

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY REQUEST OF THE SELECTMEN

OF THE TOWN OF ST. ALBANS,

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 1850,

ON THE DEATH OF

GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY

JOHN HENRY HOPKINS, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF VERMONT.



ST. ALBANS:

PRINTED BY E. B. WHITING.

1850.

The undersigned, Selectmen of the town of St. Albans, regarding it as fit that there be some public demonstration of the feelings of this community respecting the national calamity occasioned by the death of General ZACHARY TAYLOR, late President of the United States, have, on behalf of the citizens of St. Albans, invited RT. REV. BISHOP HOPKINS to pronounce a discourse on this afflicting dispensation.

It affords the undersigned much pleasure to be able to announce to their fellow citizens, that BISHOP HOPKINS has accepted their invitation and that the discourse will be delivered at the Congregational Meeting House on FRIDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 1850, at 3½ o'clock in the afternoon.

JOSEPH WEEKS,
ANSON BUCK,
JULIUS H. BROOKS, } Selectmen.

St. Albans, July 24, 1850.

St. Albans, Vt., August 3d, 1850.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

The undersigned, Select-men of the town of St. Albans, improve an early opportunity to return to you, on behalf of the citizens of St. Albans, their grateful acknowledgments for the able and instructive Address pronounced before them, at their request, on the evening of the 2d inst.

Entertaining a desire in common with their fellow-citizens, that the moral and patriotic principles, which were so eloquently enforced therein, should have a more general, and, consequently, a more useful circulation, they respectfully solicit a copy for publication.

Your friends and ob't servants,

JOSEPH WEEKS,
ANSON BUCK,
JULIUS H. BROOKS, } Select-men
of the town
of St. Albans.

TO THE RT. REV., THE BISHOP }
OF THE DIOCESE OF VERMONT. }

Burlington, Vt., August 3d, 1850.

GENTLEMEN:—

I comply very cheerfully with your kind request, that I would furnish a copy of my Address for publication; and only regret that it is not more worthy of the subject, and of the favorable indulgence with which it was received.

Your faithful friend

and servant in Christ,

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

To Messrs, JOSEPH WEEKS,
ANSON BUCK,
JULIUS H. BROOKS, } Select-men.

ADDRESS.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS :

The respected officers to whom you have committed the civil authority of your town, have called you together this day, to mark an occurrence of rare and peculiar interest. "Regarding it as fit that there be some public demonstration of the feelings of this community respecting the national calamity occasioned by the death of General ZACHARY TAYLOR, late President of the United States," they have invited you to manifest your sympathy on what they have most truly called "an afflicting dispensation;" and have assigned to me the duty of expressing the sentiments appropriate to an event, which is invested with no ordinary importance and solemnity.

In accepting the office, however, thus kindly conferred, you will permit me to premise, that I have not been influenced by any confidence in my powers to do justice to the occasion. I see around me many, whose qualifications for such a duty seem far superior to my own. The fervid eloquence of the patriot, the deep knowledge of the practised politician, the high admiration of military renown, would all find ample scope in the subject assigned to me. And I need not say to you that these are hardly to be expected in the ministers of

Him, whose kingdom is not of this world. But notwithstanding my conscious unfitness for the task, I did not feel at liberty to decline it, lest my motive might seem to be an indolent indifference to the wishes of my friends. And therefore I have to ask for an indulgent hearing, in the hope that although I cannot excite your feelings by the talent of the orator, I may yet succeed in addressing to your understandings the words of soberness and truth.

The order which I propose to follow is suggested by the terms in which the invitation has been presented to me. A brief sketch of the life and character of our lamented Chief Magistrate, with the reasons for considering his unexpected death as "a national calamity" and "an afflictive dispensation," will embrace the greater part of what I design to set before you.

It appears from the slight statements which have met the public eye, that General Taylor was the son of a revolutionary patriot and soldier, from whom he doubtless imbibed his early predilection for the military profession, and his principles of earnest devotion to the honor of his country. He was born in Orange County, Virginia, on the 2nd of November, 1784, and is therefore one of that extraordinary band of men whom "the Old Dominion" has raised to such exalted eminence, in the battles and the councils of the Nation. Like many others of our most distinguished countrymen, he was kept in the safe and manly labors of agricultural life, until he was of age; and in the year 1808, he indulged his fondness for the army, by accepting the commission of 1st. Lieutenant in the Infantry. Two years afterwards, at the age of twenty-six, he married; and in the Indian war of the North-west, under General Harrison, during the year 1812, he distinguished himself

greatly by his cool and determined courage. This war being ended, and the army reduced, he returned to the pursuits of husbandry ; but in 1816 he was again in service at Green Bay, with the rank of Major, and afterwards served in the South, being seldom absent from active duty. In 1819 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel ; and in 1832, we find him a Colonel, serving in the Black Hawk war. Four years afterwards, he was ordered to Florida, and in 1837, he fought the memorable battle of Okechokee, which was followed by the close of that protracted and difficult contest, and obtained for him the brevet rank of Brigadier General.

In 1840, he took the command of the first department in the South-west ; and in 1845, he was ordered to the frontier of Texas, where he established his headquarters at Corpus Christi. The following year, in obedience to the instructions of President Polk, he marched to the Rio Grande, and then began the series of those brilliant and surprising victories, which fixed on him the admiring gaze of his country, and excited the astonishment of the civilized world. The battle of Palo Alto was fought on the 8th of May, 1846, followed, the next day, by that of Resaca de la Palma, and, on the 18th of the same month, by the taking of Matamoras. The ensuing September witnessed the capitulation of Monterey, and February 22nd, 1847, was distinguished by the wonderful victory of Buena Vista. Dazzled by the splendor of a career, almost unexampled in modern warfare, the whole nation rang with applause and gratulation, which were powerfully enhanced by the singular modesty and simplicity of their favorite hero, and yet more by the universal tribute of affection to his frank kindness and benevolence of heart. The highest office in the gift of the people was thought by some to be the

proper reward of so much merit; and the idea, once suggested, gained force with great rapidity, notwithstanding the vast popularity and pre-eminent claims of other candidates, whom the country would have been delighted to honor. On his return from Mexico to the United States, in the Fall of 1847, he was received everywhere with the most unbounded enthusiasm. In June, 1848, the Whig Convention at Philadelphia nominated him for President, and in November of the same year, he was elected over General Cass, the opposing candidate, by a majority of one hundred and sixty-three electoral votes against one hundred and twenty-seven. His inauguration took place on the 5th of March, 1849, and he discharged the duties of his exalted office, with the increasing confidence and affection of the great body of his countrymen, for little more than a year; when it pleased the Almighty Ruler of nations to remove him to that unseen and spiritual world, where the voice of praise or censure, from human lips, can reach him no more.

On the 9th of July last, the hero passed through his final earthly conflict, surrounded by his agonized family, the members of his Cabinet, and many anxious friends; while an immense multitude thronged the public grounds, waiting, in sad suspense, for the melancholy announcement. His dying words were strongly characteristic: "I AM PREPARED—I HAVE ENDEAVORED TO DISCHARGE ALL MY OFFICIAL DUTIES FAITHFULLY." Soon afterwards his voice failed—he sunk calmly into his last sleep—the blow descended gently: but it smote upon the national heart, and the universal feeling with which it has been received proves, beyond dispute, the deep hold he had gained, upon the reverence, the love and the confidence of the people.

It would be neither consistent with my ministerial

character, my friends, nor in accordance with your own sound judgment, that I should make the slightest effort at a studied eulogy, on this occasion. As a servant of the Prince of peace, I can have no strong sympathy with military glory. And standing aloof from all party politics for more than thirty years, I am perfectly unconscious of any prejudice, which could affect the dispassionate exercise of the best judgment in my power. But in the clear and unclouded light of impartial opinion, I think it must be granted that our departed Chief Magistrate was an extraordinary example of high excellence, uniting in one those qualities which are seldom found in combination; and which it is not likely that we shall ever see again, so singularly marked, in so exalted a station.

It was not merely that his courage in the field of battle exhibited the boldest and most daring intrepidity; for this he shared in common with a host of heroes.—Nor was it that he loved his country with the pure affection of a patriot; for this, I trust, may be asserted of many others. Nor was it that he displayed, in union with the most chivalric bravery, the most benevolent temper and the kindest heart; for this too, is no uncommon trait amongst the warriors of our nation. But it was that in the midst of the most splendid military success, he seemed almost unconscious of his acknowledged greatness—that he sought to do the fullest justice to the merits of his subordinates, while he passed by his own—that he took the largest share of the perils, the hardships and effective service of war, while he cared nothing for its pomp, and pride, and glittering appendages—that notwithstanding it was the profession of his early choice, and that he owed his elevation to its triumphs, yet he regarded it, at best, as a necessary evil, and mourned over its calamities as a Christian man—that

when he saw himself the favorite of the nation, his modesty shrunk back from the Presidential chair, and his honest candor frankly professed his want of knowledge and ability—that he could not be induced to adopt the ordinary measures of political expediency, to propitiate the leaders of party, and shewed himself nobly superior to all the natural promptings of ambition—that after he was placed on the loftiest pinnacle of official power, his political opponents could find in him no trace of self-complacency, resentment, partiality or pride, but rested their chief complaints on the ground that he suffered his Cabinet to dictate in questions of removals and appointments, instead of taking the entire government of the matter into his own hand—that his independence of sentiment was so great as to keep him aloof from all Southern influence, notwithstanding he was himself a slave-holder—and, in a word, that in the midst of every temptation which this world could offer, in the shape of honor, fame, wealth, power and popular idolatry, he maintained the same constant character of frank simplicity, transparent truth, cordial kindness, sober wisdom, strict justice, and unbiased patriotism.

It is manifest that the loss of such a man, at any time, would be regarded as a national calamity. But there are peculiar reasons for the opinion so generally entertained, that in the present distraction of our public councils, the death of a President who united so admirably the qualities of the hero and the sage, is an event of the saddest import to the country. It may be well to state at large the argument for this prevailing impression, and to test its correctness by facts and principles, familiar to us all.

The immense accession of public territory consequent upon the settlement with Mexico, and the application of

California to be admitted into the Union as a Free State, have roused a conflict in our great national legislature, on the exciting subject of slavery, which has been totally without example for duration. Many Southern members of the highest standing have presented a formal menace of secession, if something be not done to protect their favorite institution from the increasing preponderance of the North. The best intellects of our Country have been occupied for more than half a year in devising a plan of friendly compromise, which shall give satisfaction to the majority and keep our glorious confederation together. And our wisest and most experienced statesmen agree in the opinion that the country is in danger of an internal convulsion, which no true-hearted American can contemplate without the liveliest apprehension and solicitude.

At such a time it is, that Divine Providence has seen fit to take away our former chief magistrate, to whose pure impartiality, prompt energy, and kindly moderation the great body of the nation were disposed to look as to a strong arm of defence in a day of trouble. They saw him in full possession of every qualification which might be desired to guide the ship of State through the fury of the storm, and preserve it from the rocks and shoals which threatened it with ruin. They knew him to be devoted to his duty, fearless of danger, and prepared at all risks, to do his utmost in the service of the Union. They knew that he was firmly opposed to fanaticism, whether of the North or of the South; that he had proposed to himself the principles of Washington, as the highest and safest model for his own administration; and that he was ready to put down, with all the vigor of his character and the power of his office, the first movement in any quarter, which could bear the imputation

of treason or conspiracy. And when they heard that his valuable life was suddenly cut short, they felt as if their best hope for the nation had perished, and the clouds which hung over the public council seemed to lower with ten fold darkness, and they mourned as if the country had lost its most faithful guardian, its most effective friend.

Doubtless, all this was an easy and natural result of the confidence and affection, which the character of our departed President had won from the national heart.—And in itself it was not only the most unquestionable tribute that could have been rendered to his merits, but it served to give its true force and effect to the event, which was assuredly designed to be, in the wisdom of Providence, precisely what your authority has called it, “a public calamity, and an afflictive dispensation.”

But yet, as in all similar cases, the language of regret is not without a strong tendency to exaggeration. It is by no means a necessary inference that this painful bereavement is intended to produce any evil results to the peace or safety of our beloved country, nor that it should be regarded otherwise than as a wholesome corrective, appointed, in the mercy of the Almighty, to rebuke the sins and the follies which are our worst enemies, and to warn us not to rest our confidence on an arm of flesh, but only on the wisdom and might of the true Ruler of nations. To this view of the subject I would therefore ask your attention, since it is the duty of explaining it, in accordance with the true Christian principles of government, which induced me to address you, on such an occasion. All Americans agree in acknowledging that our great and glorious confederation has a special and sublime mission amongst the nations of the earth, to teach them the practical possibility and real superiority

of a popular constitution, in which the people are all personally interested; electing, by an universal suffrage their own law-givers and rulers, and thus making every man, to some extent, an actual sharer in its administration; abolishing all privileged orders of nobility, opening to each individual the prospect of honor and advancement to which his virtues and his talents may entitle him, but denying all access to any political rank, independent of the judgment of his fellow citizens.

It is generally conceded, also, that our admirable Constitution takes for granted the virtue and intelligence of the great body of our people, and rests them both on the only sure basis of the Christian religion. This is demonstrable from the fact, that the admission to all our higher offices is guarded by a solemn oath, appealing to the great Searcher of hearts; that the same oath, or an affirmation equivalent thereto, is required in the administration of justice; and that no one who disbelieves a future state of rewards and punishments can be allowed to give testimony on any trial. It is still further proved by the laws of every State in the Union, forbidding the violation of the Christian Sabbath day, and punishing the sins of blasphemy and profanity against the sacred Scriptures. But it is quite superfluous to enlarge on this topic. For if there be a proposition about which mankind may be said to be universally agreed, it is surely this: that there can be no true liberty without morality, and no true morality without religion.

It is likewise granted that the peculiar blessings of our system of government are to be found in the arts of peaceful industry and useful enterprise, that it is neither designed for nor adapted to wars of conquest, although admirably suited to a war of defence; that the military spirit is eminently unfavorable to public and private

prosperity, and that while every citizen should be able to be a soldier on occasions of necessity, every soldier should remember that he is a citizen, so that the military may always be subject to the civil power.

Advancing on these principles from a small beginning, our country has gone forward with unexampled success and prosperity, until it is now, in little more than half a century, the admiration and wonder of the world.—Far and wide, our example is operating amongst the nations of Europe. Far and wide, there is a sentiment of reverence for our name. Far and wide, our privileges are the subject of envy or desire to millions of the human family. And if we are but true to our principles and faithful to the Constitution, which rests our liberty on the virtue and the intelligence of the people, and bases that virtue and intelligence upon the sure foundation of the Christian religion, the same blessing which has hitherto made us a burning and a shining light, will continue to prosper us, until ultimately, perhaps, the diffusion of freedom may extend throughout the whole globe, and prepare it for the great and final consummation.

But here lies the difficulty. We have not been true to those principles. We have not been faithful to that Constitution. We are growing proud of our prosperity and vain of our strength. We idolize the heroes and the statesmen of our Revolution, and forget the God whose instruments they were. We idolize the heroes and the statesmen who have succeeded them, and fasten our faith to these, and worship their greatness, and rely on their power, and forget the Almighty Sovereign to whom both we and they are alike accountable. And hence comes the necessity of “national calamities, and afflictive dispensations,” that God, in His mercy, may shew us our error; and lead us back to

the Source of all lasting prosperity, in which our fathers trusted; and remind us that it is He that ruleth amongst the children of men.

It may be necessary, however, to specify a few of the proofs, which shew the downward tendency of our age, through this sad neglect of fundamental principles.

1. And first, I may refer to the mode in which our laws for naturalization have been administered. Those laws expressly require the Judges to be satisfied concerning the moral character of the applicant, and his intelligent approval and choice of our principles of government. And foreigners possessing such qualifications as these, would, indeed, be a welcome addition to the strength and resources of the nation. But it is notorious that thousands are admitted year by year to all the privileges of citizenship, without the slightest real claim to the morality and intelligence which the laws demand. And, thus, in many places, the whole power of the elective franchise is actually taken out of the hands of the lawful owners, by the votes of men who are utterly unfit to exercise the right, according to the true theory of Republican Government.

2. From this abuse has sprung another, viz. the corruption of our elections, in which the votes of multitudes are confessedly bought and sold, and no sort of trick or stratagem is thought immoral, if it be only employed in the service of party. It is surely impossible to excuse this on any ground of true republican principles.

3. It follows quite naturally, that the candidates themselves are often chosen without regard to *moral*, and always chosen without regard to *religious* character. Indeed, this last would frequently be thought rather an objection. It is true that a certain measure of knowledge and ability is admitted to be necessary; but this is taken

for granted, and the main point considered is *availability for party purposes*. Here is the only cause which, in three prominent instances, led to the selection of a military hero for the office of President. No intelligent man, I presume, can doubt that General Jackson became the popular idol of the nation by the splendid victory of New Orleans, and that it was the name of hero that opened his path to the Presidential Chair. General Harrison owed his political success to the same popular love of martial glory, and "the hero of Tippecanoe" was the magic phrase which emblazoned his pretensions. And so it was with our late lamented President. His surprising victories in Mexico raised him to the rank of hero in the public eye, and had more actual influence in procuring his election than a thousand sober virtues could have exercised. And yet no thoughtful and considerate mind could ever believe that the art of war was a consistent introduction to the science of political government, or that success in the one was any argument of fitness for the other. It was doubtless a happy event, that those military presidents were men of rare merits in other points of character. But it was not on these that their favor depended with the people. They were pure objects of hero-worship, and nothing more.—And, therefore, I refer to them to show, that we have quite as much regard for the shining points which catch the popular eye, as the ages that have gone before us; and provided we have these, we concern ourselves but little for the homelier qualities of morality and virtue.

4. The next topic of our reproach arises from the political maxim that "to the victors belong the spoils," by which every change of administration puts thousands of men out of office, without any fault except the unpardonable one of having voted for the unsuccessful candi-

date. On the theory of our Government in its early youth the question to be asked concerning any public officer was supposed to be this: "Is he honest, and is he capable?" But it is a long while since that theory has been acted on, with any tolerable consistency.

5. And here we have to acknowledge the grievous abuses of that party spirit, which is not only the cause of the evil last mentioned, but of an innumerable host of other sins against justice and truth. It is party spirit which seeks so often to sacrifice the worthy and exalt the vile; which studiously flatters its own candidates, and as studiously reviles their antagonists; which calls evil good, and good evil, and puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; which separates chief friends, and tramples recklessly on the dearest relations and most sacred obligations of life, whenever it is enlisted in the service of political venality. True, there is nothing new in this. All the older nations have set us the example of the same corruption. But our republican system demands a higher and a purer principle, if we would be exempt from the fearful convulsions of other times and countries; nor can we hope to do much towards the effectual reformation of foreign governments until we have learned to purify our own.

6. The sixth point that I would notice is the deplorable want of public decorum and official respect, which has so frequently, of late years, disgraced the character of our legislative assemblies, and, at last, has even invaded that most dignified body, the Senate of the United States.

7. And when to all this, we add the new-born lust of foreign territory; the wild and reckless crusade of our ultra abolitionists against the institutions of the south; and the equally wild and reckless spirit in which they have

been resisted ; to say nothing of other points of reprehension, surely we have reason to bow our heads in sorrowful acknowledgment that the early character of our nation is fast changing for the worse, that we have insensibly departed far from the true theory of our republican system, and that we need the corrective hand of Divine Providence to curb our pride, to recall us to a sense of our dependence on a higher power, to force us to reflect and feel, to open our eyes to the dangers towards which we are rapidly tending, and to awaken us to a consciousness of the solemn truth that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people."

It is but a few years, since we all witnessed the extravagance of our hero-worship in the case of President Harrison. It pleased God to rebuke us by a "national calamity, an afflictive dispensation." In a little month after his entrance upon office, he was stricken by the hand of death, and we were called to lament what many were disposed to think a most untimely bereavement. Two presidents succeeded, and behold! another hero arose, and gave us a new opportunity to fall into our favorite idolatry. He has been spared to us somewhat longer, but now, he too, is taken away. Far be it from me to deny the claims of either. Both were eminent warriors, both were pure and honest patriots, and both had well earned, by a life of consistent and laborous duty, the praise and confidence of their country. But this is no reason why we should forget that the best and greatest men are only the instruments of a higher power ; that all their successes and their triumphs are His appointment ; that we can have nothing, either as a nation or as individuals, except what we receive at His hands ; that when He sees fit to withdraw one of his eminent official servants, it is a light thing with His Providence

to raise up another in his place ; and that, so long as the great body of our citizens render all their worship to Him who alone is entitled to it, as their Creator, Redeemer and Preserver—remembering that they must not place an over-weening dependence in the powers or virtues of any mortal, but rest with all their faith upon the grace and goodness of the Almighty,—so long they may be assured of His blessing : so long, the Lord will teach their rulers truth, and their Senators wisdom : so long, if a David be removed, a Solomon shall succeed him ; and the tears of mournful regret shall be followed by the voice of joyful gratulation.

There is not, my friends, in the wide earth, at this day, a nation which is, in all respects, so favored as our own. None where the laws are administered with so much equality, where the poorest man finds it so easy to gain a competent subsistence, where there is so great an average of ordinary instruction and intelligence, where there is so little suffering from oppression, where the road is so open to affluence and honor, where so many of the citizens have it in their power to become the owners of the soil, and sit in peace under their own vine, with none to make them afraid,—where, in a word, the good Providence of God has showered down His best gifts in such rich profusion, and bestowed upon the mass of our citizens so large a measure of comfort and prosperity. But I put it to your own sound judgment to say whether we, as a people, have made a suitable return for all these benefits ? Have our piety and zeal kept pace with our blessings ? On the contrary, do we not resemble those chosen and favored Israelites, who began to play the idolator in the very zenith of their glory and renown ; and, as a just punishment, were divided into two nations, which ever after regarded each other with

aversion and hostility ? And although it must be granted that our idols are not like those of the ancient or modern heathen, yet do they not involve the same substantial sin of departing from God ? Does not the inspired apostle expressly say that covetousness is idolatry ? Is not the over-weening confidence placed in the objects of popular applause, another species of the same sin ? Do we not virtually offend against the divine prerogative, when we indulge our national pride, and claim all the praise of our Country's greatness for our heroes and our statesmen, without any just and grateful acknowledgment to the Almighty Ruler ? And notwithstanding the number of our Churches and our Ministers, is it not true that the authority of the Bible is often set aside, and that irreligion and infidelity are increasing ? Hence it is, that we are in danger of far heavier calamities,—far more afflicting and awful dispensations, than that which we are called upon to deplore this day. The distracted state of our great national legislature is thought by many, to be ominous of approaching disunion. So great was the anxiety of our late President's mind upon this subject, that some have confidently assigned it as one of the causes of his death. But whether that idea be well-founded or otherwise, it is easy to imagine how sore a trial to his feelings it must have been, to witness the alienation, the strife, the bitterness, which have marked, for six long months, this first Congress of his administration. How his patriotic heart must have yearned, as he pondered over those alarming questions : Is this glorious confederation, indeed, threatened with dissolution ? After leading the soldiers of the Republic so long against our foreign enemies, shall I now be compelled to wage battle with our brethren in a civil war ? Is the wild spirit of ultra abolitionism to be gratified by trampling

down our Constitution, and deluging our land with the blood of our own fellow citizens? Can it be possible that already, before that noble Constitution has lasted a hundred years, surrounded by every privilege and blessing, the envy and the admiration of the world—that so soon, and in such circumstances of unparalleled prosperity, we are to be torn asunder by internal discord, only because we can neither be content with the heritage which our fathers have bequeathed to us, nor thankful to Providence for the marvelous superiority of our national lot? That such reflections must have pressed upon the departed hero's mind, can hardly be doubted, since we are assured, by our greatest and wisest statesmen, that this terrible risk is actually before us—that this most awful of earthly calamities is not only possible but probable,—nay, that it is, perhaps, nigh at hand. May God, of His infinite mercy, avert the impending danger! May His spirit calm the angry storm of reckless violence and passion! May His omnipotent word say to the fury of the tempest, Peace, be still!

I know not, my friends, how far the avowal of my own sentiments on the agitating controversy of the day may accord with the feelings of my respected auditory. In this matter, I speak only for myself, and desire that every intelligent man that hears me, should enjoy the same unbiassed freedom of opinion. But I should despise myself as totally wanting in the moral courage which becomes a Christian republican, if I shunned the occasion of distinctly stating my own fervent hope, that the great and wise leaders of our political councils may succeed in their patriotic effort to calm the chafed spirits of our southern brethren by some judicious course through which the true intent and meaning of our noble Constitution may be vindicated, and our country be re-

stored to unity and peace. It is not that I have any sympathy with the institution of slavery. My feelings and my habits are all opposed to it, and I regard it as a serious evil, which I should rejoice to see abolished from the earth. Were it in my power to direct the energies of our General Government, I would gladly devote all its vast resources to the object of purchasing the freedom of every slave within the Union, and settling them upon the shores of Africa, on the model of Liberia, and aiding them to enlighten and civilize that vast continent from which their fathers came. The Mexican war alone has cost us one hundred millions in three years, for an advantage which is, as yet, of doubtful utility to our own best and highest interests. And it is susceptible of a strict arithmetical calculation, that the annual interest of twice that sum, continued for a period of fifty years, would suffice to emancipate our three millions of slaves, so as to relieve the country of the whole, during the life of the rising generation, and make them a blessing to Africa and the world at large. But neither this nor any other plan, at all commensurate with the evil, can be adopted, without much time and grave consideration. And, meanwhile, I cannot condemn our Southern brethren as sinners, because they use an institution which the law of God expressly allowed to ancient Israel, and which the precepts of the Gospel were never supposed to forbid, before the commencement of the present century. I cannot see the justice of denouncing them, because they claim the protection of the Constitution for their legal rights, as that Constitution has been expounded by the Supreme Court of the United States, the highest tribunal of our country. I cannot blame them because they refuse to reduce themselves to beggary by emancipating their slaves without a fair equivalent, nor because

they are unwilling to expose themselves to the danger of the conflict and confusion, which would be the probable, if not the inevitable consequence of retaining such a population amongst them. Nor can I wonder at the strong excitement which they feel at the doctrine of our ultra-abolitionists, when they hear and see themselves reviled as the enemies of God and man, unfit to hold communion with a Christian Church, or to have a place amongst a Christian people, merely because they maintain what was the doctrine of the whole Christian world, only fifty years ago.

But here I must ask you, my friends, to note carefully the distinction which the ultra-abolitionist is always confounding. The holding of an African slave is one thing, and the abusing him by cruelty or oppression is another. I cannot for a moment doubt that the Bible allows the relation of master and slave, while it condemns the treating of the slave in any other manner than is consistent with the Gospel precepts of justice, kindness and affectionate consideration. The sin therefore lies, not in the relation itself, but in the abuse of that relation by acts of immorality and severe ill-usage. And although I freely admit that the institution is liable to these abuses, and therefore desire most cordially, for that and various other reasons, that it may be done away, yet I know that there are many slave-holders who are eminent for every Christian virtue, who treat their slaves with all possible benevolence and care, and to whom those slaves look up with loving attachment, as their best earthly friends and benefactors. But the ultra-abolitionist can see no difference between the use and the abuse of the institution. According to his creed, slavery, under all circumstances, must be an unpardonable sin, an unmitigated atrocity: totally forgetting that

if the Gospel had forbidden the allowance of slavery, these millions of Africans who have lived and died in the midst of Christian influence, must have remained in their own benighted land, sunk in the extreme darkness of the grosest idolatry, and exposed to a depth of heathen corruption and ferocious tyranny, in comparison with which, the worst alleged abuses of southern bondage are light indeed.

Frankly and fully, therefore, do I agree, in relation to this matter, with your great statesman, Daniel Webster, and with, as I verily believe, the intelligent and reflecting mind which composes the majority of our clergy and our people throughout the Northern portion of the Union. With them, I deplore the evils of slavery. With them, I earnestly desire its total abolition, as soon as it can be attained in the spirit of Christian kindness and constitutional principle. With them, I would sincerely deprecate and oppose any needless extension of the area of slavery. But with them, also, I would refuse to do evil that good may come. I would refuse to relieve the slave by the ruin of the master. I would refuse to wrest the word of God under the mistaken hope of advancing the march of freedom. I would refuse to re-model the Church, by the exclusion of the slave owner, in the face of apostolical authority. And I would refuse to trample on the Constitution—the Supreme law of the land, and thus risk the commencement of a civil war, with all its horrid and atrocious consequences, only in order to force prematurely, what will be much more likely to come to pass, in the exercise of kindness and forbearance, and what I doubt not will come to pass, with the consent of all concerned, in the Lord's good time.

I have specified the name of Daniel Webster on this occasion, my friends, not because he holds a different opinion from many other eminent Statesmen, but because he has been made the peculiar subject of so much abuse and obloquy, for his disinterested, patriotic and magnanimous course, in the service of the whole Union. Alas! have we not here another sad proof of the violence of prejudice? When such a man can be so recklessly assailed by his former admirers, his very motives calumniated, his integrity aspersed, his honor and his purity of purpose slandered, only because he has conscientiously preferred the performance of his public duty to the nation at large, before his personal interest in his own district! These, however, are the very circumstances which test the power of principle. It is an easy thing to defend the truth, when truth is popular and acceptable to our party. But the Statesman who can resolve, if necessary, to sacrifice himself to the welfare of his Country, is a patriot indeed.

And now, my friends, to conclude—let me entreat you, one and all, to reflect seriously on the prospect before us. We have met together to deplore the calamity—the afflicting dispensation, which has deprived us of the hero, so lately raised to the highest office in the gift of man. But he has departed in honor and in peace. No more can his ears be pained by the conflict of party. No more can his heart be wrung by the sad anticipation of civil war, with all its frightful train of woe and desolation. For him we have nothing to regret. Years could have added nothing to his fame, nor is it for us to say that a longer life would have enabled him to establish a better claim to the affection of his country. But how do we propose to shew our reverence for his memory? Is it by encouraging this new and disorgan-

izing doctrine that the Southern slave-holder must be deprived of our sympathy as a Christian or a man? Why then did we help to elect a Southern and a slave-holder as our President, and why do we come here this day to unite in lamenting his death, as an afflicting dispensation? Shall we not rather testify our sorrow for his loss, by aiding to the utmost of our power, in maintaining the glorious Union, whose battles he fought during almost forty years? Shall we not rather imitate his patriotism by opposing the enemies of that noble constitution, which, under the guidance of a favoring Providence, our fathers framed as a model to the world? Shall we not range ourselves to a man with our faithful representatives, who, though they are all opposed to the extension of slavery, are yet more opposed to the awful perils of civil discord, as bound by oath and in conscience, to legislate for the peace and welfare of the whole nation? And above all, shall we not imitate the course of those Revolutionary heroes, who, in the hour of perilous dissension, resolved to look to God as their leader and their guide, in the prayer of humble dependence and trusting faith, that He would vouchsafe His favor and protection?

True, our glorious nation has been intoxicated by a marvelous career of prosperity. True, we have been too much devoted to the love of gold, the power of popularity, the ambition of conquest, the worship of men. True, we have been neglectful of the divine Source of all our blessings, and have forgotten that we are the purchased and redeemed inheritance of the Lord of hosts. But He has not yet cast off nor abandoned us. Our rulers are not yet delivered over to delusion. Our departed Chief Magistrate is succeeded by another, as able in the Cabinet as was his predecessor in the

field, and animated, as we trust, by the same zeal for the welfare of his Country. He has summoned to his aid a band of advisers who, as a whole, have no superiors in the land, for talents, experience and devotion to their official duty. If then, the feeling of the nation be right, what forbids us to hope that the course of our public prosperity will be onward, and still onward, in the union of high national, and cordial, fraternal sympathy, in the development of our vast resources, in the increasing reverence for law and order, in a loftier morality, and, as the spring and regulator of all the rest, in a deeper sense of practical religion? Thus, by due degrees, the North and the South may come to a harmonious sentiment on the subject of slavery. The angry spirit of crimination and recrimination once passed away, a peaceful and united effort may be made by the whole power of the nation, to convert the slaves into freemen, and settle them on the coast of their father-land, as the pioneers and guides of liberty and religion to that benighted continent. And then will our glorious country have accomplished a deed, 'beyond all Greek, beyond all Roman fame,' sure to carry down the names of the actors to the remotest posterity, and to attract the applause and admiration of a grateful world.

I have but little more to add, nor shall I trespass much farther on your kind attention. I doubt not that many of my respected auditors agree with me in the opinion expressed at the commencement of my address, that the selection of your orator has not been fortunate, and that I am but poorly qualified to do justice to your wishes, on an occasion like this. On that point, at least, we shall not differ in opinion. But I can assure you, with perfect sincerity, that I have not sought so much to say what might be acceptable at the moment, as to place

before you what I believe to be profitable, because I believe it to be true. In the ultimate power of truth, I have the most absolute confidence, since it is truth, and only truth, to which the Supreme Lord and Ruler of us all has promised the final victory. Error may triumph for a while. Even good men may be seduced by the impulse of their own generous feelings to become its ardent advocates, and in seasons of strong excitement and controversy, it may carry them away from the calm, pure light of Christian reason and consistency. And at such times, the advocates of truth may be abused and vilified. Yea, they may spend years under a cloud of odium and calumny, and may die at last in a vain struggle against popular delusion, as many a martyr has died before them. But truth does not die with them. Truth is immortal, truth is eternal, because it is the offspring of His word who liveth and abideth forever. If I have succeeded in raising any of your minds this day to that Fountain of truth, and if, in some reasonable measure, I have aided any amongst you to put away the violence of party spirit, to cherish the feelings of old affection towards all the members of our glorious Union, to regard the existing evils of our country in a spirit of patient hope and prayer, and mildly but firmly to discourage the disorganizing efforts, which endanger alike the peace of Church and State, and which may, if not checked in season, involve our happy nation in one wide spread deluge of anarchy and blood—then, my respected friends, I shall console myself with the reflection that your time has not been spent quite unprofitably, and that my humble and imperfect labor has not been altogether in vain.

