



THREE QUESTIONS

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so late a Period ?

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then System of Government ?

Does the Constitution of the United States Sanction Slavery ?

CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED.

BY DAVID MACDILL, D. D.

"PLAINDEALER OFFICE."

OQUAWKA, ILL.

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Why was the Continent of America not Discovered till such a Late Period ?

Perhaps some may think it a sufficient answer to this question to say in reply, The mariner's compass had to be invented, and sea-faring men had to experiment with it for years before they would venture far out of sight of land, and "tempt their dangerous way" through the trackless ocean. Then we ask again, Why was it so long before the mariner's compass was invented? In answer to this question, some may be ready to allege that science had to make considerable progress among mankind before such an instrument could be invented. Without asking again, Why was it so long before science had made the necessary progress? and receiving an answer, which would only spring another question, we shall admit that both the answers given, are true as far as they go; but the truth which they contain only serves to hide the main truth from the mind's eye. God had his own ends to accomplish—his own purposes to fulfill in all this. Whether we contemplate the laws of nature, or what are sometimes called second causes, or the progress of the arts and sciences, or the rise and fall of empires, or the causes from which they arose, or the atmospheric phenomena, or what not; we may see, or should see, the footsteps of God as a present agent—ordering, directing and controlling all causes and all events for the accomplishment of the great ends of his physical and moral government. But here, as some one has remarked, "the hearts of the peasantry are often wiser than the *heads* of the philosophers." Speaking of the remarkable shiftings of the wind (they *were remarkable*) which favored the landing of the Prince of Orange on the British coast, Macaulay says: "The weather had indeed served the Protestant cause so well that

* What follows is substantially a revised and amended copy of four articles which lately appeared in the United Presbyterian, of Pittsburgh.

some men of more piety than judgment fully believed the ordinary laws of nature to have been suspended for the preservation of the liberty and religion of England." The philosophical historian seems not to have been aware that God, to whom all his works are known from the foundation of the world could easily so arrange the laws of nature before hand, as to make them conspire to the preservation of the great and important interests of a people whom he had destined to act such a conspicuous part on the theatre of the world. Piety is often a great help to the judgment "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Had the American continent been discovered a century or two sooner, by whom would it have been settled? To this question there can be but one answer. It would have been settled by a people who were taught to regard the Pope as the Vicar of Jesus Christ, or another God on earth; to regard kings, no matter how despotical and wicked, as occupying their thrones by "divine right;" to believe that their whole duty as Christians lay in such things as worshipping the Virgin, praying to saints, and giving money to the priest to pray poor souls out of purgatory; to believe that the Scriptures were intended only for the use of the priesthood, and that if any one said that they should be translated into a modern language for the use of the common people, he should be treated as a heretic. What kind of civil and religious institutions would such a people have introduced and cherished throughout the whole of this vast continent? What kind of a foundation would they have laid for the future progress and advancement of society in all those things which bless the life that now is, and prepare men to enjoy the blessedness of the life to come? To ask these questions is to answer them.

At length God's time for the discovery came; and it will require no deep philosophy, no ingenious reasoning, no far-fetched arguments to show that it was the most propitious time. While the nations of Europe were becoming still farther acquainted with the new world, and those who go down to the sea in ships were learning not to dread a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, a people were under a process of training in Europe, though chiefly in Great Britain, who, in due time, were to introduce into it such civil and religious institutions as would be a blessing to themselves and render them or their posterity a blessing to mankind. It was in a dear school they were trained—a school which was kept by the oppressor and persecutor. But they were led, they were driven to inquire into the rights of rulers and the rights of subjects. As the little stream which bursts forth from some mountain peak only acquires more force from the obstacles which it encounters in its rugged way, amidst jutting rocks and serpentine windings, till it becomes a mighty river, bearing on its placid bosom vessels laden with the products of half a continent for the benefit of far distant nations; so the persecutions, and oppressions, and sufferings which the English Puritans and the Scotch Presbyterians endured from both temporal and spiritual tyrants, only

strengthened and accelerated the great movement of the day in favor of civil and religious liberty. And here, in the new world, God had prepared a place of refuge for the oppressed. Inured to hardships and sufferings, and having learned to put their trust in their Heavenly Father, they could face the perils of the sea and the perils of the wilderness, cheered with the hope that here they would enjoy the free exercise of religion, and be the honored instruments of erecting the standard of the cross.

In the year 1492 America was discovered by Christopher Columbus. Nine years before this discovery was made, Luther was born—the man who was destined, in the providence of God, to set on foot a movement which was to revolutionize the greater portion of Europe, and prepare a people to take possession of the most interesting portion of the New World, who would render it a blessing to mankind. While future navigators were making the lately discovered world better known, Luther and his successors were searching the Scriptures, and bringing the reformation to a greater degree of perfection.

“What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”—John 13:7.

“God’s plans ripen slowly, that the fruit may be the riper and the mellow.”

Still more. Simultaneously with this movement, and while a purer and still purer Protestantism was gaining ground in the British Isles, and the cause of civil and religious liberty still gaining new friends and becoming better understood; intelligence, morality, religion and liberty were producing their usual effects. The means of subsistence were increased, and, in the same proportion, the number of the population. Those little islands were becoming too strait for the inhabitants. Whither shall the surplus population emigrate? Unless America had been discovered, and begun to present an inviting appearance, they must have been scattered in different and distant parts of the old world. They must have mingled with the idolatrous heathen, or with idolatrous Christians, and too often they or their posterity would have learned their way. But here, churches and schools were established; the pure doctrines of the Gospel were preached and professed. To America their attention was turned; and to it many, like Isabella Graham, removed, because it was impressed on their minds that in “America religion was to flourish.” Thus the few colonies which originally were founded by refugees from the dissensions and troubles of the mother country, received vast accessions from time to time, of English Puritans and Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

“Look at any great and beneficent change produced in the state of the world; inquire into the causes and occasions of it, and you will find a host of conspiring agencies all tending to a given point, and evidently under the guidance of a presiding mind.”

Those principles which first began to be advocated in England and

Scotland by the early reformers, though for years they were but indistinctly perceived in many of their bearings, and hampered by opinions which inquiring minds did not yet see their way clear to reject—these principles, having been brought more fully into the light, after a long struggle in which many a patriot and Christian suffered more than the spoiling of his goods, were transplanted to New England and to the Middle and Southern States—to New England by the English Puritans, and to the Middle and Southern States by the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. That famous sentiment in the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal and with certain inalienable rights, does not owe its origin to Jefferson, but was advocated and held fast long before his day. Those principles, we might add, were incorporated in the British constitution at the revolution of 1698. What is their sum? That conscience should be left free—that all men should enjoy the free exercise of religion—that the church should enjoin nothing for which she has not a clear warrant in the word of God—that kings or chief magistrates, rule by the consent of the people, and according to laws enacted in the name of the people by their chosen representatives. Here, as in a nut-shell, we have Republican government, free institutions, pure religion, civil and religious liberty.

It is to the class of men who first came to our shores, that they might enjoy the rights of conscience, and others of the same general character who followed them afterwards, that our country is indebted for all it possesses of a noble and ennobling character. Hence our Harvard, and Yale, and Princeton, and Rutgers and South Hanover Colleges, not forgetting Monmouth and Westminster, and Washington, and many other colleges and seats of learning, down to Waxhaw's Academy, near the line which divides between the two Carolinas, at which General Jackson received his literary education. Had the country been originally peopled by those who regard ignorance as the mother of devotion, these institutions would never yet have been heard of. Nor would we yet have heard of the American Bible Society, and the other Bible societies of the land, or the Board of Commissioners for foreign Missions, or the various missionary boards of the evangelical churches—all which, we hope and trust, God intends yet to use still more extensively, as instruments in his hands for the accomplishment of his designs of mercy to a world lying in darkness and sin. Nor would our youth throughout the length and breadth of the land have enjoyed the benefits of common schools and Sabbath schools.

REMARKS.

1. The American system of Government owes its origin to no wisdom or foresight of man, farther than God pleases to make use of such means for the accomplishment of his purposes. Through many long ages, God was preparing the way for its appearance on the stage of the world.

2. What ends God may have in view, and what designs he may

accomplish by his present providential dealings with our country, we cannot foresee. Secret things belong unto the Lord. But we may have an abiding confidence that he will not give up the vine which he has planted among us and made to take deep root so that it fills the land—that he will not give it up to utter ruin. He may suffer the wild beasts of the field to devour it for a time, as a wholesome and necessary chastisement for our sins, with the ultimate intention of opening before us a new and brighter era. “His way is in the sea, his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known.”

3. Leaving future events in the hands of God, it is certainly our duty to use all lawful means, and make every possible exertion to preserve and defend the civil and religious institutions of our country, to prepare the way for which, his providence has been at work through successive generations.

4. Teachers of American youth should labor to show them, that, as they enjoy peculiar privileges under our government, their duties and responsibilities are in the same proportion. About fifty years ago, the Professor of Moral Science, in what was then the most western College in the United States, in concluding a course of lectures on the Federal Constitution, said: “Now young men, I am not a native American, but I must say that you enjoy advantages under this Constitution which are enjoyed nowhere else on the face of the earth.” He made an impression.

5. To say nothing of the lamentation, and mourning and wo, with which the ambitious men who organized the present rebellion, might have foreseen they were about to fill the land, and the anguish with which the hearts of thousands would be filled, who, but for their wives, would have continued to be peaceable, contented, and happy citizens, little did they consider the precious human interests which they would place in jeopardy, if not utterly destroy.

Have We, the People of the United States, an Infidel or Heathen System of Government?

Perhaps not. Let us have no random talking or writing on the subject.

Let us not praise our system of government beyond its deserts, but let us take care, lest, by finding fault without good reason, we impair public respect for it, and thus cool the ardor of its friends in its support, now that it is in jeopardy.

If it is indeed, as some allege, an anti-christian government, it must surely be very difficult for the better class of christians to reconcile it with their consciences to risk their own lives, and shed the blood of their fellow-men in its defence!

The question before us was debated with great earnestness from Georgia to Maine, during the Sabbath-school controversy, thirty years

ago. Infidels, the enemies of the Sabbath, and godless politicians (not statesmen) maintained that our Government knows no religion: evangelical Christians, and some *statesmen*, and eminent lawyers here and there throughout the Union, maintained that it was framed for a Christian people, by men, many of whom had given the most decisive evidence that they held the religion of Christ in high estimation during the "times which tried men's souls;" and that, taken as a whole, our system of government recognizes the Christian religion.

The framers of the Federal Constitution, admonished by the history of past ages, and knowing the evils which had arisen from too much governmental interference with the religion of the people, were on their watch not to admit anything into it which might occasion similar evils. Grant that they exercised an extreme caution; grant that they might and should have acknowledged more explicitly the existence and providence of God, and the truth of the Christian religion, and thus have gladdened the hearts of many good men, still some caution was necessary, and more caution than many have been willing to allow. The Christian community was divided into numerous sects, and held various opinions about religious matters; they knew this; and they also knew how difficult it would be to insert in the Constitution anything more than a very general recognition of Christianity, without giving offence to some one or more of the religious sects and causing them to complain that their religion was proscribed. And such a recognition we do find in the Constitution. They recognized the Christian Sabbath by excluding it from the days allowed to the President to return the laws given him for his signature. "Sundays excepted," is their language; but Sunday is but another name for the *Lord's-day*. They recognized the Lord's day as a day in which the officers of the Government were not expected to attend to their civil duties. At the end of the Constitution we find these words: "Done in convention in the year of our Lord 1787." Now, in the language of an able jurist, we ask, "Who was it that the illustrious Washington and his compeers—when acting for the States in forming that instrument—acknowledged as their Lord," and as the Lord of those for whom they were acting? Was it not the Lord Jesus Christ? They were forming a system of government, not for a nation of Mahomedans or Pagans, but for a Christian nation.*

But there was another reason why it behooved the convention to touch the subject of religion with great caution. Our authority for the following quotations is Harmon Kingsbury, in a work published by Robert Carter, of New York in the year 1810. In the year 1776, only eleven years before the Constitution was formed, at least nine of

* A few years ago, certain writers, not knowing what they did, affected to treat this argument with contempt. So far as is known, it was first advanced by a New York lawyer, and has since been endorsed by such men as Bishop Doane, President of Kenyon College, Ohio; Rev. J. Adams, President of Charleston College, S. C.; and Harmon Kingsbury. In a brief, carefully written document, a short sentence, nay, a single word may be pregnant with meaning.

thirteen original colonies, gave very stringent instructions to their delegates to the Continental Congress to see that all that relates to their internal police or the management of their own civil and religious affairs," be reserved to the several colonies. *Rhode Island*—"Taking the greatest care to reserve to this colony, in the strongest manner, its present established form and all the powers of government, so far as relates to its internal police, and the conduct of our own affairs, civil and religious." *Pennsylvania*—"Reserving to the people of this colony the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police of the same." *Virginia*—"Provided that the power of forming a government for, and regulating the concerns of each colony, be left to their respective colonial legislatures." *New Hampshire*—"Provided the regulation of our internal police be under the direction of our own assembly." The instructions of Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland and both the Carolinas, were in substance the same.

By the word "police" is meant "the regulation and government of a city or country, so far as regards the inhabitants." This includes all that relates to their rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities. What then do all these colonies say to their delegates but this—In relation to all such concerns as education, morality, religion, and the maintainance of justice and equity among the inhabitants, *hands off!* We the people of the several colonies reserve to ourselves the right of managing these concerns, by men authorized to act for us in our respective legislatures. On this condition, and on no other, would the colonies come into the Union: and to this day all the States claim these as reserved rights. Those who imagine that because the doctrine of States' rights has been abused,—there is no such thing—should be sent back to school. The fathers of our republic knew the danger of an overshadowing central power, though some were led more by their fears than others. Such a power is just as dangerous in the church, as all history proclaims, though some seem not to know it.

An able American lawyer, speaking of the Federal Constitution, says:—"The constitution, so far as it goes, is the highest evidence of the original public will; *but this instrument is only to be considered as the great outlines of the national compact*; and when it is either silent or doubtful in its construction, in any fundamental point, other evidence of the original public will is admissible, and must be resorted to for determining its construction, or supplying its deficiencies." On a little reflection, every one must see that the constitution could not be more, and does not aim at being more, than is here described. It contains no more than a few necessary "outlines" of a government which was established to manage the general concerns of the Union; it leaves the "internal police" of the States, with all the important interests which it involves, to the States themselves; it has little or no influence on the inner life of the nation. The State governments are component parts of the American system of government. By leav-

ing to them the regulation of their internal police, the constitution leaves with them the care of religion, so far as any civil government can take care of it. Hence, before we decide the question now before us, we must look into the constitutions and laws of the several States. Here we use first a volume published in the year 1817, which contains the constitutions of all the State which then existed. We begin with that State which makes the most decided acknowledgment of the Christian religion.

NORTH CAROLINA.—The 33d section of her constitution is in these words: "That no person who denies the being of a God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom or safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit, in the civil department of this State"

MARYLAND.—In the bill of rights prefixed to her constitution, it is declared: "That it is the duty of every man to worship Almighty God in such a manner as he thinks most acceptable to him, all persons professing the Christian religion are equally entitled to protection in their religious belief, * * * the legislature may in their discretion lay a general and equal tax for the support of the Christian religion, leaving to each individual the power of appointing the payment over of the money collected from him, to the support of any particular place of worship or minister, or for the benefit of the poor of his own denomination, or for the poor in general of any particular county." (There is quite as much of the Puritan in these two constitutions as in any that follows.)

NEW HAMPSHIRE.—Her constitution declares: "That morality and piety rightly grounded on evangelical principles, will give the best and greatest security to government."

MASSACHUSETTS having declared "That it is the right and the duty of all men in society, publicly and at stated seasons to worship the Supreme Being, the great creator and preserver of the universe," her constitution goes on to say, that "the happiness of a people and the good order and preservation of civil government essentially depend on piety, religion and morality."

NEW YORK AND SOUTH CAROLINA.—The constitutions of these States evince such a concern for the "Gospel"—the "service of God," and the "care of souls," that all ministers of religion are excluded from certain offices of profit or trust, for the reason that they ought to be wholly devoted to their appropriate work. The reason is a good one; still it does not appear why loose-footed clergymen might not be permitted to hold offices, and thrust both their hands into the treasury, as well as other "loose fellows."

PENNSYLVANIA.—The constitution of this State provides that, "No person who acknowledges the being of a God, and a state of future rewards and punishments, shall, on account of his religious sentiments, be disqualified to hold any office or place of profit or trust

under this commonwealth." (Are not those who do not thus acknowledge, disqualified?)

GEORGIA.—Her constitution provides that no person in this State shall be deprived of the inestimable privilege of worshiping God in a manner most agreeable to his own conscience.

The original constitutions of Connecticut and Virginia are small affairs, covering from about four to six pages octavo. In Virginia ministers of the gospel are, or were, excluded from being members of the legislature; but, we presume, that if a clergyman were excommunicated for any such offence as theft or drunkenness, and so had commenced the trade of politics, his disability would be removed. Ohio, Tennessee, and perhaps some other States, declare in their constitutions that, "every man has a natural, inalienable (or indefeasible) right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience." Fifty years ago or more, a great ado was made about this. The denial of the being of a God could not have shocked some people more. It was paraded as a triumphant argument that our government is so heathenish or corrupt that no Christian man should have anything to do with it except to testify against it. It was asked, "Is not the word of God and not conscience the rule? Does not conscience often dictate what is wrong? Can men have a *right* to do *wrong*? Away with it! it is not according to the teaching of Lord Warristown and the Marquis of Argyle." Well, honest old William Findley, who, after serving some years in the Legislature of Pennsylvania, was honored with a seat in Congress, while he admits that the language may not be the most happy, asks, if any man should be compelled to worship God according to the dictates of the conscience of any other man, or set of men? To provide against this, he alleges, is all that was intended; and every unprejudiced person must see that this was all. This, and nothing but this, would be its "legal effect"—as the lawyers say.

Let us now take a hasty view of the "internal police;" that is, "the regulation and government of the different States, so far as regards the inhabitants." These governments are all recognized in the Federal Constitution; they belong to the system of government adopted by the United States; without them the General Government would be very deficient; every State has a "reserved right" under the Federal Constitution, to make and administer such laws as may be judged necessary for the peace, safety and happiness of its people, provided they do not conflict with the principles of that constitution. No Christian institution is more essential to the preservation of the life and power of godliness among a people, than the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath. To it our attention will be confined. How do the States treat it in their legislation? Kingsbury is again our authority. And here we give the pre-eminence to—

SOUTH CAROLINA.—"Whereas there is nothing more acceptable to God than the true and sincere worship and service of him, according to his holy will, and that the holy keeping of the Lord's day is a

principal part of the true service of God, which in many places of this Province is so much profaned and neglected by disorderly persons :

"Be it therefore enacted, &c., That all and every person whatsoever, shall, on every Lord's day, apply themselves to the observation of the same, by exercising themselves thereon in the duties of piety and true religion, publicly and privately; and having no reasonable or lawful excuse, on every Lord's day shall resort to their parish church, or some other parish church, or some meeting or assembly of religious worship," &c. Worldly labor, &c., is forbidden in following sections—the working of slaves or servants is forbidden. This law is Puritanical enough. It was passed in 1712, and is represented as still in force; but, as it often fires with both civil and ecclesiastical statutes, after a few years perhaps few people knew that it was on the statute-book.

NORTH CAROLINA.—The first section of an "Act for the more effectual suppression of vice and immorality," is as follows; "That all and every person or persons whatsoever, shall on the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday, carefully apply themselves to the duties of piety and religion"—tradesmen, artificers, planters, laborers, &c., are then forbidden to follow their worldly employments, or to perform any labor on the Sabbath, (works of necessity or charity only excepted)."

VERMONT.—"Considering that in every community some portion of time ought to be set apart for relaxation from worldly labors and employments, and devoted to the social worship of Almighty God, and the attainment of religious and moral instruction, which are in the highest degree promotive of the peace, happiness and prosperity of the people, therefore—

"SEC. 1. *It is hereby enacted, &c.*, That the first day of the week shall be kept and observed by the good people of this State, as a Sabbath, holy day, or day of rest from secular labors and employments; nor shall any person or persons on that day exercise any secular labor, business or employment, except such as necessity and acts of charity shall require." Passed 1797.

The prohibitory part of the laws of the other New England States is much the same.

New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, in their laws forbid all servile labor or working, all traveling by land or water, "all worldly business whatsoever on the Christian Sabbath or first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, (works of necessity or charity only excepted)."

MARYLAND.—"No person whatsoever shall do any bodily labor, or work on the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday, and no person having children, servants or slaves, shall command or willingly suffer any of them to do any manner of labor or work on the Lord's day, (works of necessity or charity only excepted)."

VIRGINIA.—Substantially the same as Maryland.

GEORGIA.—The preamble to her law is nearly verbatim with the South Carolina preamble. Her first section requires all persons to attend public worship. The prohibitory part is much the same as in the laws of Maryland, South Carolina, &c,

FLORIDA does not treat the Sabbath with neglect.

KENTUCKY AND MISSOURI,—Their laws are much the same as the laws of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Missouri forbids courts to sit on the Sabbath.

OHIO, INDIANA, MICHIGAN, TENNESSEE, MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA.—All these States have laws protecting the Sabbath similar to many of those which have been copied.

ARKANSAS “Requests justices of the peace and other civil officers to take special notice and bring to justice, all offenders of the laws of this territory providing for the keeping of the Sabbath.”

ILLINOIS forbids disturbing the peace and good order of society by labor or amusement on the Sabbath.

LOUISIANA.—No law relating to the Sabbath has been found. She is “alone in her glory.”

An observation or two on the constitutions and laws of the States may not now be out of place.

1. Permitted and authorized by the Federal Constitution, according to their own request, to regulate their own “internal police,” or “manage their own civil and religious affairs,” we here see how they have exercised their “reserved right.”

2. If some of these States are now engaged in a wicked rebellion, it is not because of any comparative defect in their constitutions or laws so far as religion is concerned. And if the people of any or all of the rebel States are less religious, less moral, less intelligent than the people of the North, it is not because, in their legislation, they have shown less regard for “piety and the sincere service of God.” Compared with the other States, it is not true that they have ignored the religion of Christ. We here feel ourselves called on to remark that, whether in the Church or in the State, unless the heart of the people is kept sound, the best constitutions and laws will avail little. In the Church, those who rely solely on constitutions and ecclesiastical rules to preserve purity and orthodoxy—and in the State, those who rely solely on the constitution and laws for the preservation of liberty, are equally unwise.

3. The more recent laws of some of the States, or of the States more recently organized, do not speak so strongly on the importance of piety and religion, and the value of the Sabbath, as the laws of several of the older States. Are we to infer from this that piety is on the decline among us? If so, may not the fault lie somewhere else than in the government? If a loose public sentiment has begun to prevail and to effect the making and the administration of the laws, may not the churches have failed in their duty? The question deserves serious consideration; and better give it due attention than to be always harping on the faults of the government. It is very com-

fortable to many hearers of the gospel to sit, Sabbath after Sabbath, and listen while the Government is getting a terrible flagellation from the pulpit. It saves them the pain and trouble of thinking on their own sins against the Lord their God. The Government, so far as constitutions and laws are concerned, has done all for the cause of religion that can reasonably be expected. It is not the Nation or the State; it is the church, the ministry, that are put in trust with the Gospel, with all its reforming and purifying influences. Let us labor to purify society—the source (under God) from which the power of the Government proceeds—if we would wish to see the government more fully administered on Christian principles. This is the way in which ministers and churches are to save their country; and there never was a time when there was a louder call on them to be up and doing than at the present moment.

But we have something additional to say on the question which was proposed at the outset. The Constitution of the United States recognizes the common law. The Common law rules in our Courts, except in so far as it may be modified by special statutes. No lawyer, it is believed, will dispute this. It is the law of the land. It is a part of the system of government adopted by the United States. Let us hear Blackstone, the great—in some sort, the authorized expounder of the Common law.

He gives the general signification of law thus—"A rule of action dictated by a superior being." He teaches that "man considered as a creature is necessarily under the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being;" and that, "as man depends absolutely on his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature."—"The law of nature being co-eval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is, of course superior to any other. It is binding all over the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this. * * * And if our reason were always—as in our first ancestor before his transgression—clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudices, unimpaired by disease or intemperance, the task," (of discovering by reason what the law of nature directs) "would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But now every man finds the contrary in his own experience; that his nature is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error. * * * This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of divine Providence, which * * * hath been pleased, at sundry times and in divers manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered, we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found in the Holy Scriptures. These precepts when revealed are found, upon comparison, to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend, in all their consequences, to man's felicity. * * * Upon these two foundations—the

law of nature and the law of revelation—depend all human laws; that is no human law should be suffered to cotradict them.”

Thus far Blackstone. Any lawyer can show the reader in what part of his commentaries these selections will be found. But let us see if he is sustained by American authorities. Thus said Chief Justice Story, in his inaugural address at Harvard Institute:—

“One of the most beautiful boasts of our municipal jurisprudence is, that Christianity is a part of the common law, from which it seeks the sanction of its rights, and by which it endeavors to regulate its doctrines. And the boast is as true as it is beautiful. There never has been a period in which the common law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundation. It pronounces illegal every contract offensive to its morals. It recognizes with profound humility its holidays and festivals, and obeys them as *‘dies nonjuridici.’* It still attaches to persons believing in its divine authority the highest degree of competency as witnesses,” &c.

Bishop M’Ilvaine, of Ohio, President of Kenyon College, in a Thanksgiving sermon having quoted the above remarks of Judge Story, goes on to say:—

“Here, then, is one of our subjects for thankfulness to-day. We pause not to ask how far these truths are all sustained in the *practice* of the Government, * * we are thankful that our system of government, our common law, and administration of justice, were instituted by men having wisdom to see how entirely the liberties and interests of this nation are dependent on the teaching and the keeping of the truths of Christianity; yea, and we are thankful that we have still the eminent men, the official interpreters of our laws, who are not ashamed to maintain, unblinded by the new light which has recently been thrown on this subject, that Christianity is the legally recognized religion of our Government.”

The “new light” of which he speaks, is the light which was shed on the subject by infidels, and Sabbath-haters, and popularity-seeking politicians, during the discussion of the Sabbath Mail question.

Having made the statement which we have given, he proves it more at large in an appendix, thus: “That Christianity is the religion of this country, and as such is recognized in the whole structure of its government, and lies at the foundation of our civil and political institutions; in other words, that Christianity, as really as Republicanism, is part and parcel of our laws is evident,” &c. He then proceeds to cite many of the laws which we have already noticed, and also the opinions of Chief Justice Parsons, of Massachusetts, and Chancellor Kent, of New York, in delivering the opinions of the Supreme Courts of their respective States in certain cases. These courts agree with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, that, in refusing to form what is technically called an establishment of religion, neither the Constitution of the United States nor of any of the States, repudiated Christianity—which is part and parcel of the common law of the States and of the United States—is the recognized

religion of the land, and the only sure foundation on which we can place our free institutions.

In conclusion, we say,

1. As the common law which is recognized in the Constitution is not the common law of France, or Spain, or China, but of England, which our ancestors brought over with them to this country, and was in use and in force in the colonies from their origin—and which, as belonging to their “internal police,” they would not permit the general government to touch—just so when the Constitution declares that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” it is not the religion of the Hindoo, or the Turk, or the Mormon prophet which is intended, but the religion of the Bible, the Christian religion; which our ancestors professed on the other side of the water and brought over with them into this land wherein we now dwell; for the free exercise of which many of them left their country and encountered the perils of the wilderness; which was recognized in the constitutions and laws of the colonies and for the sake of which the Continental Congress, during the war of the Revolution, adopted measures to obtain a supply of Bibles, importation from England having been suspended. On a little reflection, perhaps every candid man will admit that it is putting no unnatural or forced construction on the language of the Constitution to say that at least one reason why it prohibits Congress from passing any law respecting a religious establishment, was that such establishments do always more or less interfere with the “free exercise of religion.”

2. The best works of men are imperfect. Our fathers were thankful that under the care of Divine Providence, the labors and travails of the Statesmen of their day—many of whom are still of precious memory—resulted in the establishment of such a happy system of government. We, too, should be thankful. Good men should take care how they speak of the imperfections of the Constitution, lest they give encouragement to those “who are given to change.” In the North as well as elsewhere there are men ready to lay their hands on the Constitution; they are looking on and ready to lay hold of every word or deed which they can turn to their advantage. They care not for civil or religious liberty, if they can only obtain office, honor, power, and last though not least, money. Such men are always ready to press themselves forward when Constitutions are to be revised; and by the trickery of party, they too often succeed. It is much easier to throw things into a chaotic state than to find the men who will be able to bring light out of darkness—order out of confusion.

3. Infidels and godless politicians have labored to create the impression on the public mind that the patriots of the Revolution, and the founders of our government, were men of no religion, or indeed, skeptics and scoffers like themselves; and christian orators and writers have sometimes been too ready to adopt a similar language. It has been alleged that in the Convention which framed the Constitu-

tion, the proposal of Dr. Franklin to have morning prayers, was rejected; and he is represented as having said, that but a few of the members thought that prayers were necessary. What he may have somewhere said we cannot tell; but it is possible that but few of the members thought that there was a special call to engage in prayer, for the reasons which Franklin had offered. They may have been more hopeful.

Be this as it may, it has been our life-long impression, that, as a body, the men who framed our constitution, believed in an over-ruling Providence, and were far from despising prayers. And we see no reason to change our opinion. Goodrich, in his revised and improved history of the United States, page 241, after remarking that in consequence of difficult questions which had arisen, the Convention was about to adjourn without accomplishing its object, when Dr. Franklin, then more than sixty years of age, made a speech, in which he urged that they should have morning prayers, goes on to say:—“This hint being well received, prayers were thenceforth made every day before proceeding to business. From this time there was more and more harmony in their deliberations, till at length the Constitution was matured and signed by the members. With this Kingsbury fully agrees, and adds that, at another time, Franklin declared that he believed in the providence of God as governing the world; that the constitution was influenced, guided and governed by that Omnipotent, Omniscient and beneficent Ruler, in whom all inferior spirits live and move, and have their being; and public prayers to God, by national bodies, were appropriate and necessary.”

4. Under our present system of Government, (if we only take good care to raise up and employ the right kind of men to administer it, which to our detriment, we have too much neglected,) we may be as pious and Godly a people as ever existed on the face of the globe. We have the Bible and Sabbaths, and Sabbath privileges, and sanctuaries. No temporal or spiritual tyrant can forbid us to read the Bible and apply the powers of our minds to find out the meaning of its contents. And we can seek the Divine Spirit to enlighten our minds and give us a good understanding. And what a blessing we may be to those who are sitting in darkness! We may send the Bible and the living teacher to the ends of the earth. What is to hinder? Let us take care not to neglect our first and great duty, our first and great concern, in these exciting and troublous times. The humble, pious Christian who prays to God for his own soul, for his family, for the Church of God, for the preservation of the Government, is worth more to his country than many suppose, though he may know little about the war or its causes.

Does the Constitution of the United States Sanction Slavery?

Perhaps it does not. We were early taught and have always believed that it does not, and we yet see no reason to change our opinion. Let us examine. No subtle reasonings are necessary. The necessary inferences from a few unquestionable facts, it is believed, will afford a satisfactory answer to the question.

The Constitution was framed in the year 1787. In the same year the famous "ordinance" was adopted by the Congress of the United States, prohibiting slavery in the territory north-west of the Ohio river—declaring that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, should exist in that vast territory which is now covered by the States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. In pursuance of this ordinance, the constitutions of these States were framed. The constitution of Ohio adopted the prohibition almost in the very words of the ordinance. According to Mr. Benton, the ordinance was originally from the pen of Mr. Jefferson; and it was adopted under the influence, and with the approbation of the very men who framed the constitution, or were active in procuring its adoption by their respective States. Now, if the constitution sanctions slavery, can there be anything imagined more inconsistent—no, self-contradictory is the proper word—than their conduct in this particular? With one breath, would they *sanction* slavery in the fundamental law of the land, with the next breath *sanction* an ordinance which forbade—what? the emigrants to this vast and inviting territory to enjoy a constitutional right—the right of removing with their negro property, if they had or chose to have such property, into a region over which the United States claimed exclusive jurisdiction?

Farthermore, the constitution was framed and afterwards adopted under the auspices of many of the very men who, but eleven years before, had, in the Declaration of Independence, appealed to the Searcher of hearts to witness their sincerity when they declared that "all men are created equal, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In the ordinance of 1787 as they were legislating for a territory over which the United States had entire control and jurisdiction, they showed the world that they meant to keep their oath. Have we become so familiar with the practice of making declarations lightly to suit the occasion or answer a purpose, without intending to abide by them, that we can hardly believe that men are, or ever were sincere in their most solemn acts?

The federal constitution simply leaves slavery as a matter to be dealt with and regulated by the several States in which it existed, without making the nation responsible for it; just as many other

important concerns are left to State jurisdiction, such as education, the punishment of crimes against the persons and property of men, morality, religion &c.

Precisely two years and five days after the Declaration of Independence, the "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union" were adopted by the original Thirteen States. In a preceding page we have seen, that the States reserved to themselves, the management of their "internal police." On no other condition would they enter the Union, and this condition was as strongly insisted on by the Northern as by the Southern States. But Union was regarded as an absolute necessity. The Articles of Confederacy therefore entirely ignore the subject of slavery, leaving it to the several States to do with it what seemed to them good. We have not been able to perceive the most remote allusion to it in the document. The Foreign Slave Trade was also passed without notice; though many, if not all, the States were more or less engaged in it. The reason of this was that the power of regulating trade and commerce was thought not to have been delegated to the United States, but reserved by the States as belonging to their "internal police." But, nine years afterwards, at the instance of the Legislature of Virginia, a convention was called to take into consideration the trade and commerce of the country;" in other words, to *revise the Federal system*. The power of regulating trade and commerce was now assumed by the United States, at the instance of the great State of Virginia. A new constitution—our present constitution, was the result. An article was inserted in it which empowered Congress to enact a law for the suppression of the Foreign Slave trade, from and after the year 1809. This, though, a step in the right direction, was in one respect, an unhappy step. Though it was a virtual condemnation of the Slave trade, and of slavery too—for, according to the common sense of mankind, the one cannot be condemned without involving the condemnation of the other—it yet, for the time being, amounted to an *authoritative toleration* of that odious traffic. But, let us not be too censorious; for, when all the circumstances of the case are candidly considered, we may well doubt whether the wisest and best of us, would do much better if we were placed in their situation. Though it is to be lamented, and was lamented by many at the time, that the slave trade was not prohibited at once, it still shows that the statesmen of that day were ready to do all that their situation and circumstances permitted to prevent the increase of slavery. The doctrine of the declaration of Independence was still dear to them.

We have said that the Federal constitution leaves slavery as a matter to be dealt with and regulated by the several States in which it existed, without making the general Government responsible for it. Let us illustrate.

Four men enter into a business partnership. One is a Presbyterian, another a Methodist, a third a Baptist, the fourth of no religion, though a decent man of the world. There is an understanding, an

implied contract, which is just as binding as if it was written, that the firm is not to interfere with the religion of any of its members, but each one is free to hold his own religious opinions, and spend such a portion of his time and money as he may think proper, in attending his religious meetings and contributing to charitable and benevolent objects, provided he does not neglect his duty as a member of the firm. Does the Presbyterian sanction the religion of the Methodist? Does the Methodist endorse the religion of the Presbyterian? Does the firm give its sanction to immersion? And if the man of no religion chuses to take a ride now and then on the Sabbath for recreation, is the firm accountable for his conduct, provided they do not neglect to reason with him in a friendly manner on proper occasions, and endeavor to show him his error? Certainly not.

Now, what was the fact when the constitution was framed? There were States in which slavery did not exist, or which had adopted measures for its abolition. There were other States in which it did exist, and which had adopted no such measures; though it is a well known fact that many of their leading statesmen bewailed its existence, and were ready to adopt any feasible plan for its removal. Besides this, documentary evidence could be produced going to show that, a generation afterwards, many reflecting and intelligent Christians in the South regarded it as an evil, and longed to see some steps taken for its removal. A union of these States was thought to be necessary for the peace, security and prosperity of the whole. By some a tacit understanding or implied contract that the General Government would not interfere with slavery where it existed, but leave it to State jurisdiction as the "peculiar institution" of some of the States, was thought not to be sufficient. Hence, a very few sentences were introduced to secure these States from such interference; though it is a well known fact that a language was carefully selected which it was thought did not recognize the right of "property in man," or render the General Government responsible for the "peculiar institution." Hence what are called the "compromises" of the constitution. They reach no farther. Consistently with them, and without violating them, we may speak our minds. Northerners and Southerners might always speak their minds freely with respect to slavery as a moral, social and political evil, provided they did so in the spirit of meekness and love, just as the members of the firm of which we have spoken, might reason with each other in reference to their peculiar tenets. And had the ministers and churches and leading men in the North as well as the South, spoken out and reasoned with their slaveholding brethren on the evils of slavery, before noisy men and ambitious demagogues had time to sow jealousies and create discord between the two sections, they might have sustained the anti-slavery men in the South; schemes of emancipation might have been introduced in at least some of the slave States; it might have been better with us to-day, and less guilt rested on the North. But

slavery had its apologists and patrons in the North; and in the great Union meetings in New York a year or two ago, some were ready to take the ground that the constitution sanctions slavery, and that those who speak against it are unfriendly to the constitution.

About the year 1820, Missouri applied for admission as a State, with a pro-slavery clause in her constitution. Two or three times a majority of votes were given in Congress against her admission. Now, if the Federal constitution sanctions slavery, these votes were in direct opposition to it. But in Benton's history of the contest, I have not been able to see the least evidence that any speaker appealed to the constitution to prove the right of the State to come into the Union with her "peculiar institution." Why? Because pro-slavery men had not yet been taught to put any such construction on it as would make it serve their purpose. But men became wearied with the contest—some were alarmed. It was settled by "compromise," under the leadership of the great compromiser. The State was admitted; but slavery was not to exist in the Louisiana purchase north of a certain line. Well do I remember how the intelligence of this "compromise" was received by a good old Associate Reformed minister—he shook his head, but said not a word. He saw, what I then did not see, that the opposers of slavery were beginning to give ground.

About the year 1830, a few "abolitionists," (as they called themselves to exclude from their communion the great body of anti-slavery men in the country) of the Garrison, Parker and Phillips school, who disliked the South quite as much as they disliked slavery, began to declaim against the constitution as a pro-slavery document. (It is admitted that before that time some good men had protested against the constitution because, in their judgment, it sanctioned slavery, but afterwards many of them virtually admitted that they had been mistaken.) The far-seeing Calhoun saw his opportunity: he took the ground that the constitution sanctions slavery; he would "force slavery as an issue upon the North." Southern nullifiers, and disunionists, and slaveholders sought the law at his mouth and began to insist that they had a constitutional right to remove with their slaves into any of the territories of the United States, and that to deny them its exercise was a grievous wrong, an intolerable oppression. And verily if the constitution sanctions slavery, who that allows himself a moment of cool reflection will say that they were very far wrong, or that they have no colorable pretext for their rebellion? It will not be denied, I presume, that the "abolitionists," (I mean that inconsiderable body of men in the North who cared little about slavery as a moral evil, but were exercised about it as a political evil,) and the Southern pro-slavery men fought for some time in Congress a common battle, but for different ulterior objects,—the abolitionists, that they might put down the constitution, and get rid of the South as well as slavery; the Southern pro-slavery men, that they might destroy the Union and preserve slavery. At length the time came to "let slip the dogs of war." But whatever may be the final issue, up

to this time the moral consequences of the present unhappy war, have been against the South, so far as her "peculiar institution" is concerned. It is filling the North with "abolitionists," a name in which all the friends of the rights and liberties of mankind must glory, when it is applied, as it now is, to all anti-slavery men.

If the church—if any church holds slavery to be a moral evil—a sin—the sin of oppression, and testifies against it as such, and at the same time believes that the constitution sanctions slavery, sanctions a sin, a grievous wrong, and oppression; with what consistency can she allow her members to seek and hold office under the Government, and swear time and again to support the constitution? Do they not solemnly bind themselves in the presence of the Almighty to maintain a grievous sin? Such a procedure may be agreeable to some modern system of ethics, but plain, straight-forward men, will—*not know what to think.*

One word more. In his "Observations," honest old Wm. Findley gives, as a reason why he voted against a certain bill in Congress, that "the constitution did not recognize slaves."

In his "Thirty Years' View," (Vol. 2, pp 696) Senator Benton, after recording a resolution offered by Mr. Calhoun, denouncing the enactment of any law "which would deprive the citizens of any of the States of this Union, from emigrating with their property into any of the territories," goes on to remark,—"*ostensibly the complaint was, that the emigrant from the slave State, was not allowed to carry his slave with him—in reality it was that he was not allowed to carry the State law along with him to protect his slave.*" (That is, to secure his slave to him.) "Placed in that light, which is the true one, the complaint is absurd; presented as applying to a piece of property, instead of the law of the State, it becomes specious—has deluded whole communities, and has led to rage, and resentment and hatred of the Union." This was the "issue," which Calhoun sought to "force on the North." He would have the Federal constitution to carry slavery under its wing wherever it goes, instead of freedom. This was the proximate cause of the rebellion. The constitution "does not recognize slaves, or property" in human beings.

If slavery, that "foul blot on our escutcheon," were entirely removed from the land, as from present indications we may hope it will, the constitution, *just as it is*, might be the constitution of a free and happy republic, not one of whose inhabitants wears the galling chain, or trembles at the crack of the overseer's whip. A very few of its provisions will have become obsolete; that is all; and the future historian will be able to explain them to the high satisfaction of succeeding generations. The lecturer on moral and political science in our schools will find an occasion to show his pupils that there has been some real progress. We want to hear nothing said about revising that venerable document which has come down to us as the fruit of the labors, and contentings, and sacrifices and sufferings of a body of *tried* patriots, whose names will be had in honor as long

as there shall be on earth a succession of men who will know how to appreciate the blessings of civil and religious liberty; and from an age, when, in proportion to our numbers, there was more disinterested patriotism, more of the true fear of God, and more of every sterling virtue, than we are afraid is now to be found in our land. Who would most likely be employed in the responsible work of revising and remodeling the constitution? Has not experience largely proved that too many of them would be men of no suitable qualifications, though able to procure seats in the convention by "taking the stump," and making what the stump speakers (among themselves) facetiously called "rabble, rousing speeches," in some Presidential campaigns, which, in former years, had well nigh convulsed the country.

Here we quote a precept contained in the 2nd verse and 21st chapter of Exodus, and follow it with the remarks of Thomas Scott, the Commentator, premising that it does not belong to the *moral law* which God revealed to men as the rule of his obedience in all ages, and in all states of society, but to the civil code which he gave to the nation of Israel.

"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh year he shall go out free for nothing."

"The Israelites sometimes sold themselves or their children through poverty; magistrates sold some persons for their crimes; and creditors were in certain cases allowed to sell their insolvent debtors. In these ways slavery had been, or would soon be, introduced among them; even that of their brethren, as well as strangers; and God did not see good, in the *judicial law*, totally to prohibit this, and several other things, which are not agreeable to the perfect demands of the *moral law*, which is the standard of every action whether right or wrong in itself. In the government of nations, legislators must judge how far it is practicable, expedient, or conducive to the grand ends of magistracy, to require *all* that is right and forbid *all* that is wrong, under *penal sanctions*; and in this respect Israel was like other nations. Indeed, the moral and judicial laws were enacted by the same Law-giver and co-incided, as far as infinite wisdom saw it to be conducive to the grand ends in view; but as they were intended for such distinct purposes, they must in many things vary. The *moral law* commanded everything spiritually good in the utmost perfection, and tolerated nothing wrong in the smallest degree; but the sentence of it is reserved to that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. The *judicial law* commanded nothing morally bad, and forbade nothing morally good; but, as sentence according to it would be pronounced by the civil magistrate, it did not insist on the same perfection; * * * it had also respect to the situation, character, and peculiar circumstances of the nation to be governed; and supposed the existence of some evils which could not be eradicated without a constant miracle; and provided against their effects. This distinction, carefully attended to, will account for many things seem-

ingly tolerated in the Mosaic law, which are condemned in the New Testament, and not only there, but in the moral law of loving our neighbors as ourselves. They are not *sanctioned*, but *merely suffered* because of the hardness of the people's hearts, or on some account to prevent worse consequences. Slavery was almost universal in the world, and though, like wars, it always proceeded of evil, and was generally evil in itself, yet the wisdom of God deemed it better to regulate than to prohibit it; yet we should not judge of the practice itself by these *judicial regulations*, but by *the law of love*." Thus far Scott; now a few observations:—

1. To *tolerate*, that is, to bear with, to suffer, when the word is used in reference to government and legislation, is to suffer or bear with that which in itself is regarded as an evil, but which, under existing circumstances, the attempt to remove might be attended with "worse consequences." It is viewed as a disease in the body politic, but suffered; just as men often suffer a disease to exist in the body natural, in the hope of keeping it under by gentle means, rather than resort to a violent remedy which might endanger the life of the patient. It is thus that Scott uses the word.

2. "The judicial law commanded nothing morally bad, and forbade nothing morally good; but, as sentence, according to it would be pronounced by the civil magistrate, it did not insist on the same perfection." It "co-incided" with the moral law only so far as infinite wisdom saw it to be conducive to the grand ends in view. If, therefore, the judicial law, though given by God himself, did not require all that is right, but tolerated some things which the moral law forbade, let us see that we do not *demand* absolute perfection in the constitution and laws of our country. If a civil law does not *conflict* with the moral law, but is right as far as it goes, we may yield it a conscientious obedience.

3. The judicial law did not *sanction*, it only *suffered*, many things which were not according to the moral law, or did not come up to its demands. Just so the Constitution of the United States merely suffers slavery to exist in some of the States, leaving the management of it to themselves as a part of their "internal police."

4. If "we are not to judge of the practice itself (that is of slavery) according to these judicial regulations," in the law of Moses, the civil code of the Jewish nation, "but by the law of love," so we are not to judge of slavery according to any system or code of human laws, but by the moral law which God revealed to man as the rule of his obedience. It is with slavery under its moral aspect, or as a question of morals that ministers and churches have to do, and in judging of it, the appeal is to be to "the law and the testimony." The civil legislator may think that, in the present "situation, character, and peculiar circumstances" of a nation, it is better to *tolerate* slavery; but this does not make it the duty of the church to *tolerate*—within her pale that which is condemned by the "law of love."

5. In some things, Christ at once set the morals of the church in

advance of the judicial law ; but his laws must have a far more extensive influence over the minds and the conduct of men, before we may expect that the civil laws of any nation will "co-incide" with the moral law, as we may hope they will when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord. Some progress has already been made. Under the benign influence of Christianity, polygamy has been banished, the civil law would not permit parents to sell their children into slavery, nor the debtor to be sold as a servant or slave—though all this was *tolerated* in the judicial law. Before we demand that the constitution and the laws of our country should be greatly in advance of the judicial law which is contained in the Bible, let us be sure that we have been laboring, and are still laboring assiduously to purify society and thus create a demand for better laws. If we would reform the Government, this is just what we have to do as Christians and Christian ministers.

6. We are sorry to see occasional articles in papers, some of which are edited by well-meaning men, holding some such language as this—Slavery is national—it requires a special statute to prevent its extension into new territory. They are playing into the hands of the Confederates, and *destructives*, though many of them mean not so. *Slavery* is not national, but *liberty* is. Every statute or ordinance designed to set limits to slavery was adopted under the Constitution, and in accordance with its spirit and intention. Slavery is the "peculiar institution" of some of the States. So they themselves have named, have christened it, as they had a "right" to do ; and let no abolitionist "interfere." The name is both proper and expressive. For many years the "peculiar institution" acted entirely on the defensive, and plead only to be let alone. Lately, it has become aggressive, and aims at making itself national. Nothing will serve it but to go where it pleases, carrying with it the "local laws" on which it depends for its existence.

7. The rebellion is fast changing that "situation and character," and those "peculiar circumstances of the nation," which induced the wisest and best statesmen of a former age to judge it expedient to *tolerate* slavery in some of the States.

8. Though our nation is now enduring sore chastisement from the hand of God, yet we are not to doubt that he has wise and merciful ends in view. Let us see that we humble ourselves under his mighty hand and confess our sins which have exposed us to the rod of his displeasure ; and be fervent in our supplications to him, that he would bring us out of the furnace like silver which has been purified seven times.

THE END.

We here append the Speech of Dr. Franklin, to which allusion has been made : 9 JU 64

SPEECH OF DR. FRANKLIN.

"*Mr. President*—The small progress we have made after four or five weeks close attendance and continual reasonings with each other, our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many *noes* as *ayes*, is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since, we have been running all about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government, and examined the different forms of those republics, which, having been originally formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist: and we viewed modern states all round Europe, but find none of their constitutions suitable to our circumstances. In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were, in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for divine protection! Our prayers, sir, were heard: and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend?—or do we imagine we no longer need its assistance. I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men!* And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel: we shall be divided by our little partial local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest.

I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."