

THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS.

AN HISTORICAL SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Coates' Street Presbyterian Church,

PHILADELPHIA,

ON

FAST DAY, JANUARY 4, 1861.

BY

GEORGE DUFFIELD, JR.,

PASTOR.

WITH TWO COPIOUS NOTES, AND AN APPENDIX.

“The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men.*”—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY T. B. PUGH,

S. W. COR. SIXTH & CHESTNUT STS.

1861.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it:

If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.—*Jeremiah* xviii. 3-10.

P R E F A C E.

THE history of this Sermon is a very simple one. The phrase "National Sins" in the President's Proclamation, suggested an inquiry as to what these sins were? One of the sources of information on this topic, it occurred to us, would be the sermons that had been delivered on other National Fast Days. Many such being just at our hand, we turned them over with no little interest and curiosity. The more we "touched the bones of the prophets," the more we felt that virtue came out of them.

"Faithful men," indeed, were those old Fathers, to whom the Gospel in all its relations, both temporal and eternal, might be most safely entrusted! Though a reward was offered for their heads, they *preached*; though a Tory party in the Church might wish to keep them quiet, still they *preached*; though their brethren not infrequently found vehement fault with them for so doing, yet, the Word of God "burning like a fire in their bones," they could not do otherwise than preach. The Chinese idea which so many have been endeavoring to inculcate of late, that "to speak of politics is to be guilty of death," by such men as Mayhew, Witherspoon, Emmons, &c., would have been laughed to scorn! "Dumb dogs that cannot bark," could not be said of them, any more than of Calvin, and Knox, and the staunch old English Puritans! Thank God that such men lived *on this side of the Atlantic*, as well as the other!

There is no excuse for us if we do not try, at least, to imitate their example. If ever the pulpit is to regain that influence which it has lost in our land, it must be by preaching occasionally such sermons as that of Dr. Langdon,* "*Governments corrupted by vice, and restored by virtue*," May 31st, 1775, from a favorite text in those times, Isaiah i. 26. "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy

* See the "*Pulpit of the American Revolution; or, the Political Sermons of the period of 1776*," by John Wingate Thornton, Boston, 1860.

counsellors as at the beginning." As ministers we must study, and quote, and preach upon that other text as often as they did, viz. : Is. lx. 12. "The Nation that will not serve Thee, shall perish;" further enforced by Jeremiah xviii. 3-10. The hitherto unpublished document of the old Chaplain in the Appendix, will show how far we have drifted, we greatly fear, *in the wrong direction*. Stirring times may be before us, and that very speedily; "wherefore, let us gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end!" Should our humble effort in this discourse be of no further service, it may at least save some valuable ministerial time in the way of reference. The man who would write a good religious history of this Nation, could scarcely do his countrymen a better service. Is it yet too late for our American Wilberforce, Theodore Frelinghuysen, to do it?

G. D., JR.

PHILADELPHIA, *Jan. 5th*, 1861.

P. S. In the delivery of the Sermon, the *details* of the third head, viz. : "Our National Judgments," were omitted for want of time.

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“FOR THE LORD SPAKE THUS TO ME WITH A STRONG HAND, AND INSTRUCTED ME THAT I SHOULD NOT WALK IN THE WAY OF THIS PEOPLE, SAYING,

SAY YE NOT, A CONFEDERACY, TO ALL THEM TO WHOM THIS PEOPLE SHALL SAY, A CONFEDERACY; NEITHER FEAR YE THEIR FEAR, NOR BE AFRAID.

SANCTIFY THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF; AND LET HIM BE YOUR FEAR, AND LET HIM BE YOUR DREAD.

AND HE SHALL BE FOR A SANCTUARY.”—ISAIAH VIII. 11-14.

“*Went to church and fasted all day.*” Such is the record in the private journal of the great “Father of his Country,” under date of Wednesday, June 1st, A. D., 1774; a day solemnly appointed by the Assembly of Virginia, on hearing of the passage of the Boston Port Bill, “as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, to avert from us the evils of civil war, and to inspire us with firmness in support of our rights.”*

A year later, just after the battles of Lexington and

* “No example of such a solemnity had existed since the days of our distresses in the war of '55, since which a new generation had grown up. With the help of Rushworth, whom we rummaged over for the revolutionary precedents and forms of the Puritans of those days, preserved by him, we cooked up a resolution somewhat modernizing the phrases, for appointing the 1st of June, on which the Port Bill was to commence, for a day of fasting.” (See Jefferson's Diary.) Does that diary, June 1st, show the same record as Washington's? The minute of the House of Commons reads—“That God would give them one heart and one mind in carrying on the great work of the Lord.” Rushworth's *Historical Collections*, Part iv., Vol. i., pp. 546, 644, as quoted by Wm. B. Reed, Esq., in his Address, Nov. 1st, 1838.

Bunker Hill, the Old Continental Congress appointed a day of *General Fast*.*

On May 17th, 1776, "which was kept as a national fast, George Duffield, the minister of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, with John Adams for a listener, drew a parallel between George the First and Pharaoh, and inferred that the same Providence of God which had rescued the Israelites, intended to free the Americans."†

Could it have been in remembrance of this day in Old Pine Street, that "unfashionable as the faith in an overruling Providence" then was, this same John Adams was not ashamed to proclaim another National Fast, May 9th, 1798? Was it an evidence of the value of such a day, that even though hostilities had actually commenced between the United States and France, and a vessel of each nation had suffered capture, that such a body of men as the *French Directory*, so speedily and unexpectedly made overtures of peace, and that of their own accord?

In the fourth year of the second war with Great Britain, the example of John Adams was followed by President Madison, and January 12th, 1815, was recommended by him as a National Fast Day.

Even while the people were yet speaking, He "in whose hand the king's heart is as the rivers of water ;

* "Memorable to distant ages should be the 20th of July, 1775, observed throughout the Continent as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, and one of the most solemn days she ever saw. When the injured millions of America, prostrate before the throne of the Eternal, poured out their complaint, and sent their cry to him that *judgeth rightly*." Fast Day Sermon of J. M. Mason, D. D., New York, Sept. 20th, 1793. Our National Tacitus makes no mention of it!

† *Bancroft*, Vol. viii., p. 385.

and who turneth it whithersoever he will," heard their prayer; and only one month after, February 18th, 1815, they received "an answer of peace," literally, and had the privilege of celebrating a day of National Thanksgiving.*

The last two days of this character are within the recollection of nearly all here present, viz.: May 14th, 1841, being the day of national fast recommended by Mr. Tyler on the decease of President Harrison; and August 3d, 1849, the fast day recommended by President Taylor, that God in mercy would arrest the further progress of the cholera.

Once more, and it may be for the last time, a Proclamation comes from the President to the people of the *United?* States, designating this 4th day of January, 1861, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, throughout the Union, that God may "remember us as he did our fathers."

As Presbyterians, we are in no doubt as to the *propriety* of observing this day. "If at any time," says our excellent Directory for worship, "the civil power should think it proper to appoint a fast, it is the duty of the ministers and people of our communion, *as we live under a christian government*, to pay all due respect to the same." We are at no loss as to the *manner* of observing the day. "There shall be public worship upon all such days, and let the prayers, psalms, portions of Scripture to be read, and sermons, be all in a special manner adapted to the occasion." As to the *character* of the prayers and sermon, the book is even more explicit still. "On fast-days let the minister point out the authority

* So in 1777, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782, days of fasting were observed by invitation of Congress.

and providences calling to the observation thereof; and let him spend a more than usual portion of time, in solemn prayer, particularly confession of sin, especially of the day and place, with their aggravations, which have brought down the judgment of heaven. And let the whole day be spent in deep humiliation and mourning before God."

Evidently in the minds of those who framed the Constitution of the American Presbyterian Church (adopted in the same year, and framed by some of the same men who framed our National Constitution, now in such imminent danger), the proper observance of such a day as this, both on the part of minister and people, was considered by them one of the most solemn and important duties that could possibly be discharged on earth.*

* To say nothing of the Biblical, and Trans-atlantic history of such days, they remembered the first fast-day in New England, July, 1621. "Though in the morning when we were assembled together, the heavens were as clear and the drought as like to continue as ever it was, yet (our exercise continuing some eight or nine hours) before our departure, the weather was overcast, the clouds gathered together on all sides; and on the next morning distilled such soft, sweet, and moderate showers of rain, and mixed with such seasonable weather, as it was hard to say whether our withered corn or drooping affections were most quickened or revived. Such was the bounty and goodness of our God." Hobomok and the Indians were astonished to behold! "*Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*," edited by Dr. Cheever, New York, 1848, p. 284. Also a similar day in 1631. "The last batch of bread was in the Governor's oven. But God, who delights to appear in greatest straits, did work marvelously at this time; for before the very day appointed to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, in comes Mr. Pearce (in a ship from Ireland), laden with provisions. Upon which occasion the Fast Day was changed, and ordered to be kept as a Day of Thanksgiving."—*Young's Chronicles of Massachusetts*, p. 385.

Doubtless, also, they were well aware of the memorable fast-day in 1746. "As an inhabitant of New England, I am bound solemnly to declare, that were there no other instances to be found in any other country, the blessings communicated to this would furnish ample satisfaction, concerning this subject, to every sober, much more to every pious man. Among these the *destruction of the French Armament under the Duke D'Anville, in the year 1746*, ought

“When the lion roars it becomes us to fear; when God’s hand is lifted up, and he appears about to strike, it is high time for us to strip ourselves of our ornaments, and to lie down in sackcloth and ashes.”* As one of the watchmen on the walls of Zion, appointed of the Lord, if appointed at all, in Israel, “to hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from *me*,” I must confess in all sincerity of heart, that never did I enter the House of Prayer on so solemn an occasion as the present—never did I venture to speak under a more tremendous pressure of personal and relative responsibility, to blow the trumpet with no uncertain sound! Business pausing in the midst of the week, and closing her shops, and stores, and factories! Religion throwing open her thousand temples, to invite within them those who believe that “only the omnipotent arm of God can save us from the awful effects of our follies and our crimes;” he only will speak aright at such a time as this, to whom God shall speak “with a strong hand,” and whom he will instruct accordingly. When “the voice of the Lord is upon the waters, and the God of glory thundereth,” all that man can say, is only as the faint echo that dies on the distant shore.

As appropriate to the occasion that has brought us together this morning, I propose, for the most part, in the way of an humble chronicler of the dealings of God

to be remembered with gratitude and admiration, by every inhabitant of this country. This fleet consisted of forty ships of war; was destined for the destruction of New England; was of sufficient force to render that destruction in the ordinary progress of things, certain; sailed from Chebucto, in Nova Scotia, for this purpose; and was entirely destroyed, on the night *following a general fast throughout New England*, by a terrible tempest.”—See Dwight’s *Theology*, Vol. iv., p. 127.

* Th. Boston’s *Memorial Ancient Fasting*, p. 320, Am. Ed.

with us, in our moral history as a nation, to direct your thoughts.

- I. TO OUR NATIONAL MERCIES.
- II. OUR NATIONAL SINS.
- III. OUR NATIONAL JUDGMENTS.
- IV. OUR NATIONAL POSITION.
- V. OUR NATIONAL DUTIES.

I. OUR NATIONAL MERCIES.*

As with individuals, nothing is better calculated to lead them to repentance, than a contemplation of the goodness of God, (Romans ii. 4), so it is with *nations*; and if it was a standing injunction to ancient Israel, "Remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or not;" (Deut. viii. 2.) Is not the spirit of this injunction especially binding upon ourselves? You trace the forming and sustaining hand of God in the growth and full development of the human body, and in view of your own personal history in this respect, gratefully confess with Addison,

"When in the slippery paths of youth,
With heedless steps I ran,
Thine arm unseen conveyed me safe,
And led me up to man!

Why not in a similar manner trace the history of His Providence in the growth and formation of the body politic?

WHO held this land in reserve for us like an inherit-

* "It is by the light of history that we discern the interests of a country, and the means by which these can be pursued and secured." — *Gouverneur Morris*.

ance, waiting for an heir, until the time had come when we could enter in and possess it to the best advantage? Who *colonized* this land, not only “winnowing three kingdoms to find the seed with which to plant it, but sifting that seed over again?” Who wisely chose the time to sow this seed, when the long night of political and ecclesiastical despotism had begun to wane, and the better ideas of civil and religious liberty to prevail, as the priceless legacy of Martin Luther and the Reformation? Who *prepared* the inhabitants of the Thirteen “*Protestant Colonies*”* to become A NATION, by such a series of events, both in the old world and the new, than which there could be none more appropriate and efficient to accomplish this result? In the days of drought, and famine, and pestilence; in the Old French War; and in their various conflicts with fierce and merciless savages in “the waste howling wilderness,” who *delivered* them? In the seven long years of the Revolutionary struggle, who put wisdom in their minds, courage in their hearts, and strength in their arms, and sustained them against such tremendous odds, and in the midst of such innumerable disadvantages, enabled them at length to triumph, and to show to the world that their “DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE” was not made in vain?

A thousand-fold more difficult^{er} even than the termination of a civil war, who, after their original confederation had proved confessedly a failure, gave wisdom to our Fathers to organize a government, and achieve our

* So the phrase ran in the days of William Pitt; now at the Centennial of Fort Duquesne, and in our common school histories it reads “*Anglo-Saxon*” Colonies! “Behold a country * * given to us and to our posterity, to spread abroad the pure evangelical religion of Jesus! Behold colonies founded in it! Protestant Colonies! Free Colonies, &c.” *Seven Military Sermons* of Wm. Smith, D. D., Vol. ii., p. 172 Philadelphia, April 5, 1757.

matchless Constitution, THE REAL SOURCE UNDER GOD OF OUR UNEXAMPLED NATIONAL PROSPERITY? "Ask thy fathers, and they will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee? It is the Most High that divideth unto the nation their inheritance." "As an eagle stirreth up her nest,* fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them." (Deut. xxxii. 11.)

But these were only blessings of the "nether springs." In the enumeration of our national mercies, we would remember with ever fresh and increasing gratitude, the infinitely greater and more important blessings of "the upper springs." The Great Awakening in the East in 1734; the "Old Revival" in the West and South in 1800; the no less powerful revival of 1831 in the New and Middle States; and more than all, the Pentecostal year of 1858, when the copious showers of divine grace covered, to some extent, the entire country! These were tokens of the divine favor, than which Scotland herself, among all her "crowning mercies," never received any more significant. Dear as America is to the heart of a patriot as the LAND OF LIBERTY, she is still more dear to the heart of the patriot Christian as "The LAND OF REVIVALS."† Born as the child of his Providence, she was acknowledged and baptized as such by his Holy Spirit. And if as early as 1793, our Fathers were accustomed to say, "There is no nation under heaven for which God hath done so much in so short a time, as he has done for America," what would they say now?

* The young American Eagle forgets who taught her to fly.

† It is a dangerous thing to speak against Revivals. From the day that Theodore Parker did it, may be dated the decline and fall of the most dangerous popularity ever possessed by any speaker or writer in our land.

II. OUR NATIONAL SINS.

As this term is in many minds ambiguous, and to some perhaps appears without any real foundation in fact, permit a word of explanation. By "National Sins," we mean those that are common to a people, and in some respects, like their customs, dress, or language, altogether peculiar to them. Strictly speaking, indeed, such a sin is one of which the great majority of the people are guilty; or of which the rulers representing them are guilty in their name; or of which the people themselves, though not the actual transgressors, yet by strengthening the hands of the evil doers, become the guilty participants.* Meanwhile, remembering that God always addresses men in the language of common sense, and does not refine away vice or crime, as man does, into metaphysical abstractions, (Isaiah v. 20), perhaps a simpler definition would be a better one, viz., that National Sins are THE SINS OF THE NATION—public iniquity being nothing else than the accumulated transgressions of private individuals. The sins that we are this day to confess in the closet, at the family altar, and in the great congregation, are those gross, and greatly aggravated, and still increasing sins, that "declare themselves as Sodom;" as well as the sins of our Presidents, and Members of Congress, and Ministers Plenipotentiary. The transgressions of *subjects* "defile a land," and help to fill up the cup of its iniquity as well as those of rulers.† "Ye have robbed me, even this whole nation," and as a nation he will

* See "National Sins to be repented of, as ever we expect National Mercies."—*Cripple-gate Morning Exercises*, Vol. iv. p. 585.

† "VICE IS THE DISEASE OF WHICH NATIONS DIE." — WILLIAM PENN. "By swearing and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." Hosea iv. 2.

hold us responsible for this robbery of his service and honor, just as much as he did Israel, and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome. To deny that God is "THE GOVERNOR OF THE NATIONS," (Ps. xxii. 28), is to deny His DIVINE PROVIDENCE;* and to deny the Providence of God is to deny his ATTRIBUTES. "His omniscience which is the *eye* of Providence; his mercy and justice which are the *arms* of it; his power which is its *life*; his wisdom which is the *rudder* whereby it is steered; his holiness, which is the compass and *rule* of its motion." (*Charnock.*) But who with the history of the world before him, of its universal empires, its various nations, its metropolitan cities, will dare to deny that "the JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH," is just as much its judge as in the days of Abraham; and that he will "do right" when men do wrong, and punish them as their crimes deserve?

The connection between personal sins and national sins, the moral succession of guilt, is just as obvious, as "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," in the harvest that is ripening for the sickle.

Our first national sin, if we are to believe the testimony of the Fathers, was INGRATITUDE.

Beginning with individuals, who, like Hezekiah, "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto them," (2 Chron. xxxii. 25), the little leaven gradually pervaded the whole lump. It was the old story of Israel and human nature over again. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." Temporal prosperity was too much for him.† "Then he forsook God which made him, and

* Acknowledged in the Declaration of Independence.

† Jeshurun began to kick very early. In the "First Sermon ever preached in New England (1 Cor. x. 24), the first printed, and the oldest American Discourse extant, delivered at Plymouth, A. D., 1621, by Robert Cushman," he says: "It is reported that there are many men gone to that other plantation in

lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation."* (Deut. xxxii. 15.)

Our second sin was INFIDELITY. The "Age of Reason" it was supposed had dawned in France. Under the pretence of an enlarged philanthropy, and of giving to mankind liberty, equality, fraternity, the French Com-

Virginia, which, whilst they lived in England, seemed very pious, zealous, and conscionable; and have now lost even the sap of grace, and edge to all goodness; and are become mere worldlings. This testimony I believe to be partly true," p. 33.

* "That no notice whatever should be taken of that God who planteth a nation, and plucketh it up at his pleasure, is an omission which no pretext whatever can palliate. Had such a momentous business been transacted by *Mohammedans*, they would have begun, "*In the name of God.*" Even the savages, whom we despise, setting a better example, would have paid some homage to the *Great Spirit*. But from the Constitution of the United States, it is impossible to ascertain *what* God we worship; or whether we own a God *at all*. * * Should the citizens of America be as irreligious as her Constitution, we will have reason to tremble, lest the Governor of the Universe, who will not be treated with indignity by a people, any more than by individuals, overturn, from its foundation, the fabric we have been rearing, and crush us to atoms in the wreck."—Works of J. M. Mason, D. D., Vol. i., p. 50.

Was this omission *intentional*, as in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence? or was it a *moral oversight*,* even greater than the tremendous *political* oversight in the original "Articles of Confederation?" "Is it not strange that it appears not to have been perceived by any one at the time that the whole of this controversy arose out of a departure from the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and the substitution of State sovereignty, instead of the constituent sovereignty of the people, as the foundation of the Revolution and the Union?"—"Jubilee of the Constitution," by John Quincy Adams, April 30th, 1839, pp. 30-36.

We cannot resist another quotation from this invaluable address of the "Old Man Eloquent." "I speak in matters of fact. There is the Declaration of Independence, and there is the Constitution of the United States—let them speak for themselves. The grossly immoral and dishonest doctrine of despotic State sovereignty, the exclusive judge of its own obligation, and responsible to no power on earth or in heaven for the violation of them, is not there. The Declaration says, it is not in me. The Constitution says, it is not in me." p. 41.

"The Constitution *was the consummation of* THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE." Oration, July 4th, 1837, p. 44.

* Hamilton said to Dr. Rodgers, "Indeed, Dr., we forgot it!"

mittee of Public Instruction had demonstrated to their own satisfaction that Christianity was false; but unfortunately had failed to demonstrate that anything else was true. The belief of a God, of the immortality of the soul, and of moral obligation, was not only to be blotted out in Europe, but the same thing must be done in America. The Atheistic philosophy of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, re-produced by Thomas Paine, spread like a pestilence, especially among young men, from individuals to cliques, from cliques to parties, until at length in the person of the third President of the United States, infidelity obtained a national triumph.

No day of fasting and prayer during that administration! Constitutional scruples would not permit it! No-thing of that reverence for "the divine author of our holy religion," that was so universally seen in the example of Washington; but that example despised, and his good name calumniated. The words of the Prophet (Hosea vii. 5), again had their meaning. "In the day of our king, the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine: he stretched out his hand with scorners." Then first, *political principles were made the sole test of a man's fitness for office, independent of his moral or religious character.*† With what result has been *lamentably illustrated* in the history of the nation ever since.‡ The poison then infused into the veins of the body politic, it is greatly to be feared is still working, and will work for evil to the end of time. Of the Dragon's teeth then

* But these scruples did not permit the purchase of Louisiana, even if the Constitution must afterwards be amended so as to sanction it.

† See Appendix A, for the opinion of one of the Fathers.

‡ See the "Jeroboam" sermon of Dr. Emmons, 1801. "Prayer for the defeat of those who attempt to subvert good government." National Fast, May 9th, 1798, 2 Sam. xv. 31; and Vol. ii. of his Works throughout.

sown, we are even now beginning to reap the Cadmean harvest, and our confession this day may well be, as a nation, "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth." (Job xiii. 26.)

Our third national sin, was our VIOLATION OF THE LORD'S DAY. What this day was in the early history of New England, how it was observed by Washington and our army during the Revolution, you are all well aware. But when infidel France had abolished the Sabbath, America, fast following in her steps, must try and do the same. For a time, however, the friends of the Sabbath maintained a steady and successful opposition. Such laws as those of the State of New York, in 1788, and of Pennsylvania in 1794, (which did such good service two years since, in stopping the city railroads of Philadelphia), showed that the people were right, though many of those highest in authority over them were wrong. Very interesting is it to read such a passage as this, and especially to mark the italics. "Wise rulers, who wish rather to prevent crimes than to punish them, *will take care, both by precept and example, to promote the sanctification of the Christian Sabbath.*"*

But soon the laws began to be a dead letter; as afterwards in the cause of Temperance, those sworn to execute them allowed the Sabbath-breakers to escape, and thus themselves became guilty of the equally dreadful crime of perjury. Worse and still worse did things become, down to the war of 1812, when a New York Sabbath had become almost equal to that of New Orleans, for the flagrant violation of christian principle, on the part of men in authority, by "reviewing troops for mere parade." But it was not until 1829, that our National

* "A Concise and Faithful Narrative," p. 70.

Sin in this respect fairly culminated. It had always been a source of grief to the christian heart, that ever since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the Lord's day had been profaned by the carriage and opening of the mail.* In 1828, the National Sabbath Union was established, and in 1829, the christian citizens of these United States presented a memorial against Sunday mails, of which, says the Report to the House of Representatives, "It is believed that the history of legislation in this country affords no instance in which a stronger expression has been made, if regard be had to the number, the wealth, or the intelligence of the petitioners." And yet what was the result of this appeal? A polite report in the House declaring the measure proposed in the memorial impracticable; and Mr. Johnson's "very unjust and bitter" report in the Senate, equally disrespectful to the memorialists, and insulting to religion; a document, that on such a day as this, we can only remember as a disgrace to our archives, and a bold and open affront put upon the God of our Fathers in the face of the whole nation!

A *fourth* National Sin, for which we should this day greatly humble ourselves before God, and of which it is a shame even to speak, is ADULTERY.

The days of the "Scarlet Letter" soon passed away,† and at each successive period in the history of our country, as we contemplate the geometrical progression of this crime in various forms, it is like the prophet Ezekiel

* The opening of the Post Offices for part of the Sabbath day, was a practice gradually introduced; at first without any requirements of law. In 1810, a section was introduced regulating the Department, by which Postmasters were obliged to deliver letters at all reasonable hours *on every day of the week*.

† "Credo pudicitiam Saturno rege moratam,
In terris visamque."—*Juvenal*.

looking through "the hole in the wall" in Jerusalem each time to behold even "greater abominations" than before! The innumerable books of obscenity, of which the "Age of Reason" was the prolific and accursed mother; the scandalous cases of divorces daily occurring, the indefinite multiplication of legislative facilities for obtaining a dissolution of the bonds of marriage; and above all, the toleration and virtual sanction by the present and former Administration, of adultery, in the barbarous form of polygamy in Utah! Our heart sickens and shudders at such a disgusting recital! Two years since at Washington, in sight of the Presidential mansion, under the very shadow of the Capitol, and among men high in official station, there was a development of the nature and consequences of this crime, that caused the ears of every man in America to tingle! Like its parallel tragedy in ancient Gibeah, "There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day."* (Judges xix. 30.)

A *fifth* National Sin is MURDER.

Now seen in the form of homicide; then of duelling, especially at the National Capital, among our rulers; again in that of "Lynch Law," well called by this name, as neither the law of God, nor of man; still more frequently seen in the "street fight,"† or the armed encounter, or

* Thieves! *Drunkards!* ADULTERERS! MURDERERS! among our rulers at Washington, TRAITORS in the Cabinet! Surely the old maxim is still true of the high places of power, that "like the tops of the pyramids, reptiles can crawl there, as well as eagles fly!"

† "A species of common law has grown up in Kentucky, which, were it written down, would, in all civilized countries, cause it to be re-christened in derision, *the land of blood. Men slaughter each other with perfect impunity.*"—*Governor's Message, 1837.*

most disgraceful of all, the assassin's club even in the Senate Chamber.* What shall we say to these things this day, but with the Prophet, "The iniquity of the house of Israel, and of Judah (of both State and National Governments), is exceeding great. THE LAND IS FULL OF BLOOD, and the city of wrothing of judgment; for they say, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." (Ezekiel ix. 9.) "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (Jer. v. 9.) O! if all "the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple," was required of the generation in the days of Christ, how terrific will be the account of that generation in our history, when the same retributive Providence shall demand payment in kind, and make inquiry for the blood of the innocent that is found in our skirts! May God in infinite mercy grant, that we may, this day, so heartily repent of our sins, that the *atoning* generation may not be our own!

A *sixth* National Sin is INTemperance.

True, our Presidents have, most of them over their own names, recorded their testimony against the use of alcoholic liquors as a beverage. Societies have been formed in Congress, and for a brief period, borne gallantly the Temperance banner in the face of opposing hosts; but the

* We had it at the time, through a sure hand, from one who ought to know, that a near friend and a personal relative of the injured Senator, had determined in their indignation to administer personal chastisement after his own fashion to the cowardly assailant, and that nothing but the most energetic and decisive remonstrance on the part of the Senator himself, prevented it from being done. Did he remember Hebrews x. 30, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." If so, the recompense has come speedily!

abounding flood of iniquity has soon swept them away; and at this very moment THE MINOTAUR at the Capitol is stronger, and fiercer, and more rapacious than ever! To our everlasting shame as Americans, must we record the fact, that the first sight we ever had of a Senator, and of Members of Congress at Washington, was that of three men staggering in the street, drunk, from the dinner table, during the Christmas holidays of 1847! God help the wife when she has no arm to lean upon but that of a drunken husband! God help the nation, when her rulers are "mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink." Too often such men are mighty in nothing else!

A *seventh* sin of the nation, and pre-eminently THE SIN in the eyes of the whole civilized world, is that of COVETOUSNESS and OPPRESSION.

The time was in the history of our people, when honesty went before wealth, and a "good name was rather to be chosen than great riches;" when men expected to secure a competence by industry and economy in the regular course of their business; when the principle on which they conducted their dealings, was that of equity and mutual advantage between buyer and seller;* when the spirit as well as the letter of the eighth commandment was adhered to, which requires in all cases a fair

* A well known leather dealer in "The Swamp," New York, was one day overreached by a sharp customer. "I will give you that bundle of skins if you never enter my store again." "Agreed." "But if you do enter it, you must pay me for it." It was a bargain. Years passed on, and a very, very dilapidated looking customer entered Mr. ——'s counting room. "Pay me for those skins." "I can't. I have been unfortunate!" "Knew you would fail," said the old man, "knew it. Glad you ain't in my debt. Wanted to keep all the profits to yourself! Nothing like leather and—honesty!" The anecdote involves a far-reaching principle both of moral and political economy, that "capital owning labor" would do well to consider.

equivalent; when the expression "a fair business transaction," was not synonymous as it often now is with legalized robbery, and when a "failure" was as rare as snow in harvest.* States and cities had not yet learned a new way of paying old debts by repudiation, or individuals of deeming themselves released from moral obligation by taking advantage of a National Bankrupt Law. Yet such was one form of national guilt and disgrace in which our evil covetousness terminated at last!†

There is another and much graver form in which this covetousness has developed itself, not merely to the injury of individuals, but of whole races and nations. Three crimes especially stand out in our Annals, for which, as surely as "THE LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed," (Ps. ciii. 6,) so surely will he one day, if not now, call us to a most tremendous retribution.

* "At that time (A. D. 1800), here in Bloomfield, N. J., we heard that Mr. —, down in Newark, had failed, and we all wondered what the people of Newark had done so evil, that such a judgment should come upon them." — *Rev. Stephen Dodd*, in a familiar lecture, 1850.

† "This monstrous form of public debauchery, the repudiation of State debts, rivals the catalogue of State vices the world over. The burning indignation and sarcasm of a Juvenal would have found nothing to surpass it, in meanness, in cowardice, in falsehood, in iniquity, even among the rotting corruptions of public and private morals in the carcass of the Roman Empire. And what argues, and no wonder that it should, to the mind of observers from abroad, a portentous dereliction of moral principle and public conscience throughout the whole country, is the callousness, the apathy, the *cool endurance* with which the proposition of such perfidious, such swindling, such sweeping insolvency, has been received. Surely if we go on in this way, we shall become a by-word to the nations. It will no longer be *Punica fides* that points the moral of the school boy, and tips the arrow of the public satirist with gall."—*Address before the New England Society*, Dec. 22, 1842. Not from Sydney Smith, but from one who will hereafter rank in our annals like Elijah among the Prophets. A man who finds himself almost the only one awake in a burning house, may well be excused if he bursts through doors, and breaks in windows!

We have wronged THE INDIAN.

We have smoked the calumet, and exchanged the wampum with him, only to put out the light of his council fire, and to drive him from the grave of his fathers. What was originally the sin of individuals, and that of Georgia and other States; in 1830, became the gigantic crime of the nation. Prophecy then is history now, and if there is still such a thing left as A NATIONAL CONSCIENCE, this item in the bill of God's indictment against us will not this day be regarded by us as the least. While the Government was still pausing on the banks of the Rubicon, JEREMIAH EVARTS* declared in words that thrilled the heart of the entire nation, "If our rulers proceed, it will be known by all men that in a plain case, without any plausible plea of necessity, and for very weak and satisfactory reasons, the great Republic of the United States of North America *incurred the guilt of violating treaties*; and that this guilt was incurred, when the subject was fairly before the eyes of the American community, and had attracted more attention than any other public measure since the close of the last war."† Our sin has therefore been doubly aggravated; against *justice*; against *light*. Tell us not that the Supreme Court of the United States declared the Acts of the Legislature of Georgia to be unconstitutional! This is but another aggravation of our sin! Notwithstanding this decision, the President advised the Indians "to abide the issue of their new relations *without any hope that he would*

* We do not forget the eloquence and philanthropy of Sprague, and Frelinghuysen, and others; but the name of the author of the "William Penn" essays (twenty-four in number, and republished in more than one hundred newspapers through the country), and the editor of the *Speeches on the Indian Bill, 1830*, must always be *facile princeps*.

† Life of Evarts, p. 346.

interfere,"* and DELIVERED THEM INTO THE HANDS OF THEIR OPPRESSORS! True, the oppressors "*succeeded* in making the Indian subject a *party* question,"† and so carried it by the aid of those who acted on the maxim, "all's fair in politics;" "Religion has nothing to do with politics," &c.;‡ but the truth of these maxims must be demonstrated elsewhere than from the Word of God.§

We have wronged the MEXICAN.

Our war with this sister Republic was avowedly a WAR OF CONQUEST.|| Ahab looks out of his window, and desires

* The history of the "Georgia Missionaries" will not soon be forgotten. We well remember our horror, as a boy, in looking at the wrists of one, still marked by the manacles!

† "It is a curious fact that the Pennsylvania Administration men went so generally for the Indians, and the New York men universally against them. I can account for it only as an honor conferred by Providence on Pennsylvania, as a consequence of the upright conduct of the founder of that State in his treatment of the natives."—*Everts Life*, p. 379.

‡ They have a singular definition for this word "politics" in Washington. Our excellent brother, Dr. Sunderland, in his Thanksgiving Discourse there, Nov. 26th, 1854, says: "I shall use the term politics to characterize the demagogue spirit, than which there can be no greater evil in the Commonwealth." If this be the meaning of the word, we sincerely hope that he does not "*preach* politics!" For our own part, we still hold to the definition of Webster, "*Politics is a system of moral principles and rules for regulating the actions of men, so as to secure the safety, peace, and prosperity of a Nation or State.*" Used in its right sense, there can be no greater *blessing*.

§ Alas, for the Indian! Whenever we think of him, it brings to our remembrance those touching lines of Montgomery.

"Down to the dust, the Carib people passed,
Like autumn foliage withering in the blast;
A whole race sunk beneath the oppressor's rod,
And left a blank among the works of God."

Is it because *their* "council fire" has been put out, that *ours* begins to burn so dimly? 2 Sam. iii. 39.

|| "Was this to be a War of Conquest? I answer, Yes. Trusting in heaven (!!!), and on the valor of our arms, this shall be a WAR OF CONQUEST."—*Congressional Globe*, December 10th, 1846. We are aware that that "pyramid of mendacity," the President's Annual Message, Dec. 1846, asserts the contrary.

to make of the vineyard of Naboth "a garden of herbs." Naboth cannot on any consideration be induced to alienate a property which he had derived from his fathers. The disappointed king takes to his bed and refuses to eat. But Jezebel is ready with her counsel. What cannot be gained by fair means, can be compassed by foul. An occasion is sought against Naboth, and it is easily found. He is condemned to death, and the royal murderer enters into possession BY RIGHT OF BLOOD. Such at the time we declared to be the true history of the war with Mexico in 1847; and since then we have seen no reason to alter our opinion, but everything to confirm it.* The history of the Texas iniquity, in executive corruption, deceit and outrage, is only equalled in perfidy by that of Kansas.† "After the conquest of Asia," says Tacitus, "nothing of the ancient integrity of our Fathers was left among us!" So was it with our own nation for some time after the Annexation of Texas, and the War with Mexico.‡

* See "*A Review of the Causes and Consequences of the Mexican War*," by Wm. Jay, 1849.

† "I acknowledge your speech of January last on the Annexation of Texas. I have perused it with much satisfaction, and I deem it perfectly conclusive that the Annexation, by *concurrent resolution of Congress*, was unwarrantable, and a *usurpation of the Treaty making power*; in every view, violent, unjust, unconstitutional, and most pernicious, and unprincipled, and will lead to the ruin of the Union!"—Letter of Chancellor Kent.

‡ The eagle eye of John Quincy Adams saw through this Texas plot at a single glance, that "it was a deliberate and well-digested plan to re-establish slavery in Texas, annex that Province to the United States, and thus immensely increase the slave territory and influence in the Union." "Was this an intention to conquer Texas to re-establish that slavery which had been abolished by the United Mexican States?"—*Speech in the House*, May, 1836.

"We trust," said the *Charleston Patriot*, "That our Southern Representatives will remember that this is a SOUTHERN WAR." *The Charleston Courier* said: "Every battle fought in Mexico, and every dollar spent there, but ensures the acquisition of territory which must *widen the field of Southern enterprise and power for the future*. And the final result will be to adjust the whole balance

We have wronged the Indian, we have wronged the Mexican, but their united wrong is but as a drop in the bucket, or as the small dust in the balance, compared with the enormous wrong of which we have been guilty towards the AFRICAN.

Like the horrors of heathenism, or the horrors of intemperance, or the horrors of war, the time has gone by, when the exhausted sensibilities of the nation will any longer bear a description in detail of the horrors of slavery. We purpose only to glance at this subject in brief historic outline, and if we use the word African instead of slave, and say WE in our confession of guilt, instead of *they*, we think we have abundant warrant for so doing; for the former, from the example of the Master, (Luke xv. 19), "Make me as one of thy (slaves? No!) hired servants;" and for the latter from the universally acknowledged facts in the case. So far from being able as a nation to wash our hands with Pilate, and wipe our mouth with the adulteress, and say, "we have done no wickedness," we are all like Joseph's brethren, guilty together, of putting in a pit, or selling into Egypt, a man and a brother, who had just as much right to liberty as ourselves.* Every additional link and fetter that the South has forged, the North has welded and riveted; and but for the undoing of her own

of power in the Confederacy, so as to give us the control over the operations of the Government in all time to come."

N. B. "Equality of Southern rights" in the Government, an equivoque which deceives so many candid minds even yet, means the CONTROL of the Government!

The "just and honorable peace" of Mr. Polk, "consisted in the seizure of ONE-HALF OF MEXICO."—See *Jay's Review*, Boston Edition, 1849.

* "The pride and boast of America is, that the rights for which she contended, were the RIGHTS OF HUMAN NATURE."—*Address of Congress*, April 18th, 1783.

work at the present time, her embarrassment would be much more easily surmounted.* Waiving then at this point all moral and religious considerations of our duty to the African as a man and a brother, of rendering to him that which is "just and equal," and of "remembering him in bonds as one bound with him," we come to July 4th, 1776. When the Declaration of Independence was signed, and "all men" declared to be "equal," and one of their "inalienable rights" affirmed to be liberty, this was no doubt good news to the poor African. Had he known the sentiments of Washington, and Lafayette, and Madison, and all the great and good men of that day, almost without exception,† he would have supposed

* "Thus the present crisis in American affairs seems to me to be the retributive plague with which Providence has visited the land, in punishment of its high-handed violence towards weak and peaceable neighbors. For a moment the national sin seemed rewarded by glory and prosperity; but the punishment was at hand, and now strife and dissension are consuming the vitals of the Nation. So true is it, that Nations, no more than individuals, can sin with impunity."—"Letters from the Slave States," by James Sterling, London, 1857.

† GEORGE WASHINGTON. "I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my *first wishes* to see some plan adopted by which slavery can be *abolished* by law." Letter to J. F. Mercer, September 9th, 1786.

JAMES MADISON. "It is wrong to admit into the Constitution the idea that *there can be property in man.*"

LAFAYETTE. "I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."

For *Patriek Henry's* testimony, see letter, Appendix B.

HENRY CLAY. "So long as God allows the vital current to flow through my veins, I will never, never, never, by word or thought, by mind or will, aid in admitting one rod of free territory to the everlasting curse of human bondage."

DANIEL WEBSTER. "I never would consent, and never have consented, that there should be one foot of slave territory, beyond what the old Thirteen States had at the formation of the Union."—Speech at Buffalo, 1851.

Such the sentiments of the "Father of his Country;" the "Father of the Constitution;" and the "Great Expounder of it;" of the "Nation's Guest;" and of one whose name was dearer in defeat, to the great American heart in

that the year of Jubilee to his unhappy nation had come indeed. "Slavery, in time, will not be a *speck* in our country," said one of the Fathers of the Constitution. But years roll on, and so far from hearing the sound of the silver trumpet, the African finds that "the sons have ceased to cherish the principles of the fathers;" and that the system of oppression for himself and posterity, is to be extended. Now the area of Freedom is to be enlarged by the purchase of Louisiana; but just also to this extent does the poor African learn that it enlarges the area of slavery! Another State knocks for admission—it is Missouri—and after a contest that shakes the Commonwealth to its foundation, she too is admitted as a slave State. But a "Compromise" is effected—a line is drawn—"hitherto shall this evil come, and no further!" (Thirty years later, and this line also is obliterated to carry slavery into Kansas.) Then came the Annexation of Texas.* In 1850, a law is passed, that any one who shall "aid, abet, or assist such persons, *directly* or *INDIRECTLY*," to escape, *i. e.* even give a brother man a piece of bread or a drink of water, shall pay a fine of \$1000, and suffer six months' imprisonment!! Still later comes the "Dred Scott" decision, and as far as it can do so, strips

1844, than his opponent's, in victory: to how great an extent have they been forgotten!

Let us hear what the Arch Traitor and Secessionist, whose glory it is to have "precipitated the Cotton States into a revolution," says of these venerable men. "*The OLD FOGIES of that day entertained opinions in relation to slavery, which we of this day are unanimously agreed were not sound!*" Yancey's speech at Montgomery, Alabama, May, 1858, on the subject of re-opening the African Slave-trade.

* "It is a little humiliating that the United States, that is, WE—have given Texas ten millions of dollars for a part of the lands which *belonged* to us, and not to her, and left in her hands *twenty-five thousand square miles* of our own territory, as a bribe or bonus, in order to make the ten millions go down with a better relish!"—Dr. Beman's *Thanksgiving Sermon*, 1850.

the poor African of the very last vestige of his rights, and makes NATIONAL and perpetual, a system which our fathers intended only to be local and temporary! Last of all comes the re-opening of the SLAVE-TRADE!* If in other respects we have this day reason to deprecate the avenging wrath of God, most of all have we occasion so to do because of the sin of "OPPRESSION." "This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors which they shall receive of the Almighty. * * If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword, and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread. Those that remain of him shall be burned in death, and his widows shall not weep." (Job xxvii. 13-15.) The principle is equally true of a Commonwealth!

III. OUR NATIONAL JUDGMENTS.

"When the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it; and ye shall know that I have not *done without cause* all that I have done in it, saith the Lord." (Ezekiel xiv. 12-23.)

God punishes men in that capacity in which they sin. "Individual sins meet with individual punishments;

* Let those who suppose that the final suppression of the slave-trade was provided for by the Ashburton Treaty of 1842, read the Appeal of the Society of Friends in 1858, especially the Appendix, p. 41. After a long list of vessels, class, name, and fate, they say: Thus we see, that though vessels have been captured and condemned, there has been but one man convicted of the offence against the statute. If the legal construction of these laws permits the encouragement of the slave-trade, the sooner the Act of Congress is amended the better!"

"We take this opportunity of declaring our most earnest wishes to see an entire stop forever put to such a *wicked, cruel, and unnatural* trade."—Part of a resolution reported by Washington at the Fairfax County Meeting, July 18th, 1775.

family sins with family punishments; national sins, therefore, must meet with national punishments. Existing as Nations *only* in this life, they are punished in this life! Here the political body to which individuals belong is judged. Hereafter the judgment relates to men personally.”*

The *first* great judgment according to our fathers, was “the disregard universally displayed *to the sanctity of the oath*, and the disposition *to evade the laws* of the country, though constitutionally enacted.”

We do not wonder that they were so greatly troubled on this account. Historians have remarked, that when that sacred respect to an oath, as an inviolable obligation, which so long distinguished the Romans, began to be diminished, and the loose Epicurean system, which discarded the belief of Providence, to be introduced, the Roman honor and prosperity from that period began to decline.

The Rebellion of Daniel Shay in 1787, and the Whisky Insurrection in 1794, were relatively almost as serious matters to our fathers, as “Secession” to us. Even Washington himself seems to have been in more trouble at the state of things that then prevailed, than at the gloomy prospect from Valley Forge!

A *second* judgment was the DEFEAT OF GEN. ST. CLAIR by the Indians, on the Miami, Nov. 4th, 1791, when six hundred and thirty-one were killed, among whom were Gen. Butler, and thirty-seven other officers, and two hundred and sixty-three wounded.

“To remind us of our sin and of our duty, the monitors of Providence were *again* employed. Let the banks

* “Duty of America in the present crisis.” Fast Day Sermon, Jan. 12th, 1815, by Rev. J. B. Romeyn, D. D., New York.

of St. Mary, and the adjacent grounds which, now whiten with the bones of our youth, tell the tale of wo!"*

A *third* judgment was the YELLOW FEVER, in 1798, which raged in Philadelphia, New York, and for the first time in Boston.

"Philosophers may speculate and argue as they please. They may pretend to assign merely natural causes for all these events. But let it be remembered that GOD ACTUATES NATURE. Nature without God, is a word either destitute of meaning, or replete with blasphemy."†

A *fourth* judgment was the WAR WITH FRANCE, in 1798, when the Nation stood on the brink of such a precipice as it had never done before. War, pestilence, and divided counsels, just at the time the nation was rushing headlong into infidelity! Was this a mere coincidence? The country that had been the *cause* of judgment, about to be the *means* of its infliction! If ever there was a sin seen in its punishment, it was here. Such men as President Dwight, of Yale College, and many others, did not lift up their voice in vain. The people humbled themselves before God, and "by the merciful appointment of Divine Providence, the danger of war suddenly disappeared." "He shook his rod over us that we might observe it, and laid it aside without chastising!"

A *fifth* judgment was the WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN, in 1812, when blood flowed upon the ocean and the lakes in torrents; when the Federal City was taken, and the Capitol and President's House burned; and when in consequence of the "embargo," and the total stagnation of trade and commerce,

"Thousands of rich sank down among the poor."

* "Divine Judgments." Dr. Mason's Fast Day Sermon, 1793.

† Mason's "*Divine Judgments*," Vol. i., p. 48.

A *sixth* judgment was the ASIATIC CHOLERA, which, in 1832, crossed from the Old World to Canada, and advanced by way of Albany and New York into the United States, where it became for several years the principal epidemic disease. Whatever doubt there may have been about other judgments, all were constrained to admit that this was the Finger of God.

A *seventh* period of judgment began in 1835, about the time of the Great Fire in New York. The enormous amount of property destroyed by fires on land, and by storms at sea; by the failure of banks, and the reaction of excessive speculation all over the country, once more rebuked our haste to be rich, and our idolatrous love of money, in a way that could not be misunderstood.

An *eighth* judgment was the death of President Harrison in 1840, just one month after his inauguration, when for the first time in the history of our country, the Presidential chair was rendered vacant by death.

In this President, the moral and religious portion of the Nation thought they had found a man after their own heart, and the memorable words with which he concluded his Inaugural Address, are written on their memories as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, on a rock forever.* “I deem the present occasion sufficiently important and solemn to justify me in expressing to my fellow-citizens, a profound reverence for the Christian religion, and a thorough conviction that sound morals, religious liberty, and a just sense of religious responsibility, are essentially connected with all true and lasting

* “With the Constitution of his country in one hand, and the Word of God in the other, he acknowledged their mutual dependence and entire fealty alike to patriotism and religion.”—Waterbury’s *Fast Day Sermon*, 1841, “God exalted in the discipline of Nations.”

happiness; and to that Good Being who has blessed us by the gifts of civil and religious freedom, who watched over and prospered the labors of our fathers, and has hitherto preserved to us institutions far exceeding in excellence those of any other people, let us unite in fervently commending every interest of our beloved country in all future time." April 4th, 1841, the day of Harrison's death, was a very, very dark day in our history, the effect of which we have felt increasingly for evil ever since.

What a dispensation of death was that witnessed by Vice-president Tyler, a lesson not more for him, than the nation at large! "Death vacating the Presidential chair for his occupancy! Soon after vacating again by the death of the statesman who took it, the chair of the Vice-presidency he had quitted! His predecessor in the first office of State falling on his right hand, his successor in the second station of dignity falling on his left hand. Bereaved in his home of a consort, who, from sharing his exaltation, soon passed to the tomb; bereaved in his Cabinet, first, of Legare, rich in promise, talents and acquirements, and smitten down in the fulness of his strength; and now of Upshur and Gilmer, his personal as well as political friends."*

Alas! how seldom are the lessons of calamity truly learned! (Amos iv. 6-12.) "Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." Again we went on more rapidly than ever, "filling up the cup" of our national iniquity, and soon there came,

A tenth judgment, viz., the DEATH OF PRESIDENT TAYLOR,

* "*The Lessons of Calamity*," by Rev. Wm. R. Williams, on occasion of the explosion in the U. S. Ship of War, PRINCETON, by which Messrs. Upshur, Gilmer, and others, lost their lives. Delivered March 10th, 1844.

July 9th, 1850, a President of all others who had it most in his power to deliver us from the evils in which we are now involved; but who, while faithfully "endeavoring to do his duty," in such an hour as he thought not, to the great affliction of his country, was called away in the second year after his inauguration!

Great events are rarely understood at the time of their occurrence; they lie like the valleys covered with mist; but when in due process of time the mist rolls away, then we begin to understand them. (Hab. ii. 3.)

"It is well worthy the consideration of the old States, whether it is not better to dispense with all Territorial organizations, and at once to carve the whole into States of convenient size for admission. *This was the plan sanctioned by Gen. Taylor, and but for his death would have been adopted.*" Hon. John Sherman's letter, Dec. 22d, 1860.

Since that period the judgment trumpets have been blowing, and the vials of God's wrath have been pouring out upon us as a nation almost continually. Blighted harvests, destructive storms at sea, tremendous tornadoes on land, the inexplicable FINANCIAL PANIC of 1857, droughts unprecedented as to extent and continuance, and signs in the heavens, which rarely occur without equally remarkable events on earth; and now, last and worst of all, the great POLITICAL PANIC; all these things show us this day, that when "the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the land, the inhabitants thereof (should) learn righteousness."* Having lost *faith in God*, to so

* So it *has* been in times past. The Yellow Fever and the French War were followed by the "old Revival" of 1800; the war of 1812 by a series of revivals beginning in 1815; the Asiatic Cholera by the revivals of 1831; the "hard times," from 1836 to 1841, by the revivals of 1842; and who does not know that 1857, the year of the Great Panic, was succeeded by the year of the Great Revival! Why then may we not look for the "wall to be built in troublous times," in 1861?

great an extent, no wonder that we have lost faith in each other, both *financially* and *politically*!*

This leads us to consider

IV. OUR NATIONAL POSITION.

According to the Proclamation of the President that has assembled us together, it is an hour of "extreme peril," a time of "actual and impending calamities," a time of "panic and distress," not obscurely hinted at as a day only to be compared with "the darkest days of the Revolution!" The condition of the country "distracted and dangerous;" the Union of the States threatened with alarming and immediate danger; the friendship and good will that formerly prevailed among our people, "completely at an end;" the "wisest counsels wholly disregarded;" the Commonwealth suddenly plunged into exigencies unforeseen; the country on the verge of "civil war;" all classes in a state of "confusion and dismay;" "hope itself deserting the minds of men;"† and

* "There now exists (1856) an extraordinary prostitution of honor and honesty in politics; an extraordinary corruption in business; an extraordinary amount of extravagance and luxury; and an extraordinary amount of wickedness of every sort."—*Newspaper Editorial*.

For the state of things in 1860, especially in New York City, see Judge Pierpont's letter of resignation to the Governor. Tremendous as are the charges there made of moral and official corruption, the worst of all is, that they *were never denied*.

How speedily are national calamities forgotten! •

"And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."—*2 Sam. xx. 12, 13.*

† Even Pandora's box had hope at the bottom!

all as the consequence of our "NATIONAL SINS," our "ingratitude, and guilt," our "false pride of opinion, and perseverance in wrong!" How others may have felt on reading this Proclamation, we do not know, but for ourselves we must confess, that for days together we were ashamed to look an American, much more an intelligent Foreigner, in the face. If the object of the Proclamation was to humiliate us, it has certainly had that effect, though in a different way perhaps from what was originally intended by it. "Not to despair of the Republic,"* we had hitherto supposed was one of the very first principles of patriotism and common sense; and to despair of it before anything *had really been done to save it*, appeared to us an inconsistency equally great in the morals of the Proclamation, as had just before been seen in the Annual Message, in the way of argument.†

But willingly to accord to the Proclamation all the credit for good intention that it deserves, let us look for a moment at our National position, just as it appears on the face of it. On the 20th of December, 1860, South Carolina "declared and ordained that the Constitution of the United States was repealed, and the Union now subsisting between her and other States was dissolved."

* "Evil prophecies not unfrequently work their own fulfilment. Being continually repeated, they at length arrest our attention; then gradually and imperceptibly gain over our belief, and finally make us indifferent to the result. When men have once attained this mental position, we can easily perceive how soon the dreadful prophecy may be fulfilled. *Turn a deaf ear to the dismal croaking, NEVER DESPAIR OF THE REPUBLIC!* At least as the best means of *postponing the funeral obsequies of our invaluable institutions*, let us be faithful to the last." —"Our Country," by H. Mandeville, D. D., Mobile.

There are two kinds of treason; one that springs from design, and one that springs from weakness; and if Rochefoucault is to be believed, "more men are guilty of treason through weakness, than any studied design to betray."

† We thought of the old fable of Hercules and the Wagoner, especially the moral, "The gods help those *who help themselves*."

Secession State Conventions have been appointed as follows: Jan. 3d, Florida; Jan. 7th, Alabama and Mississippi; Jan. 8th, Texas; Jan. 9th, Georgia; Jan. 23d, Louisiana; and also during the same month, in reference to the same object, special sessions of the Legislatures of Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky. Treason in the Cabinet, open and unblushing; the National Treasury almost bankrupt; the National arms betrayed into the hands of the enemies of the Government and the Constitution; the overt act of treason committed by the unworthy successors of Gadsden and the Rutledges; the very fort in which Sergeant Jasper immortalized his name in connection with the American Flag, now disgraced by a garrison of rebels, who substitute the Palmetto for the Stars and Stripes!*

The Federal Metropolis itself threatened,† and the

* "The memories of the past are there,
Fast clinging to each silken fold;
The pious hope, the vow, the prayer,
From hearts and lips now hushed and cold.

"Our sires' strong faith, their war-worn years,
Their dying groans, their conquering cry,
Their orphans' wail, their widows' tears,
Great WASHINGTON there wrote on high.

"*His sacred shade in wild alarm,*
Now calls that traitor hard to stop,
As once God's angel stayed the arm
Of Abram on the mountain-top.

"And vale to vale, and crag to crag,
The deep-toned curse shall echo far,
On him who rends the Union flag,
Or from its azure strikes a star."

Detroit Tribune.

D. B. D.

† A few months before the decease of the late Col. Benton, he said to a young political friend then on a visit to Washington, "Young man, you have seen the Hall of Patents, the Post Office, the CAPITOL; for whom have they

militia of the District of Columbia, and of different States, ready to put themselves at once under the command of the National Authorities, and march for the preservation of their common country; "the time for crimination and recrimination past;" the time for ACTION fully come, AND THE GREAT BODY OF THE PEOPLE ONCE MORE IN COUNCIL; such a day as this, it may safely be affirmed, has never been seen in the history of our country, since the establishment of the Constitution! Decision of purpose, promptness of action, the utmost energy of unflinching determination on the part of our rulers, that which under God alone can save us; well may we this day pray with our Fathers of old, "*To avert from us the evils of civil war,* AND TO INSPIRE US WITH FIRMNESS IN SUPPORT OF OUR RIGHTS!"

Our Government; our civil, social and commercial interests; our best enjoyments in private life; everything that constitutes the common welfare; yea, our NATIONAL EXISTENCE itself, at stake; what then are our

NATIONAL DUTIES?

I. As CHRISTIANS, to understand the correct and Christian theory of government in general;

That God has established it;

That obedience is to be yielded as a *matter of conscience*;

been built at such enormous expense?" "For the people of the United States, I suppose." "*United States!* No, Sir, no! They are for the SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY, which has been plotting for the last five and twenty years, and which I greatly fear the Nation will not wake up to discover until it is TOO LATE." Remembering the words of the dying Benton, we were not surprised to hear Senator Iverson declare in place, "I see no reason why Washington City shall not be continued the Capitol of a Southern Confederacy. The buildings are ready to our hand!"—*Speech* of Dec. 11. Nor to hear Mr. Rhett affirm, that "Secession had been in contemplation for thirty years!" See also the *Letter of Gen. Jackson to the Rev. Mr. Crawford.*

That until a people are ready to make a new Constitution, and establish another form of Government, they are bound to maintain that which they have.

Rom. xiii. 1-7.*

II. AS CHRISTIAN CITIZENS, to understand the true nature of OUR OWN Government.

1. That the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States, are parts of one consistent whole, founded upon one and the same theory of Government, as a theory working itself into the mind of man for many ages, but which had never before been adopted by a great nation in practice, viz.:

The natural equality and inalienable rights of man; and that

The people are the only legitimate source of power. See *Adams' Jubilee of the Constitution*, p. 41.

2. That this Constitution is *not* "a compact," but a *fundamental law*; that it creates direct relations between it and *individuals*; that it lays its hand on individual conscience and individual duty; that it was originally received as a whole, and for the whole country; and that what the people have done, only the people can undo! *Speech of Daniel Webster, U. S. Senate, Feb. 16, 1833.*

III. A third duty is to understand the true nature of REBELLION.

To justify rebellion, a Government must be so bad as to fail of its just end; its injustice so great that it would be preferable to endure civil war; there must be no pros-

* On this passage, thousands of sermons were preached on the "Supremacy of the Laws," during the prevalence of "Mob Law" in 1838, 1844, and especially in 1850. We suggest that they might now be repeated to great advantage with a *new application*.

pect that grievances can be redressed peaceably; there must be a good hope of the firm establishment of a better Government; there must be some reasonable expectation of eventual success;* otherwise, the imperative duty of "the Powers that be," in reference to such rebellion, is TO PUT IT DOWN.

IV. A fourth duty is to HATE TREASON.

"Treason against the State, on the part of its highest officers, is the darkest of human offences. Fidelity to the Constitution is due from every citizen. The murderer, even when his victim is eminent for genius and virtue, destroys what time will repair, and deep as is his guilt, society suffers but transiently from the transgression. But he who conspires against the liberties of a Nation, conspires to *subvert the most precious bequest of past ages, the dearest hope of future time*; he would destroy genius in its birth, and enterprise in its sources, and sacrifice the prolific causes of intelligence and virtue, to his avarice or his vanity, his caprices or his ambition; would rob the NATION OF ITS NATIONALITY; the people of the prerogatives of man! THERE CAN BE NO FOULER DEED!"
—*Bancroft*, Vol. ii. p. 15.

V. Let us make up our minds, as to what is our duty *personally* in reference to our present National position.

Of course in this matter, I can only speak for myself as an individual,† but if the simple alternative is between the abrogation of the grandest National Constitution un-

* "Religious duty of Obedience to Law," by I. S. Spencer, D. D., Brooklyn, 1850.

† A young layman thus spoke at Old Pine Street a few evenings since. "Six young men have died in this congregation in 1860; in all probability there will be a much greater number in 1861. If our country calls for our services we must be ready to give them." Though the pastor was present, *Nec dicit aliter!* The old church was true to the Union in 1776, why should it not be equally true in 1861?

inspired, the world has ever seen, and CIVIL WAR—terrible as such a war is—“when it begins, no one knowing where it will end;”^{*} yet between these two opinions, I cannot halt for an instant. Knowing where I stand, and on what occasion, in full view of my responsibility to God and man for such a declaration, rather than that the sentiments recently uttered in a Presbyterian pulpit of New Orleans[†] should become the moral and religious sentiments of this country, and lead to their legitimate results in making slavery *National* instead of *local*,[‡] and against

* Bishop Burnet.

† “*To secure and to perpetuate the institution of domestic slavery as now existing;*” “*the duty we owe to ourselves, to our slaves, to the world, and to Almighty God,*” preached in a Presbyterian pulpit, under the motto: “A faithful witness will not lie;” “a true witness delivereth souls.” Words are wanting to express our horror and astonishment at such a sentiment at high noon in the 19th Century!

We thought of the *unanimous* action of the Presbyterian Fathers in 1818. “It is manifestly the duty of all Christians, who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both *with the dictates of humanity and religion*, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use honest, earnest, unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as *speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and throughout the world.*”

We thought of what Hannah More said in 1788; “Slavery is vindicated in print, and defended in the House of Peers! Poor human reason! When wilt thou come to years of discretion?”

Most of all did we think of the words of a certain writer in Charleston, S. C. “Such is the fatal influence of slavery on the human mind, that it almost wholly effaces from it even the boasted characteristic of rationality!”

A faint echo of this sermon of Dr. Palmer’s, has recently been heard in Brooklyn, L. I. American slavery a doctrine of the Bible! “The Union to be sacrificed on the altar of peace!” *Credat Judæus, Raphell!*

“Another error consists in regarding the Africans as an *inferior race, fit only for slaves*. Infidelity, as you are aware, has been active at the South in inducing the belief that the negro belongs to an inferior, if not a distinct race. This doctrine is the only foundation of perpetual slavery. This defence of slavery is as old as Aristotle. ‘*The barbarians are of a different race from us, and were born to be slaves to the Greeks.*’”—*Dr. Van Rensselaer’s Letter to Dr. Armstrong, 1858.*

‡ See an admirable article in *Bib. Repertory*, Jan. 1861, entitled, “*The*

the Christian sentiment of the world,* re-opening the Slave-trade, and all “the horrors of the middle passage,”— I say it calmly, I repeat it deliberately, I am as ready to-morrow to enlist in the Army of the “SECOND FOUNDERS OF THE REPUBLIC,” as ever the honored ancestor whose name I bear, was to enlist in the Army of the Revolution!† “When President Langdon of Harvard University put himself at the head of Col. Prescott’s column on Cambridge Common, on the eve of the 17th of June,

state of the Country,” by Dr Hodge, of which we are sorry to say, that the words that follow in italics have since, with other portions, been *suppressed*.

“Our outward union is the expression of inward unity. To this we owe our dignity and our power among the nations of the earth. Had we been as the dissociated communities of Italy, we had been insignificant. It is because we are one; that we are great, prosperous, and powerful. *All this, until recently, was the common sentiment of the country; and the man who should advocate a dissolution of the Union, would have been associated in the estimation of his countrymen, with Benedict Arnold. And such, we doubt not, will be the position assigned by the judgment of posterity to the authors of disunion, should that calamity befall us.*” For further extracts, see Appendix C.

* In 1843, Senator Buchanan, from Pennsylvania, remarked: “All Christendom is leagued against the South upon the question of Domestic Slavery. They have no other allies to sustain their Constitutional rights except the DEMOCRACY OF THE NORTH!” In view of such a declaration, the history of this party, and of Mr. Buchanan’s Administration for the last four years, is very significant.

† Loving the Society of Friends as we do, increasingly, for their steady and consistent testimony, as seen in the writings of Anthony Benezet, John Woolman, and others, against intemperance, the oppression of the Indians and the Africans, and in so many respects against the evils of war; yet on the subject of non-resistance we cannot agree with them, not finding this doctrine taught either in the Old Testament or the New. “What are human governments to us?” says one of these good brethren, reproving us for this sermon. “We have nothing to do with them. What rights have we to defend? We have no rights. We have laid all human rights upon the altar,” &c. Such language as this, we candidly confess, we do not understand. If ten wicked men should attack one hundred non-resistant Christian men, with a view to destroy them, it seems to us that there would be at least as much folly on the part of the one hundred in allowing themselves to be slaughtered, as of wickedness in the ten in slaughtering them. However, as this whole controversy with the Friends was gone through by Gilbert Tennent and others, we will say no more.

1775, and offered up a devout prayer beneath the stars for the success of the expedition then starting for the neighboring heights of Charlestown, he was no Judas leading a band with swords and lanterns against the Christ of God.”* In view of all the results of Bunker Hill, it is as clear to me as the noon-day sun, that he would HAVE BEEN A JUDAS HAD HE DONE OTHERWISE! That our brethren at the South, whom we still call brethren, and towards whom we still feel as such, notwithstanding such speeches as those of Senators Iverson and Wigfall,† may know precisely what they have to expect, if they continue to say, “A Confederacy,” when God in his Providence does not seem to call for one, I repeat the sentiment just uttered; that if putting aside all our efforts at conciliation, they throw down the gauntlet, and appeal to the God of Battles, they may rest assured beyond all doubt or cavil, that it will be TAKEN UP! “To secure a peaceable possession of all important national rights, for such a purpose, war is lawful; and they who hazard their lives in it, are worthy of the highest honor!”‡

Say ye not then, *on any pretence*, “A Confederacy” to those who are now endeavoring to overthrow our National Confederacy, and establish one of their own! “Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.” Let not a foolish, sinful fear, disturb our spirits, conquer our faith, or restrain our prayers! Sure of a “good God,” a good cause, and a good issue at last, “Sanctify the Lord of

* Rev. Wm. Adams, D. D., New York, Thanksgiving Sermon, 1850.

† Fanaticism begets fanaticism. “If John Brown of Ossawatimie” “fired off his gun to show what time of day it was,” it is high time for us to look at the National sun-dial. Brown was but the legitimate and inevitable result of Slavery Propagandism. An army of such men, Governor Wise himself being judge, would make an army more terrible than Cromwell’s “Ironsides.”

‡ “*Abp. Secker’s IX. Sermons on occasion of the Rebellion,*” p. 201, ed. 1758.

Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and HE SHALL BE FOR A SANCTUARY!"*

As old John Adams, "the pilot that weathered the storm" in 1798, said: "The furnace of affliction produces refinement in the State as in individuals." In the words of our President elect, whom we trust God has raised up for a similar crisis in 1861, "Only STAND FIRM, and we will not fail!" Remembering that the year 1761 was the beginning of American Liberty, we are not willing that 1861 shall see it end!

* The saddest line to us in Horace's Ode on the Ship of State,

Nudum remigio latus,
Et malus *celeri saucius Africo,*

is the following:

Non Di, quos iterum pressa voces malo.

A P P E N D I X .

A.

“The convention for forming a Constitution, for the State of Pennsylvania, met at Philadelphia, on Monday, 15th July, 1776, and elected Dr. Benjamin Franklin, President. By solemn resolution they directed Divine service to be performed before them, by the Rev. Wm. White, since Bishop of Pennsylvania, and offering to Almighty God, their praises and thanksgiving for the manifold mercies, and the peculiar interposition of his special providence, in behalf of the injured and oppressed United States, they prayed for His Divine grace and assistance in the important and arduous task committed to them.”—*Gordon's History of Pennsylvania*, p. 539.

The following document was evidently prepared to assist the deliberations of the convention; it has never before been published, and only within a few months narrowly escaped destruction. Whilst “rummaging” as Mr. Jefferson says, among a mass of old papers, we were fortunate enough to discover and save this well considered testimony of one of the Chaplains of the Old Continental Congress.

WHO SHOULD BE OUR RULERS?

Query.—May a community of professing christians, of right require any profession of the christian faith of those appointed to bear rule among them, previous to their admission to office, or make a profession of christianity, a suspending term of their being admitted to any of the principal offices in the state?

Though every sect of christians are through human weakness, liable to mistake, and ought therefore to exercise mutual charity and forbearance towards each other; neither may any person have any injury done him, in his name, person or estate, or be subjected to any pains or penalties for his religious sentiments, whilst in no way tending to the hurt of the commonwealth; yet, that they may, and ought to require a profession of christianity in general, such as a belief of the Holy Scriptures, to be of Divine authority, and salvation by Jesus Christ, of every of their principal officers of state, previous to their

admission appears—if not absolutely incumbent—yet by far the most probable and eligible sentiment, from the following considerations :

1. Officers in the State are to be considered as the servants of the public, employed by the Body, to perform certain services for them, and for which service, they receive that reward or hire, which the community agree to give; though officers are the servants of the State, it is yet the highest honor the State can confer on any of its members, to repose confidence in them, to transact for them the public concerns.

2. No man, or set of men, has any natural right to any office in the State, more than he has a natural right to oblige or demand his neighbor to hire him to perform any service he has to do, and consequently none of his natural rights are infringed—if the community think proper not to employ him, more than the farmer infringes on the natural rights of the laborer, when he chooses to employ another rather than him.

3. Every community has an undoubted right to choose whom they will employ, to perform any service for them, equally as the farmer has, to choose whom he will employ to perform any labor for him. And as they have a right to choose as they please, whom they will employ—So,

4. They have for the same reason, an equal right to make such regulations as they see proper, respecting the persons they will agree to employ in their service, so that these regulations infringe on no man's natural right, nor inflict any penalty on those they may not think proper to employ.

5. For a society of professing Christians, to agree to employ none in any of their principal offices of service in the State, but such as profess christianity, appears to be no more than a proper mark of respect paid to themselves, as a body, and to the christian religion they profess, and cannot therefore, in that point of view be condemned.

Whereas, on the other hand, to act a contrary part, must appear in the eyes of the far greater part of the community, treating christianity with a degree of neglect, and has a direct tendency to sink it lower in the public esteem, and induce many through the influence, a connection of ideas has on the mind of man, to hold it on a par with Infidelity, in other respects as well, also, as in that wherein they would thus see it placed by the Constitution of their government.

6. Good morals are essentially necessary to the health and prosperity of the State.

Whatever measure therefore, appears best adapted to preserve and promote the morals of the state ought to be embraced.

Christianity is much better calculated to preserve and pro-

mote good morals than infidelity; as much therefore, as christianity is better calculated for this great essential purpose, so much more advisable and prudent it is, to have christian magistrates and officers, rather than infidels, especially when we consider,

7. The experience of all ages has confirmed the observation, that the principles and practice of superiors, and especially of rulers, have great influence on those of inferior rank; as in the history of the Jews; the complexion of the people at large, as either moral or profane, may generally be known by adverting to the character of the rulers that were over them, and it is ever to be expected, that every man will endeavour according to his opportunities for that purpose, to promote the sentiments he himself has embraced, and induce others to join him in practice.

To admit therefore, an Infidel to authority and rule in the State, as it gives weight and influence to his sentiment and example, so it has in the same proportion a direct tendency, to promote infidelity and sap the foundation of good morals in the state, and thereby do it a material and essential injury; nor can the effect be doubted, when we consider how naturally prone mankind are to be, much more easily and powerfully influenced by evil sentiments and examples than good ones.

This appears the language of reason, and though I am well aware how readily many are disposed to a Deistical contempt of that Sacred Book, to sneer at an appeal to the Holy Scriptures, yet, as I believe them to be from God, and designed to make us wise for our own true good here, as well as eternal happiness hereafter, I am not ashamed to apply to them in the present case, and assert it most consonant to the declared will and command of the Eternal God; that a State composed of professing christians, should place over them, rulers and officers professing christianity. And here it is necessary to observe that the Scriptures were not designed for any one particular nation of people, but as a rule of direction, for the professing people of God, in all parts and ages of the world. And although in the directions given to the Jews, there were some things of a particular nature and particularly designed for that people, exclusive of all other nations under heaven in every age, yet, whatever general directions were given to them, founded in and consonant to the reason of things, these were as much designed for us as for them, and are equally obligatory on us. Who will venture to say that the great charter of blessings confirmed to that people, *Deut.* 28: and sanctioned by heavy penalties; those denounced in case of persisted in Rebellion against the the authority of God, was not equally

designed to inform us as them, of the way wherein to secure national prosperity and avoid national calamity and distress? and has not the experience of all ages, agreeable hereto, confirmed the Sacred Remark—*Prov.* xiv. 34, that “Righteousness exalteth a nation,” &c.? This then, being granted, which cannot with reason be denied, it will follow that the directions given to that people to regulate their conduct, in choosing their chief magistrate, and established by God himself as a part of their Constitution, ought at least to have some respect paid to it by christians, in choosing those who are to bear rule among them; it is certainly, more probable we shall act agreeable to the mind of God in paying a regard to it, as far as our circumstances coincide with those of the people to whom it was given, than by treating it with absolute neglect. These directions are therefore, transmitted down to us, *Deut.* xvii. 18. Let any one read the passage and then say whether an Infidel Magistrate can by any means be supposed to answer the character; or whether its most plain and natural meaning, if it has any respect or meaning to us at all, is not that as professing christians we ought to choose officers professing christianity, for,

1st. He is to be of their Religion, that is a Jew, incorporated in that body and professing the Jewish Religion, no matter of what tribe or order, save only that none of the tribe of Levi, are to be chosen. This is all the exception made, and it is a good exception, still, nor will any of the clerical order desire it, unless they have forgotten the apostolic injunction, “Give thyself wholly to these things,” *1 Tim.* iv. 15.

2d. He is to study the word of God, for though the expression, (*Deut.* xvii. 18,) has a special reference to the judicial law of that people, it cannot with propriety be restricted to that. It was the whole law which was with the priests and Levites, but this was the whole of the Divine Revelation, is still of excellent use to form even the highest officers of the State, for a faithful discharge of their trust to the commonwealth as well as to form the individual for usefulness here and glory hereafter.

3d. He was to learn to fear the Lord—but how is this most likely to be obtained to have rulers that are taught to fear God? Is it by choosing Infidels or by choosing Christians?

4th. He was to set an example to the people—and this example was certainly not for nothing, but that it might have influence; it was therefore as much the people’s duty to observe and follow the example of their rulers, as it was theirs to set it. But what example shall we expect from Infidels? Are they likely to walk in the law of the Lord? &c., or ought we to choose examples of infidelity to set before us and our children to copy after?

A second direction from the sacred pages, 2 Samuel xxiii. 3. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the *fear of God.*" This is an express command of God, and delivered in terms so general, as render it impossible to be restricted to the Jews, but equally designed for us as any other portion of Sacred Writ. And will any say that an Infidel answers to this character, or is likely to rule in the fear of God? The 101st Psalm is generally understood as descriptive of those the Psalmist, by divine direction, was determined to employ in the service of the State; and such are characterized, v. 6, by walking in the perfect way. But is it possible to suppose infidelity can be that "perfect way?" Or if the Psalm should be understood of domestic servants, will not the argument hold much stronger with respect to those who are to serve the State?

In Isaiah xlix. 23, it is promised among the singular blessings that shall attend Christian States in the day of their greatest prosperity, that their rulers shall be "nursing fathers," &c., to the Church of Christ. But are Infidels likely to be these nursing fathers? Or when we know God generally accomplishes ends in the way of means adapted to these ends, shall we use the means that are most directly opposed to it, in order to obtain the so valuable and desirable ends?

Under the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is express in this matter, by the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 1—7, which cannot be understood as forbidding Christians to go to law at all, for then would the Holy Spirit manifestly contradict himself, and condemn the use of what he elsewhere terms an "ordinance of God." Neither is it to be restricted merely to the condemning of a litigious disposition, for there would then be no need of saying anything about judges, whether Heathen or Christian, as a litigious temper has nothing to do with the judge, but is still the same, whatever the magistrate be. But the charge against them is in express terms, not for going to law, but for going to law before infidel magistrates and judges, and not before Christians, as v. 1, and then even when there were no Christian officers in the State; for which reason he urges them to choose judges among themselves, by mutual consent, and submit to them the decision of their debates, rather than apply to infidels for justice; nay, even to sustain loss, and bear the injury which otherwise they had no right to bear, rather than appear before a heathen or infidel bar, which must appear to any candid inquirer the very design of the apostle's address; for to understand it, as some pretend to do, as an injunction to settle matters by arbitration, and not to go to law, is begging

the question, and deriving their argument from the corrupt administration and unrighteous delay of justice, which is the only reason that gives arbitration the preference, inasmuch as were proper judges appointed, and they faithfully to attend to and discharge their duty, there could be no more proper, just, or expeditious method devised of deciding debates. And, besides, there is not a single syllable in the text about a corrupt administration or unjust delay of justice, but the matter is entirely and precisely about the judges, and that only.

Upon the whole, both reason and revelation, if I am not greatly mistaken, will be found with united suffrage to declare that if it is not an absolutely incumbent duty, it is at least highly becoming, and right, and fit that a community of professing Christians should admit none but such as profess Christianity to principal places of trust, as Rulers in the State, and this, I am well persuaded, will be found to be the sentiment of a very great majority of the sober thinking part of all denominations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, nor can any with the least shadow of justice allege that this tends to establish, or give a prerogative to any one sect of Christians above another, inasmuch as all that is contended for is only in addition to the belief of one Eternal God, the Creator and Governor of the world, proposing also a belief in Jesus Christ the Saviour, and that the holy Scriptures, as contained in the Old and New Testaments, are of divine authority, and given as a rule of faith and manners, leaving to every man and to every sect and denomination to understand the Scriptures, and explain and receive the doctrines contained therein, in the best manner they can for themselves, according to the measure of light where-with they are indued, without any human exposition or interpretation of others being imposed upon them; but the rights of conscience fully and equally secured to all of every denomination.

Arguments, I know, and some of them at first view plausible, are offered on the other side of the question.

1st. It is said the Church and State ought to be kept entirely separate, and no connection admitted between things civil and religious, as they have no connection in nature, and many mischiefs have flowed from blending them together. If this be so, then great care must be taken to establish nothing of morality, for this is one grand essential constituent of religion, which consists in loving God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves; doing to all men as we would wish them in like circumstances to do to us. If any say the good of society requires this, I answer this is only giving up the position, and saying that though civil and religious things are to be kept entirely apart, they are yet in many things so inseparably connected

that it is impossible to separate them one from the other. If this be so, we can then have no Sabbath established in any State, however composed entirely of professing Christians, unless it be somewhat of a political Sabbath, and entirely dissimilar to the word of God, for as the observation of a Sabbath is a part, and that a very material and foundation part of true Religion—for any State, therefore, to establish the observation of a Sabbath, is so far to blend Religion with their civil constitution; which, according to the above position, ought by no means to be done, but the two be kept entirely separate from each other.* Nay, further, as the observation of a Sabbath is a part of revealed religion, and depends entirely on the divine authority of that revelation which enjoins it, we cannot establish the observation of a Sabbath without previously admitting, and equally establishing the divine authority of that revelation on which the Sabbath depends. We must, therefore, inevitably either admit and establish in our civil constitution the divine authority of the Scriptures, or we must utterly reject the Sabbath from amongst us, save as any one may choose of his own accord to observe the day. There is no alternative in the case. Admit, then, the Sabbath rejected, as on the above position it absolutely must be, and no one obliged to observe it, I leave it to any man who has observed how difficult it is with all the care that can be taken to have a Sabbath observed, I leave it to him to judge what our situation in a few years will be. Whether we shall be likely to have a Sabbath among us at all, but in this respect be purely heathen, and the Sabbath entirely gone, though the wisest and best of men in every age have esteemed the observation of the Sabbath of essential use to promote not only piety towards God, but morality toward men, and the great good of society; and God himself laid it down as a first grand foundation principle in the Jewish constitution, instantly after bringing them forth out of Egypt. The truth of the case is, it is impossible to run a line of distinction between things civil and religious, so as to separate the one from the other, in any civilized State. They are in many respects what God and nature have joined together, and man may not put asunder. The only culpable connection is when, instead of establishing purely the inspired standard, human creeds and compositions are established, and an unequal and equally unjust prerogative or preference is given to any one sect or denomination over or beyond others, or when any pains or penalties are inflicted for religious sentiments, in no wise interfering with the common good and safety of the State.

* See "*Sunday Laws; or, Shall the Sabbath be protected?*" An Essay published by the Presbyterian Board, Philadelphia.

2d. It is said, to exclude an Infidel from being admitted to stand candidate for any office in the State, is infringing his natural right, and impliedly inflicting a penalty on him for his conscience sake, and in a matter purely respecting religion, and which ought to have nothing to do with things of a civil nature.

To which I reply—If no man has a natural right to any office in the State, there is no natural right infringed in not electing him to that office. If it be said, though he has not a natural right to the office, he has a natural right to be admitted to stand a candidate for it, it is replied, the collective body have certainly as good a natural right to determine on the qualifications of those they will agree to choose into that office; and if there be any clashing of natural rights, or if a natural right on the one side stands opposed to a natural right on the other, Reason says, that of the individual ought to give way to that of the collective body. Nor is his being excluded by the want of a qualification judged proper by the community, to be esteemed a penalty inflicted, whilst no injury is done him in name, person or estate, but he enjoys in peace and safety all his civil and religious rights and liberties, save only that the community have not thought proper to appoint him a ruler over them.

3dly. It is said, It may be depriving the community of the service of a very capable, useful and worthy member, to which I answer, in the language of the Apostle to the Corinthians—Can it be supposed there are not wise men to be found among a whole State of professing Christians—no, not so many as to afford a sufficient number to fill the most important offices of the State? If it be so, the Christian religion must have greatly dwindled away in that State, and the time come near at hand when it will be proper to give it up to the direction of Infidels.

4thly. It is said—It would be depriving the people of a free choice. If the people have before laid down and agreed upon such a regulation, they are deprived of nothing but departing from a rule which they themselves have considered as salutary, and necessary to be observed.

5th. It is alleged—That the prudence of the people would so direct them that there could be no danger of a majority being chosen of such as disbelieve in Christianity, and that two or three, or any small number, could do no harm.

It is a remark made by the wise man, that one sinner destroyeth much good, and it might hold in this case as well as in others. And if it would be prudent in the people to guard against a majority of their representatives or chief officers being Infidels, one would think it not a very imprudent step to

establish a rule that, without doing injury to any man, would effectually prevent it.

It is scarce worth mentioning a certain commonplace objection, which, though really an insult on the meanest understanding to offer, is yet made against requiring a subscription of a profession, as calculated only to make men act the hypocrite, by declaring what they do not believe, inasmuch as the same objection equally militates against requiring any profession, or declaration of anything, or enjoining an oath of fidelity on admission into any office: for a man may certainly as easily act the hypocrite in professing allegiance to the United States of America, declaring against the right of the King of Britain to govern these States, or solemnly swearing that he will discharge the trust of office committed to him, as in making a profession of believing the Scriptures; that if for this reason the latter should be rejected, all ought by right to be renounced together.

I shall close my remarks on this subject at present with observing, old customs and institutions with which we have long been acquainted are like old friends, whom we shall not hastily cast off, without weighty reasons urging thereto. We have tried now for near a century an institution, the same in substance with that above pleaded for, formed by the celebrated founder of this State. No inconvenience has ever arisen from it. It has obtained universal esteem, is interwoven into our earliest thought of the matter, and grown up with our judgment; under this the people will feel themselves contented and happy; whether the case will be the same with the proposed alteration is greatly to be questioned, or rather the negative is certain, and the experiment, if made, will but too probably in its consequences verify in the State of Pennsylvania the Prophet Hosea's remark, chap. viii. 3 and 4—"Israel hath cast off the thing which is good, they have set up rulers but not by Me."

GEORGE DUFFIELD.

The above piece was written at the time of forming the Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, and though I wish to exercise all the charity I can for all mankind, and abhor the idea of subjecting any person to any, even the least injury on account of his religious sentiments or tenets in things pertaining to another world, so that he behave himself as a good citizen, yet, on a calm review of the case, at this distance of time, I cannot but think the arguments here adduced have weight, and that, on the whole, it is the safest line of conduct.

G. D

PHILADELPHIA, *Sept. 5, 1787.*

B.

Hanover, January 18, 1773.

DEAR SIR:—I take this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of Anthony Benezet's book against the slave-trade: I thank you for it. It is not a little surprising, that the professors of Christianity, whose chief excellence consists in softening the human heart, in cherishing and improving its finer feelings, should encourage a practice so totally repugnant to the first impressions of right and wrong. What adds to the wonder is, that this abominable practice has been introduced in the most enlightened ages. Times, that seem to have pretensions to boast of high improvements in the arts and sciences, and refined morality, have brought into general use, and guarded by many laws, a species of violence and tyranny, which our more rude and barbarous, but more honest ancestors detested. Is it not amazing, that at a time, when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country, above all others, fond of liberty; that in such an age, and in such a country, we find men professing a religion the most humane, mild, gentle and generous, adopting a principle as repugnant to humanity, as it is inconsistent with the Bible, and destructive to liberty? every thinking honest man rejects it in speculation. How few in practice from conscientious motives?

“Would any one believe that I am master of slaves, of my own purchase! I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living here without them. I will not, I cannot justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue, as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them.

I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil. Everything we can do, is to improve it, if it happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence for slavery. If we cannot reduce this wished for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advance we can make towards justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law, which warrants slavery.

I know not where to stop. I could say many things on the subject; a serious view of which, gives a gloomy perspective to future times! * *

PATRICK HENRY.

C.

The only question of principle, so far as relates to slavery, which distinguishes the mass of the people at the North from the extreme Southern party, is, whether slavery is a municipal or natural institution; whether a man's right to hold a slave as property rests on statute law, or upon the common law. If the latter, then a man has a right to carry his slaves into any state or territory into which he may lawfully carry his ox or his horse. He may bring them by hundreds and thousands into any state in the Union, and settle with them there. If the former, he can carry them no where beyond the legitimate authority of the law by which slavery exists. Which of these views is correct, this is not the place to discuss. All that we wish to say on the point is, that this is the sum of the difference in principle between the North and the extreme South; and that, as a historical fact, the doctrine that slavery is a municipal institution, that no man has the same right to hold his slave in bondage in France and England, that he has there to keep possession of his books or clothes, was the doctrine of all parties in this country until within the last twenty or thirty years. If, therefore, holding this opinion is a just ground for separating from the North, it was a just ground for refusing to submit to the administration of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and every other President, unless our present chief magistrate be an exception. * * *

The leaders of the secession movement regard the Union as a mere partnership; a treaty between sovereign states, which may be dissolved by any one of the parties, by giving due notice. That this is a false view of the case is evident:

1. From the very idea of a nation. It is a body politic, independent of all others, and indissolubly one. That is, indissoluble at the mere option of its constituent parts. * * * No constituent member of a nation can ever have the legal right to secede or rebel. It may have a moral right, in case of absolute necessity. But having no legal right, it exercises its moral right of rebellion, subject to the legal and moral right of the government against which it rebels, to resist or to concede, as it may see fit.

2. A second argument against the right of secession is found in the very words and avowed design of the compact. The contracting parties stipulate that the Union shall be "perpetual." A perpetual lease is one that cannot be annulled at pleasure. A perpetual grant is one which cannot at will be recalled. A perpetual union is one which cannot be dissolved except on the consent of all the parties to that union. Seces-

sion is a breach of faith. It is morally a crime, as much as the secession of a regiment from the battle-field would be. * *

3. A third argument against the right of secession is drawn from the historical fact, that the right was at first desired by some of the states, and formally rejected. New York wished to adopt the Constitution on condition that she might be permitted to withdraw should she see fit. Madison wrote to Hamilton that such a conditional ratification of the Constitution was worse than a rejection. New York, therefore, concluded to come in on the same terms with the other states, with the express understanding that there was to be no secession. * *

4. This may be said to be *res adjudicata*. All parties are committed against the doctrine of secession. When the New England states, under the pressure of the embargo laws and of the evils to them of the war of 1812, sent delegates to the Hartford Convention to consult about the means of redress, the measure was condemned with one voice by the dominant party, as tending to secession. The *Richmond Enquirer*, then in the height of its influence, the recognized exponent of the principles of the Jeffersonian party at the South, elaborately proved that no state or number of states had the right to separate from the Union unless by the consent of the other states. In 1814, that journal held the following language: "No man, no association of one state or set of states, has a right to withdraw from the Union of its own account. The same power which knit us together can unknit us. The same formality which formed the links of the Union is necessary to dissolve it. The majority of the states which formed the Union must consent to the withdrawal of any one branch of it. Until that consent has been obtained, any attempt to dissolve the Union or distract the efficiency of its constitutional law, is *treason—treason to all intents and purposes.*" What was true then is true now. And treason by the law of God and man is one of the greatest of crimes.

5. * * * We do not doubt that many excellent men, many sincere Christians at the South, have been brought to believe that secession is legally and morally right. But it is no new thing in the history of the world that great crimes have been thought right. There never was an *auto da fe* which was not sanctioned by the ministers of religion. The greatest crimes have been perpetrated by those who thought they were doing God service. The fact, therefore, that good men approve of secession, that they pray over disunion, that they rise from their knees and resolve to commit the parricidal act, does not prove it to be right. It only proves how perverted the human mind may become under the influence of passion and the force of popular feeling.