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E. A. Alderman, Esq.

A SKETCH OF

By *SW* THE *Reid*

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. DAVID CALDWELL, D.D.

NEAR SIXTY YEARS PASTOR OF THE CHURCHES
OF BUFFALO AND ALAMANCE.

INCLUDING

TWO OF HIS SERMONS; SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REGULATION,
TOGETHER WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY TRANSACTIONS AND
INCIDENTS IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED; AND A VERY BRIEF
NOTICE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND MORAL CONDITION OF
NORTH-CAROLINA WHILE IN ITS COLONIAL STATE.

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S E R M O N I.

THE CHARACTER AND DOOM OF THE SLUGGARD.

Prov. xii. 24.—BUT THE SLOTHFUL SHALL BE UNDER TRIBUTE.

Paying tribute or tax is an acknowledgement of subjection and dependence; and is opprobrious or not, according to the circumstances under which it is paid. When we pay a tax to the support of a government whose constitution we approve and in whose measures we have a voice, it is paid cheerfully; and then we are more than compensated by the personal security and by the facilities for improvement which it affords; but still it is an acknowledgement of dependence upon, or of subjection to, that government. When it is paid to a foreign government; and especially, if it be paid from compulsion, and not from choice, it is always considered as degrading. Thus the Jews considered the tribute which they paid at different periods of their history to the surrounding nations; and finally, to the Roman government. So all nations in all ages have viewed the payment of tribute by compulsion, whether it was paid to their own rulers, or to those of another nation; and this arises from that innate love of liberty which belongs to all men, as well as to their sense of justice and propriety; for the exaction from a people of a tribute more than they themselves, when properly informed, admit to be necessary to enable the government to give adequate protection to their persons and property, no matter by whom it is done, is felt to be a violation of justice; and the government which will make such exactions from downright avarice, or for ambitious purposes, is not guided by a fair appreciation of the rights of mankind, or by those benign principles which alone can render its operation acceptable and salutary to the governed.

When an individual is said to be under tribute, as in the text, the meaning is that he is in a degraded state of subjection to, and dependence upon, those around him; and such, we are here told, will be the condition of the sluggard. We are so constituted that vigorous and well directed exertion is necessary to the attainment of anything that is valuable; and all the powers we possess, bodily and mental, ought to be employed assiduously in pursuance of the end for which they were given. The powers with which we are endowed are various; but the employments for which they are required are also various; and it is not important in what way we are employed, provided it be at something that is right and useful. If we refuse to exercise these powers in the way in which it was designed we should exercise them, we must remain destitute of that which would be obtained by a proper industry;

and this neglect, and the consequent destitution, may be either partial or total. For example: a certain degree of bodily exercise is necessary to health; but if we neglect that exercise we must want the health and vigor which might otherwise be enjoyed. The acquisition of knowledge depends upon a diligent use of the means and the due exercise of our mental faculties; but if we refuse to take this course, we must remain in ignorance. Industry, as to the things of this world, is necessary to obtain the means of subsistence and the comforts of life; but if we refuse to labor, we must remain in poverty and wretchedness. We are surrounded by enemies and dangers of various kinds; and to avoid being overcome, both vigilance and efforts are necessary; but if we refuse to watch and to take the proper precautions, or to defend ourselves when attacked, captivity or ruin will be the certain consequence.

It has been said that the word which is rendered *slothful*, in the text, ought to be rendered *deceitful*, or *fraudulent*; but we need not detain you with any critical remarks in order to settle that point, as the two characters are very much alike; for we generally find that the deceitful and fraudulent are indolent too; and there are certainly some of the same elements in both. As it stands it answers better also to the antithesis in the first part of the verse. *The hand of the DILIGENT shall BEAR RULE; but the SLOTHFUL shall be under TRIBUTE.* Besides there are many other passages, both in the Old and New Testament, and especially in the book of Proverbs, of the same import, and about which there is no dispute.

A man may be so intent upon gain, or so absorbed in scientific or literary pursuits, or so engaged in something else that is lawful and even important in its nature, as to neglect his health, and, not only become the subject of debility and disease, but go down to a premature grave. The effect in this case is owing, not to indolence, but an imprudent or a too eager pursuit of the object; yet indolence will be followed by the same result; for in both cases the laws of our physical nature are violated in a similar way. We need not enquire whether there is any culpability in the former case; for that depends on circumstances, and is not necessary to our purpose. It is with the *sluggard* we have to do at present; and for him there is no apology. While he is impairing his health and shortening his days by his inactivity and sloth, he is gaining nothing in any other way, and must therefore be chargeable with his own misery and ruin. To say nothing of the injury to his health from inattention to cleanliness and from the want of fresh and wholesome air, which is very great, the laws of our physical existence require frequent and regular exercise; and without it the vitality of the system will languish and its energies become impaired. *As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the sluggard upon his bed*—turning from one side to the other, but still remaining in the same place. *The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom: It grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth*—that is, the slightest exertion is irksome to him; and he neglects, not only the muscular exertion necessary to health, but to make suitable provision for his nourishment. Such a man cannot enjoy the health and vigor of other people; nor have the same number of days to

live; for, as a matter of fact, we always find that those who live long upon the earth are people of regular and active habits.

If the sluggard commences in poverty he will remain poor; and if he commences rich he will become poor. He may desire wealth and comfort, but his desire killeth him; for "his hands refuse to labor." He may "covet greedily all the day long;" but, while "the righteous have enough and to spare," he is in want. While many a man, who began life poor, has become rich by honest but persevering industry, many a fine estate has been wasted by sloth and inattention. *The slothful man saith there is a lion in the way: a lion is in the streets,*—that is, in the very places where he ought to be at work, or attending to his business; and the amount of it is that he is ready to make any excuse, and will indulge his sloth upon any terms. The consequence is that, if he has a farm, it is in disorder, and becoming waste. *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.* To an observing and reflecting man this was a source of instruction. *Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it and received instruction.* The amount of it was, that while the man was saying to himself, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep,* his poverty was seen coming as *one that travelleth, and his want as an armed man.* If he is a tradesman, or a merchant, and neglects his business, his customers, his debts, or any thing belonging to his occupation, the same result will follow. Sloth is usually at the bottom of all negligence, disorder, or bad management in business; and there is more sloth among us, and more of the evils resulting from it, probably, than many of you have ever supposed.

But these are not all the evils, nor the worst evils to which the sluggard is subject; for those of a mental and moral kind are much more serious in their nature and their consequences. A certain amount of knowledge is necessary to a man's welfare, here and hereafter; and the more knowledge he has the better, if he makes a right use of it; for then his satisfaction and his usefulness will be in the same proportion. But even that amount of intelligence which will enable him to understand his own interest, and make him acquainted with the duties which he owes to God his Maker, and to his fellow beings, requires a diligent use of the means of knowledge, and much reflection on what he reads or acquires in any way. He may be very positive or dogmatical in his opinions, without being able to tell why he entertains them; and is positive just because he is ignorant. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.* Seven was considered as the number of perfection among the Jews, and being in common use it was often employed by the inspired writers, as it was by the people to whom they wrote, to express the whole class of persons or objects to which it was applied; and by "seven wise men" was therefore meant all the wise men in the world. The sluggard thinks he is wiser than any body else; and this state of mind, in addition to his aversion to any proper exercise of his mental powers, keeps

him in ignorance. While the due exercise of all our powers, mental and physical, is the only condition on which our present and future welfare can be secured, of which we are expressly informed by the great and good Being who gave us existence, and the proof of which is manifest every where around us; he who will not comply with the laws of his being and fulfil the only condition on which his welfare is attainable, must become a certain prey to "all the ills that flesh is heir to;" for if he is not aware of these evils how can he escape them? If he is ignorant, how can he know in what they consist, or in what direction they will come? or if he does not know the things that make for his peace, how can he seek them, though ever so anxious? Knowledge, like every thing else that is good, is the reward of industry; and if we would obtain it, we must prize it above gold and silver, and seek for it as for hidden treasure. The slothful man cannot know in what his true interest consists; nor become properly acquainted with his duties to God and to his fellow man.— Of course he cannot answer the end of his creation by honoring God and being useful in the world; and as he contributes nothing to the welfare of the community in which he lives, by bearing his portion of its burdens, or by aiding to support those principles and to carry out those plans of improvement on which its good order and prosperity depend, he must be despised by all the wise and good. The sluggard, as a worthless being, destitute of merit, and doing no good to himself or any body else, is as really an object of reprobation as the miser, the spendthrift, or the highway robber; and the blessings which he foregoes and the evils which he brings upon himself, here, are but forerunners of the heavier losses which he will sustain, and the more insufferable woes which he will bring upon himself hereafter; for the unprofitable servant will be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness where no ray of comfort can ever cast even a momentary radiance over the gloom, and where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever. The evils which he is bringing upon himself here are those of privation and of suffering: they are physical, intellectual, and moral; and increasing, as they are, from day to day, both in number and degree, they can be regarded only as the beginning of sorrows.

We have seen that while the sluggard is impairing his health and shortening his days, he is wasting his estate, or depriving himself of blessings and privileges which he might otherwise enjoy; and is not only acting in a manner very similar to that of the most prodigal spendthrift, but is pursuing towards himself, and perhaps others also who may be dependent on him, a perfectly suicidal course. God hath declared that "he is brother to him that is a great waster;" and that he "who sleeps in summer shall beg in harvest," exposing himself to poverty, shame, and misery.

As he will not disturb his ease that he may become acquainted with his duty to God, or learn upon what terms the divine favor may be obtained, and what will be the consequence of neglecting to comply with those terms, neither will he take the trouble to ascertain what is due to him from his fellowmen, or what he owes to them. Hence being deficient in his duty to his God, his king

and his country, he not only becomes an easy prey to every bold intruder who is either desirous of gain or greedy of power, but is exposed to all the evils, of whatever kind, that can come upon him from those towards whom he has violated his obligations. While he is spending or losing, by his ignorance and sloth, the inheritance that has been handed down from his predecessors, perhaps through a number of generations, with all the temporal comforts which it might have afforded, or is neglecting to acquire the means of comfort and respectability which a kind Providence has placed within the reach of his industry, the ambitious and the covetous, those tyrants of the human race and pests of society, view him as an object fit for their purposes, and mark him for their prey, believing that his ignorance will screen them from his notice, and that his indolence will make him perfectly submissive, or prevent that vigilance and exertion on his part which are necessary to his safety. Thus they are encouraged to make the experiment; and they too often succeed. Here your own memories may easily suggest examples, both in public and in private life, in which the weak, the ignorant, and the slothful were out-witted and imposed on, defrauded and subjugated, by some unprincipled villain or other, who was destitute alike of honor, humanity, and every thing else that could entitle him to the respect and affections of his fellow men; and of such the world is full.—But as the sluggard is so reckless as to destroy his soul, body, and estate, it is almost a matter of course that he will so undervalue his civil and religious liberties as to lose them in the same way.

Were he careful to examine into the rights of society and to ascertain what each individual parts with, for the sake of the government, the aggregate of which is the royal prerogative, and is committed into the hands of the supreme magistrate to be exercised for the public good, he would easily see when his civil liberties were secure, or when endangered by the attempts of ambitious and designing men; but he does not consider that the king, as such, is created, protected, and supported by the State; and that all his acts should therefore promote the public good. While the sluggard continues ignorant of these leading principles, no wonder if he is easily awed into slavery, stoops his shoulders to the burden, becomes a servant to tribute, and yields to all the unjust demands of usurped prerogative.

In acting thus, however, he is an enemy, not only to himself, but also to his children. Can this be possible! you will say. Can he divest himself of humanity! Can he lay aside the tender feelings of a parent! Can he forget the civil interests of his children! Can he expose his helpless infants to the lawless demands of tyranny, and to all the cruelties of despotism! Can he be so infatuated as to ruin his tender offspring by surrendering their liberty and property into the hands of those who exercise usurped prerogative!—I would say it was impossible, if incontestable facts did not prove the contrary. Who are capable of such blackened crimes! who can deliberately ruin himself and his children at once! the *sluggard*; and whoever else may do the same thing from other principles or in other ways, the sluggard is sure to do

it, in whom ignorance, disregard of moral obligation, and a supreme love of ease are inseparably united.

Should such a monster of human society appear at a time when the royal prerogative is extended beyond the bounds of reason, or the just limits of the constitution, would he act the champion in the cause of liberty, bravely withstand the shocks of an arbitrary and tyrannical government, and bid defiance to all the illicit requirements of despotism? Would he vindicate the cause of political truth, and firmly resolve to transmit to his infant sons the fair inheritance of liberty? The answers to these questions I beseech you to conceal. Let not the friends of the constitution, or the "Sons of Liberty," know that such an enemy to the common interests of mankind anywhere exists, lest their patriotic zeal should raise undue resentment and cause it to burst upon his devoted head—conceal, I pray you, conceal it from his unoffending family:—add not infamy and disgrace to their bondage and oppression. It will be enough, and more than enough, for them to answer the demands of tyranny, and the lawless requisitions of an unprincipled minister, if, for lack of courage and firmness, the chains of slavery should be now fastened upon us. Alas, they must groan out their days in lamentation and wretchedness, suffering whatever a corrupt minister, or ministerial tools, can invent; and tamely surrender all that is most dear and valuable to the demands of avarice and the menaces of power. Let them not know that their bondage and degradation must be ascribed to the ignorance and indolence of their progenitors, who, from cowardice or the love of ease, tamely surrendered all that was their own and all that should have been their children's, into the hands of a popish minister or an infatuated senate. This would sink their sinking spirits still lower, and add infamy and shame to poverty and oppression. Let oblivion spread her dark veil over their ignoble principles and unmanly conduct, who, for a little ease, or the hope of securing a trifling estate, or some mere selfish advantage of comparatively small value and short duration, would resign their own and their children's liberty, overturn the constitution, and expose themselves, with their posterity, born or unborn, to the griping paw of arbitrary power.

When men of this character, ambitious and unprincipled, are a majority in the State, or have the control of public affairs, what unjust prosecutions, what shipwrecks of property, what fines, confiscations, and imprisonments, the black history of some former inauspicious reigns fully manifest. I refer to the time when a set of slothful and unprincipled wretches disgraced the British Senate, suffering the Council Table, Star Chamber, and High Commissioners to engross almost the whole power of making and executing the laws—at which time they enforced their loans, benevolences, and ship-money, by illegal prosecutions, intolerable fines, and long imprisonments, to the ruin or serious injury of the nation; for vast multitudes of the most industrious, upright, and valuable citizens left the country; and with all classes there was a want of confidence in the government;—while the disregard of moral honesty and good faith manifested by the men in power, and the temptations held out to the am-

bitious and covetous to stifle conscience and trample on the rights of justice and humanity, produced a general deterioration of moral principle.

The sin and danger of sloth, in relation to our civil liberty, or of yielding to the unjust demands of arbitrary power, is further evident from the fact that those in high life, or who administer the government, have all the allurements by which to turn the active spirits of the age, and cause them to act in concert with themselves. Some they bring over by promoting them to high stations; some by pains and penalties; some are influenced by the apprehension of not being able to obtain justice and of losing what little they have; some are brought into subjection and held fast through a kind of depravity in their understanding, not distinguishing between reasonable taxation and oppression; while others seem to have so much infidelity in their make that they will not believe what all mankind assert, and will hardly believe the testimony of their own senses.

But the sluggard from mere indolence, or from an aversion to exerting himself in any way, will not observe these matters, nor inquire into what is conducive to his own and his children's safety and happiness. He would rather stoop his shoulders and take on him the whole load of oppression and slavery, with all their train of privations and hardships. Were these evils confined to the persons and families of such indolent wretches it would be more tolerable; but, alas! posterity, in all its extent and in its distant generations, may feel the burden, made more insupportable by repeated additions.—France and Spain, yea, all the enslaved nations of Europe, can bear witness that it was the sluggish disposition of their remote predecessors, and the inactivity of succeeding ages, which introduced, increased, and perfected their present bondage—a bondage which makes them to this day groan under a load that it is not likely they or their children will be able to throw off.

Had our forefathers in England given up the cause of liberty and indulged in sloth, or inglorious ease, when popish recusants, assisted by the French, and headed by an angry and disappointed Prince, attempted our subjugation and ruin, we should have been under the domination of popery, and exposed to all its persecuting tenets;—to slavery, and all its poverty and wo. Attempts have been often made, since the reformation, to introduce popery and slavery into the British nation; but they were always resolutely and successfully withstood. Charles I, prompted and sustained by his alliance with France, the depravity of his understanding, and his uxorious obedience to his popish queen, encouraged popery in his kingdom; and those who professed the protestant religion were both oppressed and persecuted. At this time the British parliament was adorned by men of honesty, zeal and activity, who effected such prodigious revolutions in church and state, as were the surprise and wonder of all Europe. When James II abdicated the throne of England, and raised an army of papists and confederate French, to establish popery and slavery, the British nation did not betray their religion or their liberty by an inglorious submission, nor did they desert the mighty cause of truth and freedom through sloth or cowardice. They valiantly repelled the force and fury of his attacks;

and fearlessly proclaimed the prince and princess of Orange the king and queen of Great Britain. Thus our forefathers, or many of them, sacrificed at Londouderry and Enniskillen, their lives, that they might hand down to us the fair inheritance of liberty and the protestant religion; and in the whole course of their conduct in the support and defence of their rights, they have set us an example which ought not to be disregarded.—But the sluggard gives up his all; all that is his own, and all that should be his children's and their children's after them, into the hands of ambitious, arbitrary, and wicked men,—in consequence of which, he and they, so far as he is at all concerned to prevent it, are exposed to unremitted slavery, poverty, and distress.

If the sluggard be thus an enemy to all above him, to all around him, and to all that will come after him, as well as to himself, in soul, body, and estate, he ought to be well observed in every well regulated community; for he despises and tramples upon the laws of God and the most salutary institutions of men—institutions that have been handed down, as invaluable and sacred, from father to son, through many generations. Among these we may mention that of *trial by juries*, which is a very ancient institution or usage in Great Britain; for it seems to have been known to the first Britons, was practised by the Saxons, and has been confirmed since the invasion of the Normans by *Magna Charta*, and by continual usage. Trial by juries, however, is not only of great antiquity, but is essential to the safety and happiness of every British subject, and, in fact, of all mankind. Juries are England's *Ephori and Tribuni*; and are the living bulwark of the laws and the liberties of the people. If we look at those nations that are destitute of this constitutional or essential safeguard, we find that the condition of the inhabitants is miserable, being either entirely subjected to the arbitrary will of tyrants who plunder, dismember, or slay them from mere caprice, according to their humor, often without any provocation, and merely to gratify a savage cruelty; or at least we find them under such laws as render their lives, liberties, and estates liable to be disposed of at the discretion of men acting as judges, who are perfect strangers, oftener mercenary than otherwise, and the mere creatures of the royal prerogative; sometimes malicious and oppressive; and frequently partial and corrupt. But such has been the patriotism, prudence, and activity of our ancestors, that they have never suffered the most arbitrary prince, or princes, that ever swayed the British sceptre, to destroy this invaluable privilege; nor can it ever be destroyed until the constitution, and the liberties of the people, which are now secured by it, are wrested from them and trampled under foot, which can never be done, except from their own supineness or mismanagement. If Britons, when under the influence of heathen superstition, or in the ignorance and thralldom of popery, were thus jealous of their rights, and maintained the privilege of being tried by their peers, or by a jury of the wisest and best men to be found in the vicinity, as the only means of securing their lives and fortunes against the arbitrary, partial, and corrupt judges, would it not be a blot on the escutcheon of Britons or the descendants of Britons, professing the protestant religion, and enjoying

so much light, now to give up, from sloth or cowardice, a privilege so valuable that every other of merely a civil kind can hardly be brought into the comparison. The sluggard who gives up such an important branch of the constitution is worse than a thief or a robber; for the one takes from you only what he needs, or can take away at present, but the other undermines the constitution; opens the door for tyranny and oppression; and exposes all around him, and all that will come after him, as well as himself, to the paw of arbitrary and despotic power.

The consequences of sloth are therefore most pernicious; and the sluggard, being a perfect nuisance to society, must be under the frowns of his Maker, and despised by all good men; for he will not unite with the people of God and the friends of humanity, either to procure or defend their common rights and privileges.—This seems to have been the case with the inhabitants of the city *Meroz*; and God expressed in the most forcible manner his displeasure at their indolence and cowardice. When Jabin, one of the kings of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, had subjugated Israel, and mightily oppressed them for the space of twenty years, Deborah, a prophetess, being influenced by the spirit of the Lord, called for Barak out of Kedesh-Naphtali; and ordered him to go to Mount Tabor, and take with him ten thousand men out of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon. Accordingly Barak issued a general proclamation for these two tribes to meet him at Kedesh; and they obeyed, except the inhabitants of this city *Meroz*, who, it seems, chose rather to be under the tyranny and oppression of that cruel prince, Jabin, than to join with God and his people in vindicating their rights and maintaining their common privileges. God, that he might shew his indignation against those sluggish or timid wretches who would not join in the common cause of liberty, nor unite in defending those rights which he had originally given them, and which, though lost by their pusillanimity, he was about to restore, provided they shewed themselves worthy of such a favor, inspired the prophetess Deborah, and Barak the chief commander of the expedition, with that celebrated song, recorded by the divine historian, in which there is this remarkable passage. *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

There seems to be a dreadful similarity between our sluggard and the inhabitants of this devoted city, both in the *measure* and in the *manner* of sinning. They regarded neither the command of God, nor their own or their children's happiness; and preferred their present ease to the good of the community, the cause of truth, and the welfare of posterity. They seemed to despise, or disregard, all that was above them, all that was around them, and all that might come after them, just like the person mentioned in our text, who shall be under tribute. If this be so, may we not say, without any violence to the sacred text, *curse ye the sluggard, saith the angel of the Lord, curse him bitterly, because he will not come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against those mighty oppressors who break down the sacred enclosures of the constitution, and make inroads upon the life, liberty,*

and property of the subject; who take away or mutilate our charters that have been solemnly ratified by British sovereigns and guaranteed by the plighted faith of government; who take away or deprive us of the right of trial by juries, which is indeed the Palladium of English liberty; who tax us and take our money, without our consent; and who extend the courts of admiralty and vice-admiralty beyond their ancient and proper limits.—Thus the sluggard is an object of execration every where, and at all times; and the evils of his conduct attend him in all his interests and relations, in public and in private; yea in every circumstance or situation of life, his way is as a hedge of thorns. He is cursed in his relations, as being numbered among the profligate and profane, and nearly connected with the most abandoned spendthrift; for *he is brother to him that is a great waster*. He shall be cursed with *groundless fears and apprehensions*, when called to the discharge of any necessary or important duty: *There is a lion without: I shall be slain in the streets*.—He shall be cursed in his *possessions*; for it is manifest to every one who takes a view of the sluggard's field, and of the vineyard of the man void of understanding, when he sees its whole surface covered with thorns and nettles, and its wall broken down, that poverty shall overtake the owner as one that travelleth, and that famine shall seize him as an armed man. He shall be cursed in his *dwelling*; for, *by much sloth the building decayeth*. He shall be cursed as a *filio-de-se*, a person who is deliberately guilty of suicide, because he neglects the ordinary means of preserving his life and securing his best interest. *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor*. He shall be cursed of God forever: Thou wicked, slothful, and unprofitable servant—you must take up your everlasting abode in the blackness of darkness, where the excruciating pain inflicted upon you by divine vengeance, will be productive of eternal weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. But why need we attempt to mention in detail the numberless evils—the poverty, shame, and remorse—the contempt, misery, and despair—that he shall suffer in his person and character, here and hereafter? All the curses in the book of God are levelled against him; and they will, ere long, break upon him like a bursting cloud. The united execrations of the present, and of coming ages, will render him truly contemptible; and the gnawing reflections of a guilty conscience, will make him completely and forever miserable.

After this description of the sluggard's character, and of the complicated train of evils which will pursue him, in soul and body, through time and eternity, blasting his name and character here, and involving the ruin of his hopes hereafter, you are perhaps saying, If this picture be just, or if the sluggard's character be so odious and his punishment so terrible, we will not indulge in sloth ourselves, nor connive at it in others. These are good resolutions, and may be a good beginning; but these distempered times call for more than resolutions. You know that some years ago the British Parliament took a notion to be arbitrary; and proceeded to pass acts which were unknown to the constitution, alarming to the wise and prudent in Great Britain, and ruin-

ous or oppressive to their American subjects. They sent out their odious Stamp Act; but it could find no entrance, although it was said there, that *it would execute itself*. It was repealed, but the design of taxing these colonies, without their consent, was not laid aside. Probably they saw that American virtue would not readily yield to such arbitrary measures; and that therefore more time and deliberation were necessary; but in the mean time there was laid up a decree of the Parliament for future use, viz: "That they *can* make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever." They seem to be maliciously zealous to obtain domination over us,—a proof of which was given in the case of New York, whose legislation was suspended by an act of Parliament, for a supposed offence against the crown. Thus they officiously stepped in and stripped his majesty of his prerogative, that they might usurp authority over us. They proceeded to lay a tax on a variety of things, though, with respect to most of them, it was again repealed; but the duty on tea still remaining, they resolved that it should be paid; and sent large quantities of it into various parts of this continent. Some was sent back; some stored up; and some destroyed, as at Boston. But the tea being the property of the East India company, the destruction of it was a trespass; and the perpetrators of the act were liable by the common law. Those concerned in that riot, however, were not apprehended, nor was the town of Boston called upon to deliver up the offenders. The justice of Parliament was invoked in this trifling matter; and it will surprise the less civilized nations to learn that it was granted. Their armies and fleets were sent, in virtue of this inhuman law, bearing date after the trespass at Boston was committed, and exposing the innocent with the guilty, to the most complicated distress that ministerial vengeance could invent, or that a British Parliament, filled with rage and the insatiable thirst of power, could inflict.

The sense of the United Colonies was taken on this important matter.—We set forth our grievances: We petitioned his majesty in a most humble manner to intercede with the Parliament on our behalf. Our petitions were rejected, while our grievances were increased by acts still more oppressive and by schemes still more malicious, till we are reduced to the dreadful alternative either of immediate and unconditional submission, or of resistance by force of arms. We have therefore come to that trying period in our history in which it is manifest that the Americans must either stoop under a load of the vilest slavery, or resist their imperious and haughty oppressors; but what will follow must be of the utmost importance to every individual of these United Colonies; and should be the hearty concern of every honest American.—What will be recorded on the following page of our history must depend very much on our conduct; for if we act like the sluggard, refuse, from the mere love of ease and self-indulgence, to make the sacrifices and efforts which the circumstances require, or, from cowardice and pusillanimity, shrink from dangers and hardships, we must continue in our present state of bondage and oppression, while that bondage and oppression may be increased until life itself will become a burden; but if we stand up manfully and unitedly in defence of

our rights, appalled by no dangers and shrinking from no toils or privations, we shall do valiantly. Our foes are powerful and determined on conquest; but our cause is good; and, in the strength of the Lord, who is mightier than all, we shall prevail. If we fail to do our duty in this momentous crisis, bondage and oppression, with all their unnumbered and interminable woes, will be entailed upon us; but if we act our part well, as men and as christians, in defence of truth and righteousness, we may, with the help of the Lord, obtain a complete and final deliverance from the power that has oppressed us, or at least secure our rights, and attain a prosperity and happiness which no other nation has ever enjoyed, or even dared to hope; for then the consciences of men being unawed or unbiassed by human authority, and the truth of God being unadulterated and unfettered, the gospel will have free course; and we may hope that truth and righteousness will prevail until the predictions of the inspired writers, however vivid and glowing, shall be all fulfilled.

If I could portray to you, in any thing like their reality, the results of your conduct in this great crisis in your political destiny; or if I could describe with any tolerable degree of correctness, the feelings which you will have of self approbation, joy, and thankfulness, or, of self reproach, shame and regret, according to the part you act—whether as men and as patriots, or as cowards and traitors—I should have no difficulty in persuading you to shake off your sloth, and stand up manfully in a firm, united, and persevering defence of your liberties; but I would hope that enough has been said—enough in reason—enough for my purpose; and we expect that none of you will be wanting in the discharge of your duty, or prove unworthy of a cause which is so important in itself, and which every patriot and every christian should value more than wealth, and hold as dear as his life.