infamy every scheme which approximates toward a tendency to exalt to popular favour or patronage one sect of professors, above another, thereby enabling them to possess an extraordinary influence over the fears, the prejudices or the ignorance of the people. For here must begin the first approach toward ecclesiastical domination. And be assured that when once a privileged class gains an existence even by the common consent of community, without the prop of legislative aid; they will be prepared to exert a superior and improper influence over the minds of the rising generation which is the gradual but only sure way to innovate upon the constitution of your civil government, until an ecclesiastical hierarchy will be established, and your freedom prostrated. But

where, it may be asked, where is the cause of the alarm? I have not said there is cause; but I now enter upon the inquiry. I enter upon the interesting and important inquiry, whether there be any evidence that our ecclesiastics like those of Ancient Israel "have corrupted themselves?" whether "their spot is the spot of his children?"

You are not to expect the evidences to appear to you in the open avowal of avaricious and ambitious projects, any more than in the open disavowal of our holy religion. *The wolf will come to you in sheep's clothing.* Their monopolizing schemes will appear under the mask of the most exalted sanctity, and their ambitious views must be drawn out from under the most plausible and specious pretences of humility, self-denial and abasement.

It is too obvious to be overlooked, that the professedly orthodox christian world, and particularly our part of it in America, are, and have been for some years past, making very great and extraordinary exertions; exertions which are viewed and supported by many, whose desires are doubtless pure as light, and disinterested as heaven, with congratulations of joy, but by others, with perhaps as spotless intentions, with some fear.

Societies have been organized for the ostensible purpose of christianizing the heathen and the Jew, and moralizing the world. And to facilitate the accomplishment of these benevolent objects, theological seminaries have been established for the education of missionaries and especially for the gratuitous instruction of pious and indigent young men. To accomplish this, donations and contributions have been solicited and obtained, by travelling agents appointed for that purpose, and by the organization of missionary societies in all the states, and in nearly or quite every city, town and village in each state; and among all classes of people, from male heads of families, to females, young men, young women, and children to raise funds by monthly or annual contributions in money, clothing and provisions, until vast and increasing funds are accumulated, counting doubtless millions of dollars annually. But are not these measures commendable? Are they not laudable in the highest degree? Certainly, if the ostensible object be the real one. But look a little farther, penetrate the arcanum if you can, and see if you cannot discern, amid these spacious pretensions, some evidences of the growing evils against which we admonish.

How do these schools instruct? Do the missionaries, thus

made, bear the spot of his (i. e. God's) children? How do they expend the vast sums thus raised?

It is known to every one, that pure sectarianism characterizes these seminaries without exception. That before any one is permitted to enter their consecrated walls as a student, he must solemnly pledge himself to support all the dogmas of the Geneva reformer, and is consequently extremely liable to inherit much of the cruel ferocity of him who burnt Servetus, beheaded Grotet, and spread his persecution against all who dared to dissent from him, wherever his power and influence extended. But *are they* patterns of deep humility and self denial? Do they like the ancient servant of God, "wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented?" Could you prevail on them to go as Christ commanded his disciples, "without purse or scrip, or two staves?" Mark the outfits for a foreign mission, their costly appendages, and their manner of living when there, and then answer these questions for yourselves. In respect to the last particular, I beg leave to introduce one pointed evidence from the pen of the late amiable, innocent and unsuspecting Harriet Newel, who went on a mission with her husband, the Rev. Mr. N. to India. She writes from Calcutta, "Yesterday afternoon we left our vessel, and were conveyed in a *palanquin* through crowds of Hindoos to Dr. Carey's." (A palanquin is a vehicle carried on the shoulders of men!) "Dr. Carey's appeared like a palace to us. He keeps a large number of Hindoo servants." Did our Saviour ride in a palanquin, borne on the shoulders of men! and proselyte men to his religion to make them his menial servants? "Imagine" says she, "to yourself a large stone house with six lofty spacious keeping and lodging rooms, with the same number of unimproved rooms below—such is the building. He is now advanced to a state of *honour* with  $\$8000$  a year." Let it be remembered that Dr. Carey is professedly a missionary of the religion of the humble Jesus! Is this the *spot of his children*? She goes on. "We accepted his invitation to visit the missionary family at Serampore, took a boat, and at eleven o'clock next evening reached the happy dwelling of these friends of Emmanuel. Here peace and plenty dwell, and we almost forget that we are in a land of pagan darkness. This is the most delightful place I ever saw. Here the missionaries enjoy *all the comforts of life. Servants are very numerous.*" Again, I ask, does this article: tale bear *no testimony* that these ministers

of religion "have corrupted themselves—That their spot is not the spot of his children"? But after all this extravagance and expense, it is thought hardly possible that the vast sums raised for missionary purposes are expended in that cause. It is true many are educated, but few, comparatively, very few are sent to the perishing heathen, or the bewildered remnant of Israel.—There are a host of them at present unemployed. Mr. Sabine a presbyterian minister in Boston, says, in a postscript to a sermon published not a great while since, "In fact this part of the Country abounds with clergymen unemployed in their own proper way, and condescending to labour, for which they never were designed, and for which their characters are ill-adapted." It is believed, therefore by many minds, that vast sums raised and constantly accumulating, never have been and probably never will be expended agreeably to the ostensible object, but are hoarding up some where, beyond the reach of legislative control, even to tax for the support of government, and are reserved for purposes and objects yet enveloped in mystery.

Nor is this measure the only one, in which we are to look for duplicity. It is truly astonishing that every institution pure in origin, religious in its profession, and benevolent in its uncontaminated operations, must be laid hold of by the mercenary hand of the hypocritical worldling, and by calling in the aid of bigoted sectarianism, and fanatical zeal, prostituted to the worst of purposes. No institution ever came into public view under more plausible appearances of disinterested benevolence, or better calculated to unite the energies of all denominations for its support, than the establishment of societies for the gratuitous distribution of the bible among the poor. And there is no possible doubt that the motives of the original founders were perpetually pure and disinterested. But corruption found it vulnerable. She pointed out an avenue by which bigotry could enter, and turn the current of popular favour wholly in support of one predominant sect; by giving them the almost exclusive privilege of distribution, and thereby placing in their hands a kind of artificial influence, and hence affording them an exalted opportunity to enforce their dogmas, while they so charitably presented the bible, which, by the by, cost them nothing, and for which they pocketed, at least, a liberal compensation from the charitable contributions of a deluded people. She opened a door for avarice to monopolize extensive benefits; by exaggerating upon the destitution and ignorance of families in

respect to the divine word, and pathetically calling on a sympathetic community for more liberal contributions; until presses are obtained, and splendid printing establishments are erected for their accommodation, and convenience, and they have replenished every book store, and filled every market with bibles, from the plainest to the most splendidly executed, and are reaping a rich revenue from funds originally obtained from the people, for the most charitable purposes.

The fears, the hopes, the ambition, and the popular feelings of mankind are all called into requisition, in order to support and perpetuate these institutions.

Heaven is promised as the reward of their liberality—endless damnation is denounced as the sure consequence of refusal. Popular applause, and promises of support to seats of exalted honour and profit in society are proffered to such as favour them, while he, who has the audacity to question the purity of *all* their proceedings, and the firmness to act independently according to his own judgment, must have his name cast out as evil—must be branded with the ignominious epithet, of *heretic, infidel, worse than heathen*; and the unmoving finger of scorn must mark him as an object of their persecuting derision.

But the worst is not told. The most fearful and alarming evidences of perversion are not adduced. The most alarming, because accreted, if possible, under the most plausible veil and combined with the most efficient measures for the accomplishment of their mighty designs.

The long indulged wish, at least, of the self-styled orthodoxy of our country, for a national establishment of religion, is too apparent to be doubted, by any candid and observing mind. Their dolorous groans, their vituperations, and their settled enmity against some of the most active and influential individuals of our national council, that no peculiar privileges were granted them, in the provisions of our federal compact, are not wholly forgotten. Nor are the exertions of the New-England clergy, made with that secret co-operation and energy that in their imaginations promised them success, and led them to the delusive hope that occasionally exposed itself from some of their weakest and most unguarded brethren, at the time the elder Adams filled the chair of state, wholly erased, I trust, from the minds of many in this assembly. But their plans were premature. Americans were enlightened on this subject. They had learned by woful

experience, the sad effects of clerical domination; and they opposed with an inflexible and all-conquering arm their vile machinations.

The spirit has not wholly slumbered. "The fire, though covered, has still burned." A more deep laid plan must be devised. The work must be begun at the root. An opportunity at length presents: A Sabbath School springs up in England; originating in the tenderest sympathies of our nature, founded upon the most benevolent principles, and recommending itself in the strongest manner possible to the religious patronage of every christian. Its object was to snatch the children of the poor—the indigent, necessarily confined every moment of the six days in work-shops and factories to earn the humble pittance that supports existence, from the hand of barbarous ignorance, and while it instructed them in the rudiments of learning to incline their minds to virtue; and by enabling them to read, and to understand the divine word for themselves, to exalt their hopes to heaven. Sectarian competition was out of the question—particular creeds were unknown—christians of every denomination, and the benevolent in every society united in the work. It flourished beyond calculation; for it properly met the unqualified approbation of every philanthropist. Similar schools were instituted in other parts of the world. Americans adopted the plan; and it was, and might have continued to be one of the most important and beneficial institutions among us. But the all-contaminating hand of priest craft laid hold on it, tarnished its fair form, and transformed it into the most efficient and powerful machine for the accomplishment of its mischievous purposes. Who are so suitable as *ministers* to have the oversight and control of Sunday Schools? Their leisure, their profession, their acquaintance with the holy scriptures, all render them the best qualified to become the guardians and teachers of these institutions. All denominations are invited; and all denominations unsuspectingly engage—but mark the progress.—There is one denomination, claiming priority of establishment in these United States, and exerting superior numerical force, and consequently predominant popular influence over, community, who arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to control.—I include in this view the congregational and presbyterian denominations as one. Their teachers, therefore, if not ministers, are of their own choosing, and their mode of instruction is by their own special dictation. Every means is resorted to, to

bring children under the tuition of these teachers: Every fibre of the human heart is touched: A pathetic appeal is made to maternal solicitude, paternal affections, hope, fear, pride, shame and every passion of which human nature is susceptible in order to effect their object: "Will you permit your child to lose this opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the way of salvation?"—"Can you be so cruel to your tender offspring as to prevent him from enjoying perhaps this only chance to escape an endless hell?"—"Do you not wish to see him honoured and respected in society?"—"Do you not dread to see him despised and neglected by all respectable and good men?"—"for such he will be if he attend not Sunday Schools:"—"Do you not tremble at the awful judgement, that awaits in consequence of your neglect?—none but the dissolute, the vicious and infidels withhold," &c.

Agents are sent out, and are travelling through all parts of your country to establish schools, not simply in such places as are less favoured with the ordinary means of instruction, but in every school district in the country, until the western Sunday School Union alone, can count more than 30,000 scholars; and an army of Teachers is disciplined in the *United States* consisting of more than 24,000.

The mind of man is so constituted that impressions received in infancy are not entirely rasible, and have a greater or less influence on him through life. Hence says Solomon, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This doctrine is perfectly understood and duly appreciated, by the managers of Sunday Schools under their present establishment. There is no means left unemployed to incline the tender and pliant minds of their pupils, towards the ultimate object of their wishes; by impressing on them the peculiar tenets of their sect, by warning them against all others as awfully dangerous, not only to their immortal happiness, but to their temporal respectability; by construing all passages of scripture to them, so as to support their peculiar views and impress on them a belief of their incapability of understanding it themselves; by inspiring the highest reverence for the ministers of their order, and missionaries in particular, as though *they* were a kind of superior beings in knowledge and counsel, not subject to the ordinary frailties of humanity, and by their influence with the Divine Being, had almost the whole destiny of immortal spirits under their control.

Let it not be said that they attempt not to indoctrinate the minds of children into their peculiar creeds; and to dictate to their consciences. Why then these laboured doctrinal expositions of scripture to them? Why their lectures, (for they have preaching very frequently,) all fraught with the mysteries of their doctrines? Why are their immense libraries of tracts and books, which must be read by the children as premiums for scholarship, all filled with their dogmas? Why do they abound with so many wonderful stories of the divine power of missionaries? And above all why is there a missionary institution connected with the Sunday School establishment from which Sunday School missionaries are sent out to examine, to lecture, and to instruct these children? And why must all these without a single exception be Calvinist? It is now too late to make any such pretensions. But to put it out of all dispute I beg leave to introduce one quotation from the report of the American Sunday School Union: "Whilst the committee feel the importance of the responsibility they assume of becoming dictators to the consciences of thousands of immortal beings, on the great and all-important subject of the welfare of their souls; whilst they dread the consequences of uttering forgeries, or giving their sanction to misrepresentations of the glorious truths of the gospel, they are not backward to become responsible arbiters in these points, rather than tamely issue sentiments, which in their consciences they believe to be false, or inconsistent with the spirit of divine truth, however recommended by the names of illustrious saints, or the sanction of the most evangelical and benevolent societies." What more is wanted to open the eyes of community? Here the committee tell you in unequivocal terms that "*they assume the responsibility of dictating to the consciences of thousands of immortal beings!*" But after all, it is not surprising, nor unnatural, nor improper, that men honestly possessing a particular belief, should endeavour, by all liberal and charitable means to extend the knowledge and belief of their peculiar sentiments. It only becomes improper and alarming, when they attempt, by an illiberal misrepresentation of the doctrine and characters of others, and by an untiring and vindictive system of exclusion and proscription against the liberal part of community, by laying hold of, and fostering every popular excitement, however unreasonable and disorganizing in its tendency, to coerce them into acquiescence with their creeds and their dictations. I know they claim, and they have a constitutional right to or-



ganize and support societies for religious and benevolent purposes: I am glad of it; nor would I, if I had power, place one straw in their way, but would defend these privileges with every energy I possess. But when we see in certain measures an undeviating design to wrest these privileges from others--when we see plans adopted, and progressing, which if not crushed, will ultimately accomplish that design, is it not time to sound the tocsin of alarm? and strive to awaken the people to a sense of their danger before it is too late! It is preposterous to urge that there is no possibility, and consequently there can be no design to establish a national creed. Send your children a little longer to these schools--put them a little season longer under the tuition of these institutions and the guidance of their publications--let their vanity be pampered by a few more marks of peculiar distinctions, by their insinuating guides: march then a few more times in pompous procession at Sunday School celebrations; and then fill your legislative halls, and your national capital, and your presidential chair, and all important offices with men educated in Sunday Schools, who have grown up with all the prejudices there imbibed, and you will find it will be no difficult matter to alter your constitution of government and accommodate it to a national creed. But a wise Providence has fortunately so ordered it, that the managers of these institutions in their present form, should gain such confidence in the permanency of their establishment, as to embolden them to make for themselves, an untimely, but for community a timely disclosure of their secret designs. Mr. Aikin, pastor of the first presbyterian society in Utica, in an address delivered before the Sunday School societies in that place, a year ago this day, says, speaking of the Sabbath Schools, "It begins at the foundation and by laying this deep and strong, prepares the way for a superstructure that cannot be easily shaken"--again he says, "I have been surprised to see the apathy of our enlightened statesmen upon the subject of Sunday Schools. I have been surprised that they seem to look upon them only as a religious institution, when it is so plain that their political energy must very soon, if it increases with the same ratio it has for fifteen years past, totally regenerate our legislatures and the very halls of Congress!" and now hear him boast of the certainty of this change--this "regeneration:" but perhaps his exultations may be premature: "In some cases it is well that this blind apathy exists, for instead of it might have been opposition. But it is now

*too late to oppose.* It has been wisely ordered by divine providence that this little rivulet should flow silently along until it has acquired the strength and majesty of the ocean, and bids defiance to the gates of hell." Compare this with other publications from the same order of people and learn what is meant by this "regeneration," if you please. Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia in a discourse delivered on the same day as the above, in that city, says, "I propose fellow citizens, a new sort of union, or if you please a *christian party in politics*, which I am extremely anxious all good men in our country should join; not by subscribing a constitution, and the formation of a new Society, but by adopting, avowing and determining to act upon truly religious principles in all civil matters." What does Dr. Ely mean by "acting upon truly religious principles?" "All" says he, "who profess to be christians ought to agree that they will support no man as a candidate for office, who is not professedly friendly to christianity." What are we to understand, Dr. Ely means by being friendly to christianity? He answers, "our Presidents, Secretaries, of the Government, Senators and other representatives in Congress, Governors of States, Judges, State Legislators, Justices of the Peace and city Magistrates, are just as much bound as any other in the United States to be orthodox in their faith." And when it is remembered that Dr. Ely is a calvinistic presbyterian divine, and when it is known that in this very discourse he ranks Socinians with deists and infidels (and from the very nature of his remarks, it is perfectly obvious, that he considers all as Socinians and enemies to christianity who in any respect deny the supreme divinity of Christ, or in other words who dissent from the athanation doctrine of the trinity;) and when it is further known that in this very discourse, he calls all, who do not belong to some christian (i. e. orthodox) community *infidels*; it will be clearly seen that by "acting upon purely religious principles" according to the plan of the Rev. Dr. would be to proscribe indiscriminately *all* who dared to dissent from *his creed*. "I am free," says the Dr. "to avow, that other things being equal, I would prefer for my chief magistrate and judge and ruler, a sound presbyterian."

If you need any further testimony to prove their unhallowed designs, to pave the way to a national religious establishment, (notwithstanding Dr. Ely's attempt, in a publication recently handed about, to cover this designs,) you may have it in a circular, written some two or three years ago, by some of those

watchful guardians of their cause, and circulated privately for a season among the faithful, designed to call their energies into co-operation, but after a while found its way to the public eye. *Hear it*: "While we witness such concert among the higher orders of Society, as to religious worship, with a favourable disposition to the distribution of religious tracts, properly composed, we have good right to conclude it will issue in a *wise NATIONAL CREED*, and that the most pious and enlightened men in our country, will see the impropriety of sending out missionaries and divines to preach the word of life, with discordant and conflicting views." *Hear it again*: "It is the force of circumstances we have been speaking of," (the circumstances alluded to, are the enlisting moral and religious, and consequently numerical force in the cause of religion, [i. e. orthodoxy] and all the opposition of infidelity, (recollect who Doct. Ely ranks as infidels) will be *borne down and overpowered*,") "which has produced the *established religion* of England—the choice of its people—(a singular choice, made by being "*borne down and overpowered*,"") and which is necessary to its peace—the security of its government, and the strength of the nation. What a beneficial influence it would have on public sentiment, and feeling, if the index of its character should be distinguished by a more *national costume*, which would be solemn and imposing, and such as would secure to the *sacerdotal character*, that reverence which is due to it." This language needs no comment. It speaks unambiguously its own meaning; and declares unequivocally the wishes and designs of the sect, the party to which it belongs; and we need not say, that it is in perfect accordance with the testimony before adduced.

To facilitate these operations, and as a necessary appendage to this mighty and artfully constructed machine, extensive printing establishments are erected under the direction of the "national Tract Society" from which they issue probably more than a million of publications annually, all directed to the support of the same religious creed. And no means are left unemployed, (to use their own words) "to place them in the hand of every child who is able to read," and to introduce them into common schools; and thus raise up a generation, disciplined, and marshalled, and prepared for their service. I ask again, my friends, do you see in all this no cause of alarm? Have you witnessed, the violent exertions made at the last session of the Pennsylvania legislature to secure the legislative aid, by ob-

aining the incorporation of the A. S. S. Union, and the angry invectives, and threats, that the rejection of that bill produced from one of the most eminent clergymen of that order in the state, against the majority of the senate, without any emotion? Are there yet evidences wanting to prove that "they have corrupted themselves—that their spot is not the spot of his children?" and may we not ask in the pathetic language of our text, "Do ye thus requite the Lord? Oh foolish people and unwise!"

Let the people fold up their arms a little longer and say there is no danger—let them continue to be gulled by the unblushing and untiring system of beggary which every where prevails thro' our country, for the support of these institutions; Let the dissenting denominations of Christians, who have equally as divine and as constitutional a right to the free enjoyment of their faith and modes of worship, continue to be influenced, by the "fair speeches and flattering words" a little longer, to grant them their patronage; and it needs not the spirit of prophecy to discern that they have forged manacles for their own hands, and rivetted fetters upon their own feet, which chain them fatally to the car of clerical despotism! that they have furnished a mine, which, at one tremendous explosion will blow up the fair temple of your freedom!

Say not, think not by all this that I am unfriendly to Sunday Schools. No, let them return to their primitive purity, free them from the trammels of Sectarian control, expunge their libraries of romantic, calvanistic tracts, turn out your fanatical Sunday School Missionaries, stop your pride-pampering and vanity-inflating Sunday School celebrations and processions, and I will exert my feeble abilities and influence in support of them. But do this, and you will see the zeal of those pious supporters of Sunday Schools abate very fast.

It is well said by Mr. Aikin, "that intelligence and virtue form the basis of every government that is destined long to exist. Intelligence alone is not sufficient. You may make a people learned, but unless they are virtuous they can neither be safe, nor great, nor happy; and they cannot be virtuous without religion." But it must be an intelligence that flows through a channel uncorrupted by bigotry—an intelligence concerning men as well as things—an intelligence that will enable one to detect the hypocrite, under the specious garb that he wears, and distinguish the truly patriotic, and purely religious from the painted impostor. It must be a virtue that expands

the heart with an impartial recognition of the just and equal privileges of each individual, in matters of conscience, in professions of faith and modes of worship. It must be a religion that consists, not wholly in solemn professions and pompous rituals; but a religion that, by recognising God as the common Father and benefactor of our race, inspires filial reverence and unshaken confidence in *him*, and fraternal benevolence toward all men; and produces that practical morality, which James calls pure and undefiled religion; "to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world."

Would you "requite" with gratitude "your Father who hath created you, who hath bought you and established you," for the inestimable blessings of civil and religious liberty? would you preserve them, and transmit them safely to posterity? arrest in their progress these anti-republican and anti-christian measures. Present a fearless and undaunted front against the clandestine machinations of that secret foe, more dangerous than the "pestilence that walketh at noon day," who would innovate and subvert the very first principles of your federal compact.-- Encourage every proper means to diffuse the genial rays of science throughout every part of community--instruct your children early in the first principles of republican policy--inspire a patriotic zeal in their tender minds, by recounting to them the deeds of their revolutionary fathers--inculcate habits of industry, prudence, economy and sobriety--train their minds to virtue by giving them an early acquaintance with the unadulterated word of God, and the pure maxims and precepts of the gospel of Christ--keep them from Sectarian prejudices and antipathies: and in the election of your legislators and officers of government, let not party zeal blind your eyes to the great interests of freedom--fill your legislative halls, and your offices with men of ability and intelligence--men of patriotic, republican and liberal sentiments--frown the illiberal bigot and the haughty aristocrat from your political favour, and your work is done. "Your children shall rise up and call you blessed."-- The star-spangled banner of your freedom shall continue to wave as an inviting beacon, to the oppressed of every nation, from the storms and tempests of tyranny to a haven of peace; and guarded by divine wisdom, shall proudly triumph, when the blood-stained standards of civil and ecclesiastical despots shall unfurl no more.

THE END.