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THE
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TO

CALHOUN.

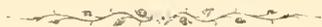
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“This was the noblest Roman of them all.”—SHAKESPEARE.

COLUMBIA, S. C.:
RICHARD L. BRYAN.

1857.

PALMER'S DISCOURSE.



A Discourse on the occasion of the death of Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN. Delivered April 21, 1850, in the Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina, by B. M. PALMER, Pastor.

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.”—DAN. iv: 17.

Whenever public calamities befall a people, an irresistible impulse prompts the ready recognition of that Ordaining Power, without whose concurrence not even a sparrow falleth to the ground. The foundation of all religion lies in the belief of God's existence, and of His providential control in the government of the universe: “He that cometh unto God must believe that HE IS, and that HE IS A REWARDER of such as diligently seek Him.” Hence, even among the nations that sit in darkness, who grope in the twilight of the religion of nature, or whose only guide are the distorted and traditional fragments of an original revelation, natural conscience gives a voice to the dispensations of Providence. Events, especially those of a painful nature, are supposed to contain intimations of the Divine will; and oracles are sought which shall infallibly interpret the meaning which is wrapt within these mysterious symbols. If the angel of death shakes pestilence from its baleful wing in its unseen flight over towns and cities; or if gaunt famine stalks through the land, snatching the scanty food from the mouths of famished multitudes; or if war, with his iron heel, leaves his track in blood and woe upon deserted homes and desolated hearths; Pagan altars at once smoke with bleeding victims, and costly hecatombs are offered to appease the anger of the deities, which flames out in such dire misfortunes. Nor is this to be set to the account of merely superstitious fears. The cruel and painful rites may, indeed, be those which superstition prompts; but the first spring of all must be found in the depths of that religious nature which is man's highest characteristic, and of which superstition itself is at once the corruption and the sign. It is the instinct of man's religious constitution, which, unbidden, seeks for the God who implanted it; it is the natural homage which reason, blinded as it is, pays to God and Providence; it is the mournful confession of

guilt and sin which the tortured conscience of the transgressor is compelled to make. But it is in a Christian country, upon which the light of divine truth has shined, where the character of God and the nature and perfection of his government are unfolded, and where men have been clearly taught the relations which they sustain to him who is their ruler as well as creator, that the fullest recognition of a superintending Providence is to be expected. Nor are we disappointed. When sudden affliction falls upon a Christian community, sending a common grief into many dwellings, the spontaneous impulses of the heart, quickened by the Spirit, and directed by the word of God, draw men together into the sanctuary, and bow them in a common worship at a common throne of grace. If a Christian nation bends beneath the weight of a general calamity, the universal sentiment of religion finds a voice when the chief magistrate summons us to the house of prayer. The hesitating sceptic who wastes his life in scrupulously weighing the evidence of Scripture in the ill-adjusted balance of his own warped and blinded reason, stands awed at the voice of God speaking in some startling judgment from "the clouds and darkness" that "are round about his throne." The philosopher who talks with a sneer of Providence, while he coolly discourses about second causes, and the uniform laws of nature, gives up for the moment his atheistic speculations, as a religious instinct occasionally reminds him that he who first ordained these laws must continually and directly administer them. Thus, in seasons of general distress, those whose religion does not rise above the level of mere theism—and it is for a lamentation that in a Christian land, especially among public men, there should be many such—these mingle with the devout followers of Jesus Christ, who own him as a Saviour from sin, and render a public homage to that God who is the author both of nature and of grace.

It is this religious sentiment which has drawn together this unusual assembly to-day. The nation has been bereaved; a great light has been extinguished—the voice of a wise and experienced counsellor has been hushed by death. Especially has the blow fallen upon *us*. The distinguished statesman, whose removal though late seemed yet to be premature, was the immediate representative of *our* wishes and of *our* opinions in the council chamber of the nation. He was the man of our pre-eminent choice in the present appalling juncture of our public affairs. His death, at all times a calamity to the whole republic, in the present crisis is felt to be a special affliction to that portion of this confederacy who looked with a confiding trust to his skill, to his experience, to his wisdom, and to his firmness, for a happy issue from our national embarrass-

ment. And the slumbering sentiment of religious dependence and obligation is suddenly awakened to a recognition of God in this dispensation of his providence. Therefore we are here: some few, perhaps, from an idle curiosity to learn how far the pulpit will venture upon political themes; but the great body of you, I am persuaded, from a sincere wish to give formal expression to the deep conviction of your hearts, that God reigns, and that his government should be acknowledged. I am not called, therefore, to waste breath with any who can see no special interposition of Heaven in the death of one who had already lived the usual term of human life, and whose enfeebled frame had long given no uncertain indications of approaching dissolution. There is an appointed time to all men upon the earth, and hence there are lessons to be deeply pondered when any are removed by God. But the times and circumstances of man's departure from life are frequently so ordered as to convey the most striking and solemn admonition to the living. This is emphatically true in the present case. It is not merely that one of the great men of this country is dead, that puts such gloom over your hearts—it is not merely that one whose wisdom and patriotism had for years been the boast of his State, that she is now dressed in the garments of mourning—it is that he died at such a time, when of all other periods he seemed to be most necessary to his country; this gives character to the event, and forces us to feel that God's hand is in it. My hearers, it is not to be concealed, and the pulpit may well now give utterance to the conviction, that we are, as a nation, in a most fearful and perilous crisis. The cords which, for three-fourths of a century, have bound together this growing and happy republic, are now strained to their utmost tension. Like a ship laboring in the storm, and suddenly grounded upon some treacherous shoal, every timber of this vast confederacy strains and groans under the pressure. Sectional jealousies, geographical divisions, the lust of political power, a bastard ambition which looks to personal aggrandizement rather than to the public weal, a reckless radicalism, which seeks for the subversion of all that is ancient and stable, and a furious fanaticism which drives on its ill-considered conclusions with utter disregard to the evils it engenders—all these combine to create a portentous crisis, the like of which was never known before, and which puts to a crucifying test the virtue, the patriotism, and the piety of the country.

To meet such a crisis, and to bear his country through it, no man seemed better fitted by character and by education than Mr. CALHOUN. With a comprehensiveness of mind capable of bringing all knowledge within his reach, with a power of analysis which sifted every subject to

the kernel, he had, for himself at least, reduced statesmanship to a science. His profound studies had gleaned from the pages of ancient history, and from the constitutions of other governments, principles which his sagacious mind enabled him to apply to all times and to all circumstances. With integrity of character which had stood unswayed amid the temptations of forty years of public service, and which the foetid breath of calumny, in an age given to detraction and slander, had not attempted even to soil, his opinion carried with it the authority which it is the prerogative of none but an honest man to wield. With a self-reliance and a firmness growing alike out of the consciousness of his abilities and of his integrity, he was able, in a crisis like the present, to stand alone, and, like the cliff in the midst of the ocean, to breast the utmost fury of the storm. Apart from this general preparation for the high trust committed to him, he was particularly armed for the existing struggle. Probably it is not too much to say, that of all the Statesmen of this country he had most studied the question which now threatens to divide us into two hostile nations. He had examined it statistically, politically, and morally, and brought all the power of his mighty intellect to understand it in its bearings and relations. To the right adjustment of it he had summoned all his energies; every other question being to his mind absorbed in this. With almost prophetic foresight he had cast his eagle glance athwart separating years, anticipating the crisis which is now before us, and had concentrated upon this period the resources of his genius and the accumulated treasures of his knowledge. The crisis came. With his feeble body, and borrowing the voice of another, he stands for the last time in the hall of debate, and gives his final warnings to the country—intimates that within the grasp of his penetrating and philosophic mind lay a plan by which in future time the country might be saved from faction and strife—and then dies—dies, his last counsels never uttered;—the laboring secret still locked up in his own bosom! Is there no Providence in the removal of such a man, at such a juncture? The cold and cheerless philosophy which can regard it as a common event, happening by fate, and devoid of all moral significance, is a philosophy which freezes the affections and congeals the emotions of the soul. But the religion which recognises in it the voice of a Supreme Power, and which asks with solemnity the meaning of such a dispensation, sends a glow to the heart, and bows the soul with docility and reverence before the teachings of God.

If, my hearers, you are assembled under convictions of this kind, you will not desire from me empty panygeric of the great man whose death

we deplore; still more would it shock your religious sensibilities were I to canvass the political themes which at this time divide man from man. We bow together before the inspired oracles of God, and seek the interpretation of this event as conveying a divine message to ourselves. I answer, therefore, in the language of an inspired prophet, that "this matter is by the decree of the watchers, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

Were I permitted to address the Congress of which our venerated statesman was a conspicuous member, I would deliver this message with emphasis to them. I would seek to remind them that government itself is an ordinance of God; that a special Providence was concerned in their election to rule a free and generous people; and that of necessity they must be held immediately responsible to God for their discharge of the solemn trust committed by him to them. As the veil is for a moment drawn aside which separates the throne of Jehovah from their view, I would echo the voice which seems to sound from that throne, "Give account of thy stewardship, for thou mayst no longer be steward." I would remind them that we all must "stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of the deeds done in the body;" that they can never merge their personal responsibility as men in their public character as rulers and lawgivers; that for all their plans, both good and evil—for all their words, fitly or unfitly spoken—for all their thoughts, whether honorable or disgraceful to those who cherish them, they must distinctly answer to the great God in that great day when all shall be tried by a just and holy standard. I would warn them against that consuming ambition, which, directed only to selfish and personal ends, eats like a cancer into the soul, and soon obliterates the last traces of honor, generosity, and patriotism in the breasts of public men. I would dissuade them from that intense devotion to party which shuts the country out of view, and forestalls that conciliation and mutual concession, without which they can neither be statesmen nor patriots. I would rebuke that bitterness of language, which not only mars the force and dignity of debate, but generates a malignity of feeling leading often to scenes of violence and brutality which put the nation to the blush. It is a part of the inspired description of the wickedness of men, that "the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Above all, I would exhort them that the rulers of a Christian people should have regard to that divine law, whose precepts are obeyed, and whose sanctions are acknowledged, in every hamlet through this broad land. I would teach that as personal religion is the surest guarantee of private virtue, so a Christian statesman, who fears

God and loves his fellow-men, will be the wisest in counsel, and the safest trustee of the rights of others. But the responsibility of addressing such words to the dignitaries of our land is not devolved upon me. I must turn to those lessons which this melancholy occasion suggests as pertinent to ourselves. Taking this death as specially ordered by Heaven at this juncture to teach important truths of universal application, we will place ourselves under the guidance of the text for the right understanding of its solemn import: "This matter is to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

I. *We are then, in the first place, distinctly taught, in the difficulties which now environ us as a people, to place our confidence not in an arm of flesh, but in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.*

The natural pride of the human mind always leads to overweening confidence in the resources of human wisdom and power. We are prone to content ourselves with a merely *speculative* recognition of a controlling Providence, and with this to satisfy the religious element of our nature, while we withhold that *practical* acknowledgment which the heart alone can give. It is but a dry inference of the understanding, a cold article of our creed, the mere dogma of our philosophy. It does not warm the heart; it does not inform the life, nor actuate the conduct; it does not nerve the strength in the hour of conflict, nor sustain the courage in the moment of darkness and defeat. Nothing but the profound conviction which comes forth from the hidden depths of the soul, and which is interwoven with all its emotions and secret thoughts, can ever shape the character of men, and influence their daily conduct. The effect of this practical atheism may often be traced in the disasters to which it leads. It provokes the Almighty to withdraw his protecting care, and to leave us for a season to the infatuation of our own counsels, if not, indeed, to chastise us with heavy strokes till his power and dominion are acknowledged. But laying out of view all Divine interposition, the natural influence of this practical atheism upon nations is most disastrous. In those trying emergencies which often arise, when human wisdom fails, when the passions of the multitude burst away from the control of those who have sought to inflame in order to use them, then reckless desperation succeeds by necessary re-action to this blind confidence. When human counsels cease to influence, and Divine counsels are not sought, what other result can there be, but that men should be borne headlong by the fury of their own passions, and riot for a season with the most entire abandonment of restraint. What is the history of revolutions and of civil wars but a commentary upon the atheism which does not practically recognise the presence of God nor the supreme authority of his law?

I have already alluded to the crisis now existing in our public affairs. This is not the place, nor am I the person, to describe its origin or to detail its progress. But in every aspect it is most fearful to contemplate. The question before us is simply that of national existence. There are, it seems to me, but three issues into which this crisis can possibly resolve itself. The first is the perpetuation of this Union as it now exists, under the shadow of the Constitution which our fathers framed for us; the second is the peaceful dismemberment of this great confederation, by the general consent of the whole; the third is the violent disruption of our political bonds amid scenes of blood and strife, from which the mind recoils with horror. As to the first of these, it is the issue for which we all ardently pray and sincerely labor. There is not one who has entertained the idea of the dissolution of this Union but as a last and most necessary resort, and there is not one who does not earnestly desire that such an alternative may, in the good providence of God, be forever averted. Yet I presume it is the most mature and settled conviction of all who live in this section of our land, that it is neither *possible* nor *desirable* to retain the name and the form of the Union, without the peace and friendship which it implies: It is not the *name* which we venerate, but the *reality* which it embodies. The most fearful schism may occur in organized bodies long before external and visible separation. The word Union is but a mockery and a lie, when bitter feuds and malignant hatred are the only terms of correspondence. I utter the sentiment with deep solemnity, I trust, under a suitable impression of the sanction which religion gives to whatever is uttered from this desk—that to the perpetuation of this Union the entire cessation of hostilities, and a return to plighted faith at the other end of these States, are of absolute necessity. If the demoralizing doctrine recently avowed is to obtain, that neither the sanction of an oath, nor the faith of written compacts, is to bind the conscience, then is the Union already and in fact dissolved. The Constitution, which is the formal bond of our Union, binds the States to reciprocal duties—it seeks to protect itself from infraction by the imposition of public and official oaths; yet if these obligations are recognised only to be the more profanely trampled under foot; if these oaths are taken expressly to be violated, then is the bond effectually destroyed which holds the confederacy together—the bond of faith and of common justice. So long as these outrageous sentiments were avowed and practised by a few individuals only in the public service, it was possible to bear them. This atrocity, so long as it remained the atrocity of individuals, could be met with that indignation with which a virtuous mind

must always regard falsehood and perjury. But in the present crisis the question can no longer be blinked, is this disorganizing principle to be endorsed, or is it to be formally and publicly disowned. It surely is not desirable that the Capitol shall be converted into the arena of strife and conflict, as during the present session of our Congress. It is not seemly that our Representatives should assemble from all parts of the land to be a mere spectacle of bull-baiting to the world. But who shall pluck the ship from the very mouth of the maelstrom, and roll back the eddying currents which create it? Who is able effectively and immediately to stop the tide of fanaticism which has swept us on to the very brink of destruction? Who is able to speak out in the storm which beats around us, and to say to all the raging elements, "Peace! be still!" verily, none but He who turns the hearts of men as the rivers of waters are turned. Our trust must be in God, who alone is able to create a speedy and happy re-action in the popular mind, and to bring the most violent and clamorous to a sense of justice and of right. My own conviction from the first has been that this would be the happy issue of our present troubles; that brought to the very edge of the precipice, and in the moment of our despair, we should see one of those sudden and auspicious revolutions in public sentiment, which a pious mind loves to ascribe, through secondary influences and agencies it may be, to the immediate and favorable intervention of the Divine Being. As Christian patriots, our appeal must now be to the friendship and protection of the God of Nations, in whom our fathers trusted, and who, we hope, will be the God of our children.

But let us turn to the other branch of the alternative, separation. We amuse ourselves with the hope of a quiet and peaceful secession; but it is an object of hope only because it is within the power of God to effect it; while nothing in the teachings of history, and no just inference from the character of men, can be produced to justify the expectation. What people sprung from a common ancestry, of our blood, having the same language, the same laws, and the same religion, enjoying a common inheritance of liberty and glory, ever separated without bloodshed into two rival nations? What boundaries shall divide us but the bitter animosities and feuds which lead to the separation? How shall the patrimony be divided to the satisfaction of both sections, so that new grounds of strife shall not grow out of the division itself? How can it be otherwise than that the strife which brings about the dissolution must be embittered by this consummating act? No! it is hoping against hope—it is hoping against all the admonitions of the past—against all the reasonable conclusions which can be drawn from

the present position of the country. Yet no one can deny that, in the providence of God, it is barely *possible*. There might be brought to pass such a combination of interests, such a connection of events, that this new thing might happen under the sun; and surely if this is to be the issue to which the controversy now pending must come, we have occasion most devoutly to put our trust in God, who alone can do that which all experience and reason teach to be well nigh impossible; certainly impossible to all human skill and foresight.

But suppose this strange result to be reached; all the memories of the past to be obliterated; our common ancestry forgotten; and a peaceful division of this vast domain of ours effected. What then? Shall two great confederacies be erected in friendly rivalry to each other? or shall there be more? or shall the disintegration be entire, and this nation, now one and mighty, be resolved into as many principalities as there are now States? Is this a day to enter upon the business of making constitutions and framing governments? Who shall hold back the flood which has already rolled over the European continent, overturning thrones and disorganizing empires? Is radicalism, which seeks change for the sake of change; and socialism, which breaks down all the partitions of society; and agrarianism, which levels all distinctions of fortune and birth—will these elements of agitation sleep, and not war upon us in the very commencement of the new experiments upon which we enter? The imagination sickens at the prospect of the accumulated dangers and evils which beset us the moment we are dismembered. Yet God is able to carry us through with success and triumph if it please Him. All nations before us have gone through a fearful and uncertain pupilage before they attained the robust strength of manhood.

In every aspect, the crisis before us throws us helpless and dependent upon Divine Providence. If the Union be preserved, a change in feeling and conduct must take place which no human power can effect. If it be destroyed, no wisdom but that from above can save us from fratricidal wars, or guide us successfully through the new dangers which threaten to devour. While, therefore, we use all prudence, and tax our own invention to the utmost, to meet the perils of the present moment, let those who believe in God, and in his control over human affairs, address him in faith. Christianity, which teaches us to love the Lord our God, which inculcates repentance for sin and faith in the Redeemer, teaches us also the love of country. And the same Father into whose bosom we pour our private cares, and whose mercy we sue in the pardon of individual sins, permits us to bring our interceding supplications in

behalf of the land which hath begotten us, and the country to whom we owe the reverence and affection of faithful children.

II. "That the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." *This teaches us to wait with patience the gradual workings of God's Providence, in silently and imperceptibly removing the evils which afflict society* It is instructive to observe the grandeur of the Divine schemes, and the silence and quietness with which they are conducted. A modern historian has forcibly observed that "to achieve great results by imperceptible means is the law of the Divine dealings. The little seed, which the new-born infant may clasp in its feeble hand, he deposits in the bosom of the earth, and from that seed, imperceptible in its beginning, he produces the majestic tree, under whose spreading boughs the families of men may find shelter." Knowing his own power, which is infinite, and his own wisdom, which is unfathomable, the Most High can afford to be patient. He projects his plans upon a scale that overwhelms our finite conceptions with their vastness. He bears with generations of transgressors. He allows stupendous evils to exist and to be perpetuated, which he could remove at a word. Meanwhile he puts into exercise moral causes, which slowly and surely, but imperceptibly and quietly, work out their extirpation; and he waits through ages for their sublime but uniform operations. How long has he borne with the idolatry of the nations, though it robs Him of that glory which he, with so much jealousy, claims for himself? How long has he tolerated polygamy, though in flat contradiction to the fundamental law of marriage, and subversive of the family constitution? How long has he tolerated the reign of despots, when by a blow of his sceptre he could emancipate the nations? He suffers one to be steeped to the lips in poverty, while his neighbor abuses his wealth in revelry and riot. He suffers one to be immersed in ignorance and mental darkness, while another prodigally wastes the opportunities of knowledge and improvement. Yet these things shall not always be. He has set his Gospel upon the earth to regenerate and elevate mankind. He diffuses slowly the blessings of civilization and knowledge, till they shall cover the globe, and saves a suffering world from despair, by the promise of the day when righteousness and peace, and love shall reign upon earth, and oppression, injustice, and hatred shall belong only to the past. Contrast now with this the hot impatience of the creature, man. He sits down, and with the measures of his scanty knowledge, forms plans which he calls perfect; then change follows hard upon change as experience suggests improvements, till at length, fretful and peevish through disappointment, he dashes to pieces the work of his own hands.

If this were confined to his own works, it were well. But with self-sufficiency he arrogates to amend the works of God. He quarrels with the slowness of Divine Providence. While God is patient with man, man is utterly impatient with God. Self-constituted reformers arise, and demand that at once the evils of society be corrected, or the whole must be made a wreck. The sun must be stricken from the heavens if a spot be found upon his disk, and the stars be swept from the sky if their courses be erratic.

I dwell upon this, because it appears to me the great error which has plunged many religious and conscientious men into the abyss of fanaticism, and has largely contributed to produce the present alarming crisis in our national councils. Evils are supposed to exist in our midst. We will not debate how far this opinion is just. Be it so, that great and pressing evils do exist in the government which is constituted over us. But these persons forget the law of Providence, which works out the amelioration of society and the advancement of mankind by moral causes, as silent as they are potent. They rush headlong in a career of reform, forgetful of other duties, and trampling upon other obligations as sacred as any which can bind the conscience. How far they are incompetent to assume the control of Providence, and to quicken the activity of Jehovah, will appear from a single consideration. In the imperfect state of human society it pleases God to allow many evils, which yet serve as checks to others which are still greater. As in the physical world objects are not moved forward by a single force, but by the composition of forces, so in his moral administration, there are checks and balances, the relations of all which are comprehended only by himself. Many things which in themselves considered are absolutely evil, do yet in their relations work out a good otherwise unattainable, and ward off dangers otherwise inevitable. But all self-sufficient reformers, working out the single idea which rides them like a nightmare, dash forward, not regarding or comprehending the delicate mechanism of Providence; which moves on, wheel within wheel, with pivots and balances and springs, which the great designer alone can control. These fierce zealots, who undertake to drive the Chariot of the Sun, dash athwart the spheres, and throw the universe into confusion, that they may have a straight path for the race.

It is time to reproduce the obsolete idea that Providence must govern man, and not that man should control Providence. Evils that are unwrought into the very frame-work of society must be borne by man, so long as they are tolerated by God. We are not to legislate for Him who "does according to his pleasure among the armies of Heaven and

among the inhabitants of Earth." The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men ; but the question with the wild agitators of our day is, whether he *shall* rule, seeing he is so slow to rule, in their judgment, right. The radicalism so rampant in our days, which wars against constitutions and laws and compacts—against Sabbaths and sanctuaries—against the family, the State and the church—is a blasphemous assumption of God's jurisdiction. It profanely rebukes the most High for errors in His administration—it seeks to snatch the reins of empire from Him who has established His throne in righteousness and judgment. And since it cannot rule God, would lay the universe in ruins at his feet. I confess that one ground of my hope that God will bring speedy deliverance to our suffering country, is, that he may thereby rebuke the pride and arrogance and profaneness of those who have brought this crisis upon us, in their mad attempt to usurp his high prerogatives.

III. *This truth, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, teaches also that as by individuals, so by nations, God has high and solemn purposes to accomplish through each ; and the business of all is to learn and do their mission.*

Dr. Croly has ventured to assert that "England was chosen for the especial guardianship of Christianity." So far as Protestantism is concerned, he maintains the proposition by a remarkable induction of facts. "It is a striking circumstance," he goes on to say, "that since the Reformation, every reign of Popish tendency has been followed by one purely Protestant ; and these alternate reigns have not offered a stronger contrast in their principles than in their public fortunes." The vigorous reign of the Eighth Henry was followed by the bloody and cruel reign of Mary, who "left a dilapidated kingdom—a nation worn out with disaster and debt." Elizabeth succeeded, and "her conquering sign was Protestantism." After a long reign, styled England's Augustan Age, she left it the queen over Europe. Charles the First was at heart a Papist ; and, after a long and disgraceful conflict with his own subjects, he lost his kingdom and his head upon the block. Cromwell, in the brief and troubled period of his dictatorship, "lifted England again to her feet," and "made the name of Englishmen as honored as was that of an ancient Roman." The Second Charles and the Second James were still more violent apostates from the cause of truth, and the house of Stuarts was expelled the throne. We will not stop to ask whether these striking facts fully justify the application which is made of them ; but of the abstract principle, that God has a trust for nations as for persons, and that they prosper or

decline in accordance with their own fidelity, there can be no doubt whatever. If the Old Testament history, where the prophet stands side by side with the historian, does not establish this truth, it infers no truth whatever. The mighty empire of Egypt was the cradle in which the infant Jewish nation was rocked and reared to maturity; the Canaanites held the Promised Land only so long as the Jews were under pupilage, and at the set time they gave it up to the descendants of the faithful Abraham; the Assyrians were raised up to be a scourge in God's hands, with which he chastised the folly and wickedness of Israel, and in due season the empire passed over to the Persian, that he might knock the fetters from captive Judah and let the prisoner go free; the Grecian and Roman conquests paved the way for the final overthrow of Judaism and for the propagation of Christianity; when the time came for "the sceptre to depart from Judah and a lawgiver from between his feet," then "the eagles were gathered together" over the carcase, and Jerusalem was wiped out and turned over as a dish. In a word, all the great empires of antiquity are seen to revolve around that small, but important, nation chosen to bear upon its bosom the immortal Church of God. All history may be viewed in two lights: as the record of human actions, and as the development of God's purposes. An intelligent reader should peruse every page first downwards, and then upwards; first tracing the thread of events, and then unfolding the plans of God in those events. History interpreted is Providence expounded. Without the former, Providence is only a blind mystery; without the latter, history is a mere fable—they are two parts of the same subject—two aspects of the same truth—each is an enigma without the other. History is the delineation of Providence; Providence is the interpretation of history; and though no inspired interpretation accompanies the events of modern times, the same God rules now as then—the same church lives now as then, to which kingdoms and empires are tributary—and the same great principle obtains, that nations have their destinies assigned in their connexion with this Kingdom of the Redeemer. Why else is England suffered to push her dominions far into India? Why else is she permitted to thunder with her cannon against the Chinese wall?

If we attend too to the origin and progress of our own history, we shall be at no loss for a clue to the mission upon which we are sent as a nation. As one has remarked, "God sifted three nations to sow this continent with a good seed." The Church of Christ first took possession of these shores, and claimed here a home. The principles upon which our independence was successfully maintained, and the remarkable

interposition of God in our behalf, reveal the commission which God gives to us as a people. Already in great measure have we wrought out a problem, for which no nation under the heavens was adequate: the entire separation of the civil and the ecclesiastical power; and we realize to the world the great idea of a Christian nation which yet does not seek to bring the church in bondage. A great destiny lies before us, if we are equal to its achievement. It is certain that before the lapse of many years, in the ordinary workings of Providence, our habits, our laws, our institutions, and our religion must be planted upon every foot of this entire continent. Already are we familiar with the idea of connecting the Atlantic and Pacific waters, and becoming thus the highway of the nations; already do we talk of sending our ships from the eastern and the western coast alike, plowing the waves of the Pacific, and sending eastward and westward the knowledge, the civilization, and the religion with which we are blessed. From the bosom of a Christian nation the Church of the Redeemer has sent forth her heralds to Asia, to Africa, to the isles of the sea; and thus, under His mediatorial reign, does he use this nation and this country to advance the glories of His kingdom, which is an everlasting kingdom, and to establish his dominion, which is to be "from the river to the ends of the earth." Let it be written then upon our banners that we are a *Christian nation*—that we fear God and respect his law. Let His Sabbaths be honored, and drunkenness and profaneness driven from our borders. Let our rulers and statesmen admit and practise upon the truth that the Bible, and the religion of the Bible, have made this nation what it is. Above all, let the Church of Christ in this country be steady and growing in her zeal to extend the gospel through all the earth—then we are safe for many good years to come; let whatever issues arise, let whatever danger threaten, with the Bible and Christianity for our foundation, our political prosperity will be as firm as the granite beneath our mountains. The loss of great men in trying seasons may well teach us these important lessons. When the props we have made for ourselves are stricken away, it is wise to say, with one of old, "Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods: but in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."