

4TH OF JULY

REMINISCENCES

AND

REFLECTIONS:

A SERMON,

Preached in the Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville,

JULY 5TH, 1810.

BY WILLIAM S. WHITE.

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CHARLOTTESVILLE.

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1810.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, July 6, 1840.

*Rev. Wm. S. White:*

Dear Sir—A number of persons who heard the discourse delivered by you on yesterday, have expressed a wish that the same might be published, and requested the undersigned to ask you to furnish a copy for that purpose, if your notes and recollection will enable you to do so without too much trouble. We entirely concur in the opinion, that such a publication is calculated to do much good, in the present excited state of public feeling, and hope that you will be able to comply with our request.

Very sincerely your friends,

TH. W. GILMER,  
E. R. WATSON,  
L. R. RAILEY,  
TH. WOODSON.

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, July 30, 1840.

*To Governor Gilmer, E. R. Watson, &c.*

Gentlemen—Your communication, requesting me to furnish the Sermon preached on the 5th inst. for publication, is received. I highly appreciate the personal feelings which have led to this request, and confiding in your judgment more than in my own, I herewith send you the manuscript. It is important, however to state, that a large portion of the Sermon has been written since it was delivered, and hence some slight changes may have occurred, both in the style and sentiment. It is, however, as accurate as I could make it.

Yours, respectfully and affectionately,

WM. S. WHITE.

## S E R M O N .

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"Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."—*Psalms* 144, 15.

A GRATEFUL sense of God's goodness is highly proper at all times. No day ever passes without pouring upon our persons and upon our families a profusion of the richest blessings. These blessings we enjoy in our individual, social and national capacity. Hence, our gratitude and praise should ascend, at one time, from the solitude of the closet, and at another from the midst of the great congregation. Times and seasons too should be set apart, when special pains should be taken to give elevation and intensity to our feelings—when signal instances of the Divine favor should be commemorated by special prayer and praise. To this statement the whole American people have assented, by remembering and celebrating as they do the Fourth Day of July. They call it the birth-day of their national freedom, greatness and glory. In the mind of every true hearted American, this day is associated with the recollection of deeds the most heroic, sufferings the most painful, results the most stupendous. Insensibility on such a day would be both a calamity and a crime. Who can remember, without deep emotion, the arrogant pretensions of arbitrary power—the wealth, the skill, the bravery of those who seemed determined on our subjugation; the mustering of a mighty military force on our borders; and then in contrast with this, remember "the wisdom that planned, and the courage that executed measures of defence"? Whose heart does not burn within him, as he remembers the results of that stupendous struggle—the achievement of independence—the return of peace—the adoption of a constitution—the multiplied blessings of civil and religious liberty, so amply secured and so widely diffused? And then, too, the friend of freedom is urged by the return of this day to look forward. He is constrained to

ask, shall these institutions, so dearly bought, be perpetuated? Is this mighty Republic destined to outride the storms which are inseparable from a government in which such freedom of thought, speech and action is allowed. Or is it to pass away as all its predecessors have done? Does the fate of Athens, Sparta and Rome await this stupendous political edifice, which has been reared upon the graves, and cemented with the blood of the wisest and best men the world ever saw?

How should a day, which awakens such reflections, be celebrated? We shall not undertake to condemn the military parade. This may be proper. The sound of the drum, and the sight of the soldier, may serve a good purpose, in keeping up the recollection, that in striving for freedom, we had to resist unto blood. Yes, let this day be always ushered in by the trumpet's clangour and the cannon's roar. Let the spirit stirring tones of martial music still be heard along our streets and through our fields--and as the polished sword and the pointed spear, glisten in the sun beam, let us remember, that the edge of the one and the point of the other were necessary means, in the inscrutable Providence of God, for the achievement of our independence. But in the name of patriotism and humanity, we would raise our feeble voice against the rioting and drunkenness which have so often disgraced this day. We would protest loud and long against the opinion that the 4th of July is distinguished by the removal of those restraints which are ordinarily imposed--and by attaching a sort of sacredness to indulgences which at any other time would be thought disgraceful and ruinous. Shall he be thought a moral and a sober man, who never swears, nor ever drinks to inebriation except on the 22d of February or the 4th of July? Are there any here, so dead to the necessary and imperishable distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, as to suppose that days of such political and social sacredness possess the power thus to transmute vice into virtue? We are persuaded there are none--none who think *so meanly* of the tendencies of this great anniversary. We address none to-day of all this large assembly, whose sensibilities are not shocked at the very thought of celebrating the achievements of our half-clad, half-fed, unpaid, bleeding, dying ancestors, by rioting and dissipation--none whose best feelings do not instinctively recoil at the very thought of responding to the dying groans

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\*The Roman slaves were allowed a season of license. Americans were never slaves, but freemen, and the sons of freemen, asserting and defending their native rights against usurpation. They ought not, then, to keep their jubilee as slaves are wont to do.

of those, who perished in their country's cause, with boistrous and drunken merriment.

The day we now commemorate was a solemn day. Picture to yourselves the scene. Only think of so small a band, met to accomplish so stupendous a work. They stake reputation, personal ease, yea, life itself. When the signers of the declaration of independence had convened to affix their names to that imperishable document, we are told, that for many minutes, solemn stillness reigned. None moved, none spoke. There they sat, a body of wise, virtuous, Heaven-directed freemen, meditating the temporal salvation of themselves and their posterity, to the latest generation. Yes, there they sat—planning—contriving and risking their earthly all for you and me. Such a body—under such circumstances—placing itself in direct opposition to the proudest and mightiest nation on earth, constitutes a scene of deep and solemn grandeur, such as this world has seldom witnessed. And how should the solemnities of that occasion be remembered and celebrated? Should not deep seriousness and lively gratitude, characterise all that is said and done to-day? A leading object in this celebration should be, so to keep alive in the public mind the principles, the men and the measures of that memorable period, as to render their influence imperishable. In this way it may be made to contribute largely to the dissemination of those sentiments and the formation of those habits, which are indispensably necessary to render us a permanently free and happy nation. Such should be the observances of this day, that as its light is succeeded by the shades of evening—and the busy scenes of active life are succeeded by the calmness of reflection, each one shall be enabled to realize, that he is a better man—a better patriot, and even a better christian, than he was in the morning. The lessons taught to-day, in all our public meetings, should be such, as to prepare the great mass of the people thoroughly to understand, appreciate and maintain their rights as freemen.

As a christian congregation, we hold it to be both a duty and a privilege, to direct our thoughts and feelings to the God of nations, through whose special Providence and superabundant goodness, we have become a people comparatively free and happy. The passage selected as a text may aid us in our work of gratitude and praise. It teaches us that the nation favored of God is happy—and especially the nation among whom the LORD-JEHOVAH is recognized and served as the only living and true God. We shall notice some of the most signal tokens of the Divine favor which are conspicuous in our past

history, and then allude briefly to a few of the means and measures, which will be indispensably necessary for the preservation of the rights and privileges now so amply enjoyed. Nor should it be forgotten, that we do not occupy the place to-day of the politician or the statesman. We are neither the one nor the other. We disclaim all pretensions to a rank and character of such consequence in the eyes of the world. As an humble, unpretending minister of the Gospel of Christ, we propose to take a very cursory glance at some of the moral and religious features in our national history.

1. In attempting to account for our prosperous and happy condition, it is important to remember some of the peculiarities connected with our national origin. Great moral causes often operate slowly, but always surely. From the very hour in which the Pope acquired the supremacy in Europe, a spirit began to display itself which threatened to burst the chains with which he had contrived to enslave his fellow men. Even amid the gloom of that dismal night—most appropriately termed “the dark ages”—there was a *star* which cast its solitary but brilliant light athwart that darkness. This was “the morning star of the Reformation”—the precursor of that day by the brightness of which we have found our way to freedom. The abundant harvest reaped towards the close of the 18th century, was sown during the two or three preceding centuries. And who, my hearers, were they that did the most to scatter that precious seed? Some may doubt and others may be wholly incredulous. But still the truth stands upon every page of veritable history, that they were Wickliffe and Huss, Luther, and Calvin, Zuingle and Knox. Yes, doubt it who may, these men laid the foundation of that very system amid the blessings of which we now live so happily. We know that they did not see as distinctly as we now do. But the reason is obvious. In the commencement of their career, they needed light and towards the close of it, they were dazzled by the excessive splendor which their own labors had occasioned. Hence, they erred. In some respects they greatly erred. But still their aims and plans were sound. They gave an impulse to the public mind which shook all Europe to its centre; and soon rendered that continent too contracted a residence for their own descendants. This gave rise to that passion for emigration which led to the peopling of our own beloved land. And who were they that acted as pioneers in the great work of giving existence to this new world? What were their principles and feelings and motives? They were not the slaves either of ecclesiastical or civil masters. Nor were they fugitives

from justice. It has been said that our "Adam and Eve came out of Newgate." If this be so, it was because "the tyrants of that day had crowded that prison with the best men of their land." But the truth is, the great majority of them came of their own accord. Nor did they come as adventurers in quest of riches or pleasure or fame. They were freemen in principle, seeking to be so in fact. They were christians in heart, struggling to be so in profession and practice. Yes, my hearers, the germe of that tree, beneath the shades of which we now repose so peacefully and happily, was brought to this land by the Puritans, and other christian Pilgrims, who sought in the new world, an asylum from the intolerance and oppression of the old.

2. We remark in the next place, that the causes which led to the war of the revolution, or rather the motives by which its originators were actuated, should be remembered to-day with approving consciences, and thankful hearts. This war was not undertaken for the purpose of conquest. Nor did it originate in a peevish, or jealous or lawless spirit. It was in no respect an offensive, but in all respects a defensive war. Our forefathers soon made the melancholy discovery, that the yoke with which they had been scourged in England, was long enough to reach across the broad Atlantic. A change of country had wrought no material change in their civil and ecclesiastical relations and privileges. There was nothing in the lofty mountains, extended plains, majestic rivers, the fertile soil and salubrious atmosphere of the new, to remedy the evils of the old world. The fetters forged by the hands of royalty were neither to be melted nor broken by such means. Ill-gotten power is not so readily yielded. The disposition on the part of the strong to oppress the weak, is not so easily eradicated. Many of the most offensive features of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, were borne from the mother country to this, in the same ships which brought the Pilgrim fathers. Here their eyes were continually pained with seeing in the dress, the equipage and manners of each petty colonial Governor, much of what they had seen at home in royalty itself—and here their necks were galled by substantially the same yoke. Here *was to exist* "taxation without representation"—and here *already existed* that great ecclesiastical incubus—that spiritual guillotine,—a church establishment. His Gracious Majesty, having no true faith of his own, had succeeded in becoming "the defender of the faith" of others. This he had done in England, and, this his imperious spirit prompted him to attempt to do in this country. Accordingly he built his temples—prescribed his forms of worship, sent over his Priests, and

then called upon the people of all creeds and of no creed, to frequent those temples, to observe those forms,—to support those Priests ; or be fined, or scourged, or imprisoned. We repeat it, the war of the revolution was not the result of ignorance, caprice, or passion. It was not the work of a lawless mob, whose profligacy had reduced them to that state of degradation, in which any change would be a blessing. But it was the genuine offspring of sound principle, legitimately striving to remedy evils which had become literally intolerable. It was the last resort of a virtuous—a magnanimous people, determined, in humble reliance on the God of nations, to secure their freedom, or to perish in the attempt.

These considerations may account for the fact, that although it was a *civil war*, it was never characterised by those excesses which ordinarily attend such wars. Thus, too, may we readily account for its successful prosecution and its happy close. And thus, too, may the most fastidious advocate of *peace under all circumstances*, consider himself justifiable in looking back to that revolution with complacency and gratitude.

3. Nor should we omit, in our reminiscences to-day, the peculiar character of those who were leaders in the halls of State and on the field of battle. Sustaining the character, and occupying the place we do, it would hardly be becoming to speak of those men as soldiers and statesmen. This we leave to other and abler hands. But the extent to which their minds were imbued with divine truth—their constant recognition of a Divine Providence, and their high sense of the value of christian institutions—these are themes to which we may most properly call your attention. It is well known that Patrick Henry uniformly manifested a high regard for the claims of religion. His influence was always on the side of sound morals and Christian piety. It is said that in his speeches he very frequently alluded to the scriptures, and often to the God of the scriptures ; and that whenever he did, his manner was peculiarly solemn and apparently devout. His biographer says of him, “ We trust that Henry was a christian. Though he never united himself to any church he often declared his belief in the Saviour, and his hope of mercy through the cross.”

To speak of the piety of Washington would be wholly superfluous. We shall only advert to that most eminent of men at a time when his conduct seems to us by far more imposing than it ever did amid the dangers and sufferings of the field of battle. The War had ended, and Washington stood alone in his glory. All loved—all revered him, except a few *jaundiced eyed* rivals, who had neither the intellect to comprehend,



nor the heart to appreciate excellence so exalted. But a moderate effort would have been necessary to make him dictator or emperor, or any thing he might desire—and notwithstanding this, he appears before Congress in all the majesty of his peculiar greatness, to resign the command of the American armies. At no time in no event of his life, did he ever appear so great as now listen to him, christian freeman. Hear the Father of his country say “I accepted the office with diffidence in myself, but with *confidence in the patronage of Heaven*, and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence increases with every review of the momentous conquest.” Did our limits permit we could easily show that Hancock, Adams, Jay; and the leading men of that day generally cherished the same deep sense of religion. The Declaration of Independence commences with a solemn appeal to the God of nature and closes with these memorable words, “and for the support of ~~the support~~ of this declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives our fortunes and our sacred honor.”

A whole year before this declaration was published, the Old Congress—a body whose name should be with every American citizen, “as ointment poured forth”—the Old Congress appointed a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer to Almighty God, “that the colonies might be ever under the care and protection of a kind Providence, and be prospered in all their interests; that America might soon behold a gracious interposition of Heaven, for the redress of her many grievances.” In reference to this appointment, Ramsey says “Since the fast of the Ninivites recorded in Sacred Writ, perhaps there has not been one which was more generally kept, with suitable dispositions than that of July 20th, 1775. It was no formal service. The whole body of the people felt the importance, the weight and danger of the unequal contest in which they were about to engage; that every thing dear to them was at stake, and that a divine blessing only would carry them through it successfully. This blessing they implored with their whole soul, poured forth in ardent supplications, issuing from hearts deeply penetrated with a sense of their dependence, unworthiness and danger—and at the same time impressed with an humble confidence in the mercy and goodness of that Being who had planted and preserved them hitherto amid many dangers in the wilderness of a new world.”

Two years after the appointment of a day of fasting and prayer, just alluded to, Congress *unanimously* adopted the following preamble and resolutions. It is dated November 1,

1777, bears the signature of the memorable Charles Thompson, and is as follows :

“ For as much as it is the duty of all men, to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God, to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations to him for benefits received, and to implore such further blessings as they stand in need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of his common Providence, but also to smile upon us in the prosecution of a just and necessary war, for the defence and establishment of our inalienable rights and liberties, particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a measure, to prosper the means used for the support of our troops, and to crown our arms with the most signal success :

It is therefore recommended to the Legislature or Executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise ; that at one time and with one voice, the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their Divine Benefactor ; and that together with their sincere acknowledgements and offering they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out from remembrance ; that it may please him graciously to afford his blessing on the governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public councils of the whole ; to inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all under them, with the wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments under the Providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human blessings, independence and peace : That it may please Him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people, and the labor of the husbandman, that our land may yet yield its increase ; to take schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue and piety, under his nurturing care, and to prosper the means of religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom, which consisteth ‘ in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ And it is further recommended that servile labor, and such recreations, as though at other times innocent, may be unbecoming the purposes of this appointment, may be omitted on so solemn an occasion.”

Indulge me in one more extract from the minutes of that venerable body—the *Continental Congress*. This is dated

October 12, 1778—and is also signed by the distinguished Charles Thompson: On this occasion they say “Whereas, true religion and good morals, are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness:

Resolved, that it be, and it is hereby earnestly recommended to the several States, to take the most effectual measures for the encouragement thereof, and for the suppressing of *theatrical entertainments, horse-racing, gaming and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners.*”

Such language to some of our modern great men, may seem to be altogether too puritanical. But let such never forget, that had our forefathers been less puritanical, we should have been less free. We honestly regard that which excites their derision, as the leading cause under God, of our signal success. In sober truth, the wisdom, prudence, fortitude and patriotism of that Congress place them on the highest pinnacle of real greatness. But “the brightest gem in their crown of glory,” is the fervent piety which was conspicuous in much that they did and said. Let all unite to-day in rendering thanks to Almighty God for having given to our country’s cause, at a time so trying, men of such exalted worth. The causes which led to the settlement of this country, the character of its early settlers, the peculiar nature of our revolutionary struggle, and of those who bore a conspicuous part in it, are all themes on which it is delightful to dwell. These are features in our national history, to look upon which, inspires us with unshaken confidence in the purity and permanency of our institutions.

4. We should render thanks for the change wrought in the government under which we live. True freedom can never exist when the great mass of the people are excluded from having a voice in the legislation of a country. Power in the hands of a few will always be abused. They who rule are ever inclined to elevate themselves by depressing the multitude. To obviate evils of this sort, to bring out the energies of a nation—to diffuse the blessings of substantial peace and abiding prosperity—in a word, to make a people really free, they must be qualified for self-government, they must be taught to yield obedience to delegated power. And this is just what we enjoy.

5. In the last place, the rights of conscience have been secured. Man is by nature a despot, and seeks to control his fellow man by arbitrary power, as naturally as he breathes. Nor is he content with accomplishing the subjugation of the body. He aims at nothing less than dominion over the mind, the heart, the conscience. Puny man, usurping the judgement

seat of Christ, presumptuously prescribes, what his fellow man shall receive or reject as true or false, both in morals and religion. The impious sentiment prevails almost every where that religion can only flourish, when dandled on the knee, and rocked in the cradle of the State. The truth on this subject is, that Christianity has never been assisted, never in the least benefitted by an alliance with the State. The entire history of the true Church of Jesus Christ confirms this statement. From the memorable day in which Constantine spread his *lead* wing over the church, to the present hour, the beauty, the purity and power of true religion have been tarnished and weakened by the officious interference, and pestiferous influence of the civil power. A secularized church may prosper under such circumstances, but vital piety sickens and dies, unless she asserts her independence and relies solely upon her great head to counsel, to guide and bless her. This Heaven-born system took possession of the Roman Empire, in the very face of a formidable establishment of false religion. And wherever such an establishment has proved temporarily invincible, "like some Heavenly dove," she has flown away from that land and found a resting place in some other. So, when crippled and almost crushed in the old world, having just strength enough remaining to make the effort, she spread her broad wings and in peerless majesty, flew to the west. She perched upon Plymouth rock, looked over this widely extended and delightful land, and with a benignity and a firmness peculiarly her own, determined that this should be her home. And here she is, cheering us with her smiles and blessing us with her Heavenly influences. And here she may safely and happily remain, until the constitution under which we live, and the declaration of independence which preceded its adoption, shall have become a dead letter--or shall have been scattered to the four winds. So long as there exists no Bishop, Priest, Presbyter or Prince to prescribe and enforce the creed to be adopted, the forms to be observed, so long has vital piety a fair opportunity to prosper. The highest conceivable probability exists that we shall worship God in spirit and in truth, when we are allowed to worship Him, *when and where, and as we please.*

We may then, safely apply the language of the text to our own country. Truly may we say, "Happy is the people that is in such a case." But, while we do this, and while we rejoice in the blessings adverted to, we should not forget that these rights and privileges are not in themselves sufficient to render the prosperity of a nation permanently salutary. Something, of a high and sacred character is necessary for this great

purpose. Favors abused, powers and privileges prostituted and squandered, tend to speedy and certain ruin. Our rights and privileges may be safely preserved, and perpetuated by the *universal diffusion of religious truth, and in no other way.*—Every other influence has been tried and has most signally failed. How appropriate and salutary a lesson may we learn from the history of the Roman and Grecian republics.—They cherished a very ardent love of freedom; so much so, that for its attainment, they fought, they bled, they died. To a very great extent, they succeeded; and for the security of their rights, they enacted many wise and wholesome laws. In truth, they possessed the requisite love of freedom, courage, learning and refinement; and yet they failed. How short lived was the constitution even of a Solon. And why? What was needed? A very brief reference to their prevailing systems of religion, will afford the answer.

These were all systems of heathenish idolatry. Notwithstanding their learning and refinement, the most degrading rites and ceremonies were every where practised. They sought direction of the soothsayer, and not of the only living and true God. They sought pardon and peace of conscience by means of the most insignificant human contrivances, and not through the “blood of the Lamb.”

It is well known that nothing exerts so powerful an influence on national character as the prevailing religion. Nothing does so much to elevate or degrade, to preserve or destroy a people. This is easily accounted for—nothing takes such hold on the feelings: nothing appeals so strongly to the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of man. We shall not consume time in attempting to illustrate and enforce these statements. We affirm without the fear of contradiction, that in possessing the Christian system, we have the very thing which Greece and Rome so much needed. The direct tendency of this system, is to make and keep man free and happy. This will be obvious on the slightest attention to its real nature. It every where recognizes in man the right of private judgment. Its uniform language is, *examine and then obey.* It discards the use of all deception and of all constraint. It asks no assistance from civil authority, it claims no alliance with civil law. It addresses the understanding and the conscience, and only asks a fair and unprejudiced hearing. It tells man of the sacredness of his obligations, and the grandeur of his destiny. It admonishes him of the constant inspection of the all-seeing eye of God; and tells him of a day in which God will judge the world in righteousness. He is told that on that day, the Prince

is not to answer for the subject ; nor the subject for the Prince ; but that *every man must give account for himself unto God*. The language continually thundered in the ear of ruler and people is, "The wages of sin is death"—"The wicked shall be turned into Hell"—"The soul that sinneth it shall die." Hence, the nations of the earth now are, and ever have been, slaves or freemen, just so far as they have been Christian, or Pagan, virtuous or vicious.

If all this be true, then it is not difficult to say what is necessary in order that our institutions may be preserved and handed down to the latest generation. Every thing that is constitutional, expedient and scriptural, should be done to render the great body of the people intelligent, virtuous and pious. More must be done for the intellectual and moral training of our youth. It is not enough to appropriate money in aid of primary schools, and for the establishment of Academies, Colleges and Universities. You might plant a College in every county, and a University in every Senatorial district, and if this were all, but little would be done. The great thing needed is, a higher sense of the value of education among parents, and more vigorous effort on the part of all to diffuse among the youth of our land more of a literary taste. Nor will a taste for nothing higher than literary and scientific attainments answer. The cultivation of the heart must go hand in hand with that of the intellect. To cultivate and store the mind of a bad man, is "like placing a sword in the hands of a maniac." Without a proper taste for learning, your halls of science, at whatever trouble and expense they may have been reared, will be deserted ; and without special attention to moral, as well as intellectual culture, they will only be as fountains which send forth streams to poison and destroy. The Bible, just as it is, without note or comment, must be disseminated. It must have a place in every man's house. Nor must it be rejected from our seminaries of learning. It must go into every place. Wherever there is a darkened understanding to be enlightened, or a depraved heart to be renewed, there must its light shine and its influence be exerted. Its sacred truths must be unfolded and taught in the Sabbath School, the Bible Class, and by public preaching.

All this will appear the more necessary from a consideration of our unparalleled prosperity. The rapid increase of our population, the astonishing improvement in the arts, and in individual and national wealth, all conspire to make knowledge and piety the more necessary. As with individuals, so with nations, the gales of prosperity are often by far more dange-

rous than are the storms of adversity. Thus it must be with us, unless the public mind is thoroughly enlightened, and all the springs of action thoroughly sanctified. In the eloquent language of an American orator, "The rank vegetation of un-sanctified enterprize, thrown into one vast reservoir of putrefaction, will send up over the land desolation and death. No nation will be so short lived as ours, unless we can balance the temptations of our prosperity by moral power. Our sun has moved on from his morning to his meridian, with a rapidity and a glory which has amazed the world." But unless we can diffuse sound knowledge and vital piety through the land, dark clouds will soon obscure the brightness of that sun, and his descent to a long dark night will be more rapid than his rising.

Another consideration of vast importance is, that our civil and religious liberty are the fruit of other men's labors into which we have entered. The heads that devised and the hands that executed the measures which secured to us these inestimable blessings, have returned to their native dust.— Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Madison, with the long line of their illustrious coadjutors, are gone. We see their faces, we hear their voices no longer. The impulse given by these master spirits to our institutions, is still felt. And may the time never come, when we shall cease to feel it. But still that influence must weaken, as time rolls on. Time obliterates from the memory of the fond wife, the image of her deceased husband; from the memory of the mother, the image of her lovely infant torn from her by death. What impressions then will not time and change efface? Precious as is the memory, great and salutary as is the influence of those sages, that memory and that influence must necessarily pass away. Already are they well nigh forgotten in the din of party strife and faction. Only let the storm which now rages rise a little higher, grow somewhat more tempestuous, and what earthly power can save us? We know that our political bark has been shaken by other storms. But then influences were deeply felt, which now are forgotten or disregarded. We are thoroughly convinced that nothing can save us, but knowledge sanctified by piety. This must be universally diffused or we are undone. It must move onward with our flowing emigration to the West and South. It must go beyond the Rocky Mountains, and pour its waters of life into the ocean beyond. If this be not done, the nation will turn in fury upon itself and pour out its own heart's blood by self-inflicted wounds. This has repeatedly occurred with other republics, and why not with ours?

Among the valuable results which have flown from the overthrow of a church establishment, is the removal of that fruitful source of hypocrisy, the requirement of a profession of religion as a qualification for office. Our gratitude is due, first to God, and then to the distinguished statesman, whose ashes repose on the brow of yonder mountain, for the act securing to this nation religious toleration. But still I would ask, with a diffidence which the delicacy of the subject imperiously demands, if there is in the exercise of the right of suffrage sufficient regard paid to the intellectual and moral character of those who seek to be our Legislators and rulers? In considering the claims of a given candidate, I would lay no great stress upon the extent or accuracy of his literary or scientific acquirements. I would attach no great importance to the facility with which he can turn Latin or Greek into English, or the ease with which he might scribble for the trashy periodicals of the day. But I should by all means expect him to be a man of sound judgment, vigorous intellect; one who had been a hard student, a successful learner in the school of political economy. About his peculiar religious creed nothing should be said. To attach any importance to this matter would be in direct and flagrant opposition to the letter and spirit of our free institutions. Religious liberty dies whenever this is done. But while all this is freely and sincerely conceded, we must insist on drawing up a short catechism for every man who seeks the suffrages of the people. It should assuredly be asked, is the candidate a duellist, a Sabbath breaker, a drunkard?—is he licentious or profane? Does he throw his influence on the side of virtue or vice? Would he make a safe and valuable associate for my sons, whose characters are just beginning to be developed? or should I be afraid to trust them in his society? These are questions which should be universally asked. And if the aspirant after office is found guilty in these respects, let the door of honor and preferment be shut in his face. Should we consent to entrust the legislation of the country to the hands of a man whose moral principles and character are confessedly such as to make him a most unsafe associate for our children? Should we be concerned only to know whether he is of our party or not? We concede the necessity of parties in a government like ours. To prate against all party organizations and movements is pre-eminently childish. But party should not be every thing. We have other rights to be maintained, other interests to be secured than those of party.

Such a course as this would effectually change the whole system of electioneering. Demagogues would cease their ef-



forts to procure public favor by taking advantage of the ignorance and appealing to the prejudices and passions of the people. Merit, and not sycophancy, would then be the high road to preferment and honor. It would be necessary for men to learn to be statesmen, by taking lessons in schools of much higher grade than are found in a tavern bar or the gamester's cell. And then too would the nation cease to stand disgraced in the eyes of the civilized world, by the coarse wrangling and vulgar abuse for which our national councils have become so deplorably distinguished. In a word, then would the wicked cease to bear rule and the people cease to mourn.

All denominations of Christians took an active part in our revolutionary struggle. For the cause at stake they all fought, they all prayed. Having thus united in securing, they should also unite in perpetuating the blessings of civil and religious liberty. The time we presume will never come, when these separate organizations will be abolished, and when all shall be amalgamated into one. But differing as they do only in regard to points comparatively trivial, and agreeing in all that is essential, they should banish jealousy, cease their strife, combine their efforts to resist the common foe, and to advance the common cause. He who recklessly unchurches all who do not agree in every particular, however trivial, with himself; he who heads a crusade against the christian world, and denounces as unworthy of confidence all who differ in opinion from himself, should meet the firm and dignified rebuke of every friend to freedom. Let each allow to the other, the sacred right of private judgment; and let the government continue to know no difference between Jew and Gentile, extending its protection over all, but granting special favors to none; then will the religion of the Bible be as oil poured upon the troubled waters. The family of Christ, though composed of different branches, will be essentially one, and thus it shall become the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Houses of worship should be erected. Pious, intelligent, and active ministers of the Gospel should be sustained by the contributions of the friends of good order, sobriety and godliness. Our seminaries of learning should be as fountains which send forth pure and limpid and refreshing streams. Wholesome discipline should be rigidly and yet kindly enforced. The Sabbath School should every where emit its mild, but cheering and salutary light.—None should esteem this unpretending institution beneath his notice. Though unobtrusive and humble, it is this day doing more to excite a taste for books, more to lay a proper foundation for high schools and colleges, more to create among the

mass of the people a becoming self-respect, and a just appreciation of good order, sound virtue, and unfeigned piety, than all the primary schools in our State put together. And there too is that institution, the specific object of which, is to hold up before the world the horrors of drunkenness. Already has it done much for the emancipation of immortal man, from one of the worst forms of slavery. Let us speed that blessed cause, and thus put it out of the power of the dissipated demagogue, to purchase popularity by darkening the minds, hardening the hearts, and brutalizing the characters of his fellow men. In the moral government of a God of purity, it never was designed that the suffrages of freemen should be bought up by sycophancy or alcohol.

There is a spirit of insubordination abroad in the land, a positive unwillingness on the part of young and old to submit to rightful authority, which is eminently portentous of evil. I fear the notions of liberty begin to prevail, which once deluged the fairest portions of France with the blood of her best subjects. The spirit of detraction and slander too, is wide awake. It hurls its envenomed shafts at the heads of all ranks and classes indiscriminately. No man thinks of rising but by treading under foot the blasted reputation of others—no new sect, either in Church or State, even hopes for success, until they can succeed in uprooting and scattering all that has been long known and thoroughly tested. If so humble an individual might be allowed to make a suggestion or two to the Christian world, touching these matters, we would say, that Christians should consider themselves particularly called upon to set an example of reverence for the laws, and profound respect for the civil authority. Of those in office they should complain less, and for them they should pray more. In our party contests we seem utterly to forget, that “promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South—but God is the judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another.”—Christians are required to be “a peculiar people;” peculiar even in their political contests; peculiar for their sobriety, moderation, temperance, forbearance and gentleness.

The whole land is now deeply agitated. One of our great periodical contests is going forward with-almost unparalleled violence. Parties are thoroughly organized, their banners unfurled, their respective leaders at their posts. The roar, not of artillery, but of declamation, is heard, in all directions. Is there any thing for the people of God, as such, to do? Assuredly there is. Let them do as the House of Burgesses directed when the British closed the Port of Boston; let them do as

the good old continental Congress directed, amidst the greatest darkness of our revolutionary struggle, whose preamble and resolution have already been mentioned. Let a day be specified on which they shall fast and pray; devoutly imploring the Divine interposition. Along with these supplications, let fervent gratitude ascend for the mercies already received, and verily there shall be a voice heard, calling upon the angry passions of men to be still, and there shall be a great calm. The ship of State shall weather the storm, and with her stars and her stripes floating beautifully in the breeze, she shall hold on her way in safety and in triumph, bearing with her to the latest generation, the imperishable blessings of *civil and religious Liberty*.