

T H E

Causes and remedies of

NATIONAL DIVISIONS,

Illustrated in a

DISCOURSE,

Delivered in *Suffield* 1st, Society,

July 4th, 1804.

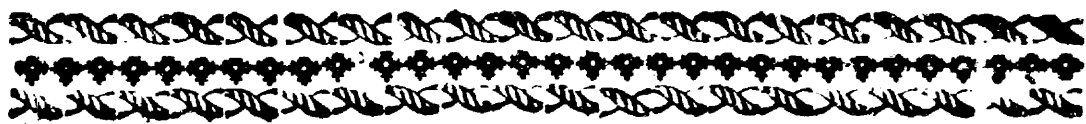
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SUFFIELD:
PRINTED BY EDWARD GRAY,

— 1804. —



The Causes and Remedies of National Divisions.

Gospel according to St. Mark, 3d Chapter 24 verse.

And if a Kingdom be divided against itself That
Kingdom cannot Stand.

ALL the precepts and maxims of our divine Master were drawn from two infallible sources of truth, nature and experience. This made him speak as one having authority. This made his words fall with such irresistible force, upon the veteran soldiers, who went to arrest him; and extorted from them this declaration, “Never man spake like this man.”

This made the hearts of the two disciples burn within them, when he explained the prophecies concerning himself:—And this enabled him to confound his adversaries, who strove to intangle him with insidious questions, in regard to domestic, political or eternal concerns.

The particular occasion, of our Saviour's uttering the maxims in the text, was a blasphemous charge brought against him, by the scribes and pharisees. They asserted, that he cast out devils,
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“by beelzebub the prince of devils.” “And he called them unto him,” to show them that he needed no witnesses to refute their charge—that it refuted itself—and said “How can satan cast out satan?” In the very nature of things, it is impossible.—Your own experience, and the experience of all ages, bear testimony to the same truth.

“And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”

It is proposed, by divine assistance, to attend to the subject in the following manner.

- I. Consider what is meant, by a kingdom's being divided against itself.
- II. Attempt to discover some of the causes of national divisions.
- III. Point out the means best adapted to prevent, and heal those divisions.
- IV. Show that the destruction of such a nation is inevitable.

I. I am to consider what is meant, by a kingdom's being divided against itself. It is this—For the subjects to have two separate interests in view, one diametrically opposite to the other:—For one party to arm itself with weapons or opinions, in order to subvert the established compact of the nation, to bring into contempt the legitimate rulers of the land; and by falsehood,

hood, misrepresentation and calumny, excite the hatred of the people, against the wisest and best measures, for the promotion of public good. The situation of such a nation, is emphatically that, of being divided against itself.

That all might clearly comprehend what is meant, by a kingdom's being divided against itself: Christ mentions a house thus divided. When the heads of a family contend with each other—one enlists the children and servants, and endeavors to destroy the respectability and authority of the other; this is a division of a family against itself. A family or city divided against itself, is a miniature of a kingdom in the same situation.

For a kingdom to be thus severed, is for one party to declare war against the common and best interest of the nation—resolving to demolish all the ancient landmarks of the kingdom.—And whether this is attempted by arms, or intreaque, it does not destroy the reality of the division.

II. I was to attempt to discover the cause of national divisions. There are some real causes of division, and others are merely pretended ones.

FIRST, the real cause is the restless ambition, of unprincipled and wicked men.

All the sedition which has existed, under well regulated governments, has been excited by men of this description.

A storm must be raised by them, that they may plunder the honors, and fatten upon the spoils of government.

They aspire after those honors, to which their merit gives them no claim, and pant after the emoluments of office, that they may live in affluence, and riot in luxury.

If we recur for information, on this point, to the most ancient and most authentic history, which has ever been written, we shall find substantial evidence to establish the position laid down.

Moses and Aaron were appointed, by the Supreme Governor of the World, to execute the laws given to the children of Israel. The credentials of their appointment were so plain, that *infidelity* could not deny them, until it was hardened, and become ripe for ruin.

But there were men, among this favored people, ambitious, unprincipled and wicked enough, to rebel against the government of God, which was administered, by these pious and upright men.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram. with two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the
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the congregation, men of renown, gathered themselves together, against Moses and against Aaron; and they uttered many heavy charges against them — “ That they took too much upon them—Lifted themselves above the congregation of the Lord—that Moses designed to establish an hereditary monarchy—that he kept back from the people, those things, upon which they had an undoubted right to judge.— “ Wilt thou put out the eyes of this people?” By looking at the history of Mose’s life, you will see, that every charge they uttered was unfounded calumny.

The impious characters of the leaders in this faction, are forcibly expressed by Moses, when he calls them “ Sinners against their own souls,” or the most impious and unreasonable sinners.

From the history of David’s reign, we shall find, that sedition was excited by characters of the same description, as in the time of Moses.

Abfalom, a profligate son of David, entered into a conspiracy, not only against the government, but against the life of his excellent father. He showed his design, by exhibiting the pomp of a Sovereign prince and conducted as though he had been legally introduced, to the chief magistracy of Israel. He prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

Thus being destitute of any moral principles—filled with a wicked ambition, and with the hopes
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of self agrandizement,—he excited a rebellion against the excellent administration of the man after God's own heart. Ahithophel, as wicked and unprincipled as Absalom, was another leader in this faction.

I shall produce but one more example from sacred history, to show what has been the real cause of the division of kingdoms.

When Rehoboam succeeded to the kingdom of his father, Jeroboam immediately put himself at the head of a faction. His real object and character must be perfectly known, by considering what he said and did. He rejected the true God, and made public profession of idolatry. He cast out the ministers of Jehovah, and made him priests of the lowest of the people. He impiously ordained feasts, to wean the people from the worship of God at Jerusalem; and not only committed the most abominable wickedness himself; but he had a peculiar pleasure in the society of blasphemers. His name is handed down to us with indelible marks of infamy.—“Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.” His fir name is—who made Israel to sin.

To make it clear beyond a doubt, that the real cause of the division of nations, is to be found in the ambition of unprincipled and atheistical men; I would refer you to the conspiracy formed against the government of Italy under the Consulship of Marcus Tully Cicero. Rome was then

then a happy republic. But she had a Cataline within her walls, whose ambition and vices could not endure, that virtuous and honest men should wield the helm of government*. Though Rome was an Idolatrous city, yet Cataline's impiety could not suffer the existence of *any* religion.

He struck at the existence of any God, and resolved to *destroy* the *temples* dedicated to their worship.

Such was the man, and such were his accomplices, who attempted to destroy the Roman Republic. The cause of their conspiracy is plain.

They hoped to thrust themselves into places of honor and profit. They wished to wipe away their infamy by establishing iniquity by law—and cheat or destroy their creditors.

As it is of high importance to discover the real cause of divisions, in well regulated governments: Let me ask you to reflect, on what has taken place in France, for a number of years past.

It was the impious Voltair, who laid the foundation of those destructive divisions, by being the patron of every vice. Diderot and D'Alembert fomented the divisions. They were made to burst into a flame by Robspere, Marat, Paine, and
other

* See the description of his character by the Roman Orator.

other blasphemers. And Bonaparte is collecting the scattered brands, which remain unconsumed, and is rapidly committing them to the flames. We see united in the characters of these men, the impious calumny of Korah, the intreaguing deceit of Absalom, the wicked blasphemy of Jeroboam, and the murderous debauchery of Cati-line.

That the nation, in which we live, is divided against itself, no one can deny. My native pride (perhaps it is too great) forbids my tracing the real cause of this division. This I will say—that exactly similar effects flow from exactly similar causes in all nations, and in all ages of the world. But I hasten secondly to show the pretended causes of divisions in well regulated governments.

We have one of these clearly stated in the 16th Chapter of Numbers at the 3d verse.

“ And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, ye take too much upon you seeing all the congregation are holy. every one of them, and the Lord is amongst them : Wherefore then lift you up yourselves, above the congregation of the Lord ?

Here we see the true principles of modern liberty and equality most forcibly expressed. “ *All the people* are as fit to manage the affairs of state as you, and you tyrannise over them,

as if they were slaves : you take too much upon you— are too imperious, too haughty—set yourselves above them, while you are their servants, and ought to condescend to the most unlimited familiarity with the lowest of the people.” This had a powerful tendency to kindle the pride, of the most worthless in Korah’s company, and riveted their opposition to the administration of Moses.

Abfalom pretended the same reasons, that Korah did, for exciting a rebellion in his fathers government. Hear what is said in sacred writ II Samuel 15th Chapter. “ And Abfalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate : and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy, came to the king for judgment, then Abfalom called unto him, and said, of what city art thou ? and he said thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Abfalom said unto him, see thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Abfalom said moreover, Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause, might come unto me and I would do him justice.”

The idea conveyed is plainly this, that his father neglected the best interests of the people—that he was guilty of tyranny and injustice, which *he* would rectify if they would make him king. His after conduct showed his abhorrence

of

of his father for setting himself so much above the people. “ And it was so, that when any man came to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand and took him—and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel, that came to the king for judgment :—So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

This mellifluous language, flowing from the lips of this handsome youth, kindled a flame in the kingdom of Israel, which nearly consumed at once the *throne* and the *altar*. He pretended, that he could make the kingdom much more happy and flourishing, than it was under the wise administration of his father.

This pretention had the desired effect, upon the uninformed, the disaffected, and unprincipled among the people.

There were the same pretended reasons, for exciting divisions, in the kingdom of France.

The most credible historians represent their Monarch, as being a most humane and benevolent father to his subjects.—That there was not the least tincture of tyranny in his nature, nor in his administration.

But the impious sons of sedition raised the cry of tyranny and oppression, against the kindest Father. The ignorant multitude swallowed the falsehood, and the learned infidels believed the lie,
 against

against their own reason and conscience. A dreadful division ensued, which has cost the lives of millions, and spilt the best blood of the nation.

Another pretended cause for exciting division, and a most powerful engine to work upon the hearts of covetous and selfish men, is the burdens laid upon the subjects, to defray the expences of government.

This was one argument made use of by Korah and his company, to kindle the resentment of the people against Moses and Aaron,

“ Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? Ye take too much upon you—and lift yourselves above the congregation.” Your salaries are too high, we will serve the people with little or no reward, besides the praise of doing better than you.

That this was what they insinuated, is put beyond a doubt, when we consider the reply, which Moses made.

“ I have not taken an ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.” This demonstrates, that one charge alledged against Moses, by these impious rebels, was his unreasonably taxing the people. And this surely was one of the principal weapons used by Jeroboam to sever the kingdom

dom of Israel.—He with the leaders of the faction spake unto Rehoboam, saying “Thy Father made our yoke grievous, now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy Father, and the heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee” We have no account in history of an administration, more happiness and enriching to the people, than that of Solomon.—True, his economy did not influence him to destroy what little navy his Father might have left him; but he built more shipping: And though it increased the taxes, it increased the power of discharging them ten fold more. It is said in the word of God. “That silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.—For the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as Sycomore trees that are in the vales for abundance.”

The reason assigned for this plenty of silver is as follows. “For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram. Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver and ivory.”

Notwithstanding this, Jeroboam could tell, how *vast* the expenses of government were—that millions were imbezzled, and no account given of expenditures; or that it was applied to purposes hurtful to the nation; as building a magnificent temple to Jehovah, building a navy, and the high salaries of the officers of government.

ment. To effect the division, as well as to perpetuate it, he undoubtedly promised a cheap government, if they would adhere to him.

That he promised this is fairly deducible from what he said and did. This first object was to lessen the expenses, that arose from religion.

The worship of the true God must be prevented, lest his subjects should contrast his wicked life, with the law of God, and rebel in their turn against him.

He laid this down as a maxim, that his existence, as king of Israel, depended on his corrupting the morals of the people.—“Whereupon the king took counsel,” Of what character his Council was, we may judge from the result. “And they made two calves of gold, and said unto them” (to the people) “It is *too much* for you to go up to Jerusalem : Behold thy gods O Israel which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” To accommodate the people, he set one in Dan and the other in Bethel.

But lest the expence to support his idolatrous worship, should be so great, as to endanger his popularity. “He made priests of the lowest of the people,” the most ignorant and vile among them. This would answer a double purpose in his government. His subjects would be delivered from the burden of taxes ; and his own con-
science

science would not be disturbed, by their founding an alarm against vice and impiety.*

III. Under the third general head we were to point out the means best adapted, to prevent and heal those divisions.

FIRST, Let us consider the means best adapted to prevent divisions.

One very effectual preventative is family government. At the first dawn of our rational existence, obedience to parental authority must be strenuously enforced.

Lessons of subordination must be learned in childhood, or the hazard is great, that they will never be learnt. The foundation for a quiet peaceable citizen, must be laid in early life.

Absalom was a favorite child, and an ungoverned one, as may be fairly inferred, not only from his conduct, but from sacred history. I am aware, that I am proving a selfevident proposition, when I attempt to show, that ungoverned children, will make factious members of society. Early teach them subordination to parental laws, and they will rarely rebel against civil laws. To fill the minds of children, with that useful knowledge,

* Any tonguey fellow, though destitute of grace, was elevated to the sacerdotal office. "Whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places."

ledge, which will enable them to do the common business of life accurately, and judge of public transaction correctly, will be another preventative of division.

Teach them the true principles of liberty—that liberty cannot exist without laws—and that wise laws cannot be made, and executed without expense. It is almost impossible, that any person should be a factious member of society, who has been properly governed in early life, and whose mind has been stored with that degree of knowledge, which, at the present day, it is in the power of every parent to give to his children.

The unprincipled and designing demagogue, will find that soil unfit for the seeds of discord, which has been well subdued by parental authority, and well stocked with useful knowledge.

But another and the most powerful preventative of division, is religious knowledge.

Let the heart of a child be early imbued with the truths of the gospel—let him constantly behold examples of holiness, and be followed with pious instructions through the periods of childhood and youth, and the disorganizing infidel, may attack, in vain, his political or religious creed. He will spurn at his impious falsehoods, and remain firmly attached to sound principles of civil and religious liberty.

The progress of division and demoralization must stop, where parents faithfully teach their children humility and subordination: Where their minds are stored with useful knowledge—and especially where family religion is maintained—the bible made the constant rule of life, and the sabbath of the Lord sanctified, by a punctual attendance upon a preached gospel. From such a state or nation the demon of discord will be hissed with scorn and contempt.

These I conceive to be the means, best adapted to prevent divisions, in well regulated governments.

I proceed,

SECONDLY to consider the means best adapted to heal divisions, where they exist. Not a moment of time shall be spent, in prescribing remedies to heal the Korahs, the Absaloms, the Jeroboams, the Catilines, and the Roberispere. The leaders in these divisions baffle the power of medicine, and are beyond the reach of hope. They may be driven into a voluntary banishment by the thundering eloquence of a Cicero; but to attempt to reclaim them would be the height of arrogance. Those who have been led astray by deceit and misrepresentation, deserve our pity and compassion, and there is a possibility of their recovery. The means best adapted to reclaim such are sound, dispassionate reasoning, and a repeated display of the characters, and ultimate de-
signs

signs of their leaders.—Show them that the self-applauder is a deceiver.—That he is no better than Absalom, who loudly proclaims—“ O that I were made judge in the land.” Repeat it as a maxim of undoubted truth—that he deserves no confidence, who is forever declaring, that he will make you as gods, if you will trust him with your dearest interests.

Do any, who profess to love Jesus, join with those leaders in division? To reclaim *such*, put the simple question to them, which Jehu the Seer did to Jehoshaphat.—“ Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?”

But experience must do the greatest share in healing those divisions—and if that fails to effect a cure :

I must in the fourth place,

IV. Pronounce the destruction of such a kingdom inevitable. The seeds of destruction are planted in the vitals of such a nation.—Such a kingdom is like a deranged man, determined upon suicide. When he has disengaged his hands from the chains, with which his friends, in compassion bound him ; those hands will be employed in the act of self destruction. A nation may be deranged as really, as an individual : And when they have broken the bonds, by which they were united together, they will lay violent hands on their own existence. The division in the
kingdom

kingdom of Israel was never healed, and the ten tribes have been so completely destroyed, that no traces of them can be found. But we have a more recent example to prove, that internal division will utterly ruin a nation. Had not the attention of France been called to external enemies, the work of self destruction, without doubt, would have been completed long before this day.

It goes on rapidly now, notwithstanding their wars abroad. The salt which has preserved France, is melting away like dew before the sun. A Pichegrue has already fallen a victim to despotism: and a Moreau, the Washington of France, if alive now, is soon to be immolated upon the same altar, in that,—“Enlightened Republic”——Jealousy and fear are engraved upon every countenance, in that devoted nation: and to betray each other to death, is the only way to have any hope, of living another hour.

If you wish for stronger evidence, of the inevitable destruction of such a nation, Hear the words of the Son of God.—“And if a kingdom be divided against itself that kingdom cannot stand.”

We infer from our subject,

That the destruction of any nation, approaches with the same rapidity, that their internal division increases. This ought to strike every American heart with solemn awe. That we are a divid-
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ed people cannot admit of a doubt. That the aggressors in this division will meet with a dreadful destruction, if they do not ruin the whole nation, is certain as holy writ, unless this division can be amicably healed.

Let me then, hazard a word of advice to all those, who yet have power to restrain the progress of ruin to this country.

Ye who hold the reins of government ! Lay not violent hands upon that compact of union, which for twelve years, gave an unparalleled degree of prosperity to our nation.

Let the contest of opinion be fair and open.

Wait, wait till sound reason and experience demand the destruction of our constitution : and then the good sense of America will effect it, without the assistance of Jacobinism, without impious calumny, without falsehood and without the shedding of blood.

Permit me to call upon Parents and upon all those, who have the care of youth and children, to reflect upon the preventatives of division held up, in this discourse. We have every weapon in our hands, suited to crush the monster, discord.

The means of instruction, which Connecticut has enjoyed are the only preventatives, under Providence,

Providence, which have saved us, from that anarchy and confusion which have reigned, in many of our Sister States. This must be our political salvation and our praise.

Be more diligent in teaching your children and servants, subordination to reasonable laws.

Teach them self denial, to prepare them to meet disappointments with fortitude and patience.

Fill their minds with that common science, which will tend to make them useful and peaceable citizens. Our strongest hope that the demon of faction will be banished from America, rests upon parental exertion, prospered by a divine blessing. Let no Infidel preceptor ever take the charge of your children—he will secretly poison the spring of moral action.

Early instruct them in the religion of Jesus, and let your example be a constant lecture upon the word of God. Teach them to reverence the sabbath as the Lord's day, and revive the ancient custom of catechizing them, and of restraining them from those recreations, which would be innocent upon other days.

“ Train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—” Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Bring

Bring the young Hannibals to the altar. and make them lift their little hands, and swear eternal enmity to infidelity, atheism and every corrupt principle.

Amen & Amen.

