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KATHARINE E. COMAN

The Christian Patriot.

AN

ORATION,

BEFORE THE

ALUMNI OF RUTGER'S COLLEGE;

PRONOUNCED IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL,

AT

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

BY

CORNELIUS C. VANARSDALEN.

JULY 18, 1837.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW BRUNSWICK, July 19th, 1837.

DEAR SIR :

We take great pleasure in transmitting to you the enclosed extract, and in assuring you, in behalf of the members of the Association, of the high gratification your address afforded them.

R. ADRIAN, JR. }
WM. L. TERHUNE, } *Com. of the Alumni.*

Extract from the Minutes of the Association of the Alumni of Rutgers's College.

JULY 18th, 1837.

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association be presented to the Rev. C. C. VANARSDALEN, for the able and eloquent address pronounced by him this day, before the Association, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication."

"*Resolved*, That Robert Adrian, Jr. and William L. Terhune, be a committee to carry the above resolution into effect."

GENTLEMEN :

I should have given a much earlier reply to your polite request, but my intention has been to decline the publication of my address. Owing to the extreme lateness of the time at which I was informed of my appointment; it was written in great haste, and when I was also in ill health. As many of my friends, however, have desired a copy, I have at length, been induced to send it to you with all its imperfections. If its publication, as it is, can promote, in any measure, the sentiments I have endeavored to advance, it is at your service.

With very high regard, Gentlemen,

believe me your friend and servant,

C. C. VANARSDALEN.

TO ROBERT ADRIAN, Jr. Esq. }
and WM. L. TERHUNE, Esq. } *Com. of the Alumni.*



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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE ALUMNI:

AT your request I have come to meet you again within these sacred walls. I am sensible of the honor you have conferred upon me, in appointing me your speaker, and, though I may not meet your expectations as *an orator*, I am too faithful to early associations to refuse compliance with your wishes as *a friend*. It is especially as such, that I stand before you. Here, every thing reminds us of the scenes of the past—here, every thing is calculated to awaken the most tender sensibilities of our hearts. We remember the joyous companionship of former years. We remember the bright and the buoyant days of our early youth. This venerated hall—these hills and vallies—these frequented walks, are familiar to us. Here many a happy hour has glided smoothly away—many a fond hope has been cherished—and many warm and lasting friendships have been formed. From our distant places of abode, and the toils of our respective professions, we have come again to meet each other, and renew our assurances of unchanging regard. We have come also to testify our continued affection and respect for our venerable President, for the Instructors of our youth, and, above all, our gratitude to our common and best Benefactor, whose kind care has been over us, and whose rich mercies have been lavished upon our way.

This day, Gentlemen, also reminds us of many a familiar form which we behold not, and shall never again behold on earth. Many of our early associates and friends come not to participate in these joyous greetings. Some from every class have already disappeared from this scene of life—and have entered the eternal world. This day, therefore, with all its pleasures, brings with it a solemn admonition of the rapid flight of our time—a voice comes to us from the graves of our buried class-mates and friends, and bids us wisely improve the present as it flies.

In obedience to this admonition, I know not how I can better perform my duty, both as a Christian and an American, than by holding up to your contemplation the character and appropriate labors of a CHRISTIAN PATRIOT. If in the present unhappy state of our political affairs, as a nation, I may be so fortunate as to present this character in its true beauty and importance—to excite your admiration and inspire the noble determination in your hearts to seek the same spirit, and pursue the same life—I shall secure your highest happiness, and the approbation of my own conscience.

By some, however, it may be doubted whether these two traits of character can coëxist in the same person. Lord Shaftsbury is not the only enemy to Christianity who has asserted that “there is nothing in the Bible to recommend and encourage the love of one’s country.” But a candid examination cannot fail to convince us, that all such assertions arise, either from gross ignorance, or intentional falsehood. It will be no difficult thing to prove, not only that they can, but that they must coëxist—that the one necessarily includes the other—that the spirit of true Religion is pre-eminently a Patriotic spirit, and that there is no genuine Patriotism without it.

That it is in perfect harmony with the spirit of religion to cherish a special interest in the welfare of our own country, must be seen in a single glance at the Word of God.

If, for example, you refer to the inspired page, you will find that it formed a conspicuous and illustrious trait in the character of Moses. For the good of his countrymen he spurned

the honors of the Egyptian Court; though they were in bondage—poor and despised, he united his destiny with theirs, choosing rather to share their privation and reproach, and to secure to them the privileges and enjoyment of freedom. Was it not the same spirit in the youthful David, when “his heart stirred within him” at the proud boasting of his country’s foes—and when single handed he went forth to join in deadly conflict with the champion of the Philistine host? In all his subsequent history also, and in the glowing strains of his sublime Psalms, may we not discover evidences of ardent and unchanging devotion to his country’s good? Not less strikingly is the same Patriotic spirit displayed in the sad lamentations of the children of Israel, when they were held as captives in a strange land. Who that has felt the strength of such emotions does not find his heart going forth in generous sympathy as he reads the record of their sorrows? “By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down: yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof, for there they that carried us away captive required of us a song—saying, ‘sing us one of the songs of Zion.’ How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” The life of Nehemiah affords another instance of the truth of our position. In the inspired book which bears his name, we are told that when one came to him bearing intelligence of the unhappy state of his native country, he “sat down and wept, and mourned many days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven.” From that moment he devoted himself to her good; he left the splendors and the luxuries of the Persian palace; nor did he rest, till, through much labor and great dangers, the walls of Jerusalem were again built, and the scattered inhabitants gathered and fortified against their foes. In Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and the other prophets, we see the same peculiar and intense regard exhibited for the good of their own country.

But it has been said that the gospel introduced a different

spirit into the world in this respect ; that it broke down all distinctions and instructed its believers to view all men, and all nations with equal interest. That it demands warmer and more enlarged benevolence, that it may be viewed as a more advanced lesson in Divine instruction, we admit—but that it does not authorize and require a special regard to our own country, we deny.

As an evidence of this, a reference to the lives and sentiments of its prominent defenders will show that they were Patriots as well as the Patriarchs and the Prophets of more ancient days. Examine, for example, the writings of the Apostle Paul, and listen to his own declaration : “ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” It was on the state of his countrymen that the mind of the apostle was here fixed—and that heart which flowed forth in Christian benevolence towards all men, now glows with ten-fold ardor. Their interests were continually and intensely weighing upon his mind, and he declares himself willing to make any sacrifice, however great, if thereby he could effect their deliverance, and secure their good. But there is one example of still higher authority. It is that of the Son of God—the **DIVINE TEACHER**. It is true that he came to rescue a world from ruin—He was the Friend of the whole family of man—but the land of his nativity—the home of His early years—the abode of his kindred according to the flesh, was still the object of his special love. It was here that “ he went about doing good.” It was for her welfare that he labored by day, and poured forth his prayers by night, and when, at length, all his efforts proved unavailing—when in their political and moral state they had become in the last degree degenerate and corrupt, how clearly is the Patriotic spirit of the Son of God displayed. As he approached the city of Jerusalem, the great metropolis of his native country ; as he stood upon the Mount of Olives—on the very spot where the army of Titus was afterwards

encamped; as, with his eyes fixed upon that proud city, he thought of the future triumph of her foes, when “not one stone should be left upon another,”—his soul was filled with sorrow, and “as he beheld the city, *he wept.*” Nor was this all; not even the pangs of death—not even the tortures of the cross, could quench in his heart the love of his native land. That he still sought to secure to her, first of all, the great blessings of his gospel—the political and moral advantages which it was calculated to confer, is evident from the fact that after his resurrection from the dead, the instruction which he gave to his followers was, to “preach the gospel among all nations—*beginning at Jerusalem.*” Is it not clearly established, therefore, from these illustrious examples, that on this subject the Old and the New Testament Scriptures are in perfect harmony, and that while our holy religion teaches us benevolence towards all men—it warrants and demands a special regard for the good of our own country.

The truth of this position will further appear from the higher duties which attach to the relations of life. Is it not true, for example, that the relation which the members of a family sustain to each other, imposes upon them special duties? “If any,” says the Apostle, “provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own kindred, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Is it not, therefore, the duty of a Father to be interested in, and to provide for his own children in preference to the children of others? And so on the other hand, is it not the language of a Divine command to children, “honor thy Father and thy Mother?” Are not children, therefore, from the very relation which they sustain, required to show peculiar affection and reverence towards their own parents? And if this is so, is not a special interest in our own country, where parents or children reside, and the welfare of which involves that of all the intimate and nearest kindred, clearly warranted and required? But further, the establishment of the family relation is not arbitrary. For, while it does not prohibit nor diminish the exercise of general benevolence, by concentrating and calling out the warmer affections towards the few,

it secures the highest happiness and the greatest good of the whole. As these links go to make up the golden chain of society, do we not see great beauty and wisdom in that arrangement, by which a little group is gathered around each link, and, with that assigned to them as in a special degree their own, with affections quickened, they are at work to add to its strength and increase its brightness? Nor is this all; we see a further beauty in this arrangement if we consider the limited powers of man. He is not competent, in the same degree, to the task of a more extended effort; his powers are of a limited nature, and it is wise therefore, that the sphere of his labor should be limited also. And yet, as we have before remarked, while in this manner his special efforts are limited to comparatively few objects, it thereby more effectually secures the good of the whole. The father, therefore, who neglects parental duties, is not only guilty of a heinous offence against God and his own family—but against society at large. And yet still further, these links may be considered as forming one chain, not only as regards the present extent of society, but also as to its future duration. And thus from family to family, and generation to generation, the family relation, though limited in its special love and effort, by this very arrangement, confers the highest good upon the whole, and transmits the richest blessings through all ages. Now the division of mankind into different nations is evidently intended, and adapted to subserve a similar purpose. For the same reasons, therefore, it exhibits great beauty and wisdom, but the same special love and effort are essential, if the great end is secured. It is only enlarging the relation that equally desirable results may be accomplished on a more magnificent scale. If it is the duty of a father, then, to cherish a particular attachment to his own children, and if the good of the community is thereby most effectually promoted—so it is the duty of every citizen to feel a special regard for his own country, and to exert his greatest efforts to promote its welfare.

This truth however will further be exhibited and enforced by unfolding more fully wherein *true Patriotism* consists.

We have endeavored to show, not only that the love of our country, but that a greater degree of love to our country than to any other, is consistent with, and inseparable from a true Christian spirit. The question now arises, what is the legitimate exhibition of this love? or in what way should it be manifested? And here we are required to distinguish between *true* and *false* Patriotism. It has been well said that there is scarcely any virtue for which there is not a counterfeit, and if all those in our land who are palming off this counterfeit Patriotism on the public, should be arrested and committed, we fear that our prisons would be too small to contain them. It is quite as common an article in the present day as the bills of our broken banks, and through the great scarcity of the genuine, good old coin, the people seem obliged to take up with it. In how many instances, where perhaps the loudest professions are made of love to "*the country*," and love to "*the people*," are the love of personal distinction, and the love of reward, and of influence, the secret springs of action? That it is not the good of the country which many of *these Patriots* consult, is evident from the multitudes who are grasping after public office; and in the great majority of cases, these aspirants are very far from possessing those qualifications which are likely to secure the highest good of the community. Look at them. Who are they? Are they men of education?—of integrity?—of intellectual and moral worth? Are they men who by their attainments and their virtues are ready to confer honor upon the office? or, are they looking to the office to confer honor upon them? In the ninth chapter of the Book of Judges we have a striking description of these office-seeking men. In the beautiful figure of the inspired writer, the trees are represented as about to elect for themselves a king. The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine, having been respectively consulted and requested to accept the office, very modestly decline, and urge as their reason, their present usefulness in the sphere in which God had placed them, and their reluctance to take upon themselves the high responsibilities and authority of a monarch. "Then said all the trees unto the bramble, come thou and reign over us.

And the bramble said unto the trees,—‘ If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow ; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’ Have we not in this fable an illustration of what in the present times we may continually behold ? The bramble—the most incompetent—the most worthless, is, notwithstanding, the most ready of them all to assume the highest trust. There is here no modest reserve—no sense of *responsibility*—no conscientious examination as to its *capacity*—but an immediate grasping at the office, with false promises of protection—“ come and put your trust in my shadow ;” and then the most violent inflictions on all opposers—“ if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.” Is not this a picture worthy of inspiration ? Does it not draw a distinction between true and false Patriotism, before which many of the loud and boasting pretenders of these times should blush with shame ? Is it not true that those who are most competent and worthy to fill an office—the most virtuous and intelligent, are those, who, under a sense of the importance of the trust, and of the duty of *governing for the good of the people, and not their own*, so far from seeking and courting office, rather shrink from it ; while the ignorant, the covetous, and the ambitious,—the mere brambles, who think, and feel, and act, from no higher motive than their own promotion, are most ready to push themselves before the people, with loud pretensions of seeking “ *the people’s*” welfare, with empty promises of protecting “ *the people’s rights*,” and when once seated in office, is it not often the case, that the great and the good have to suffer, and thus fire comes out from the bramble and devours the cedars of Lebanon ? Surely, though it may bear the name, there is no Patriotism in this. Not one spark of Patriotism ever warmed the hearts of such men. “ *The good of the people*,” and “ *the rights of the people*” are terms in which they abound, but it is the mere *cant* of political hypocrites. They are not actuated by the love of their country, but of themselves. It is high time that the people should look under the mask of these vile impostors. The true Patriot is influenced by no such

motives. He loses sight of himself, and looks at the good of the community. For his country he lives, and for his country he is willing to die.

Nor is it the spirit of genuine Patriotism to indulge in angry, and impetuous feelings, or a disposition to resent every trifling insult which may be offered to the country, without stopping to inquire what such resentment is likely to cost. Nothing is more false and absurd than to call that a spirit of Patriotism which pays little or no regard to the peace or the lives of the citizens—and under pretence of “*love to the country,*” can spread the horrors of war through her borders, and drench her soil with the blood of her sons. Yet in this way has many an individual received the name and the praise of a hero and a Patriot, when he ought to have been branded as the worst of his country’s foes. It is the love of power, or of fame; it is an evil spirit exhibiting itself in the sacred robes of an angel of light. That in some instances war may be unavoidable in self-defence, we do not deny; but, in by far the greater number of cases, it is productive of infinitely more evil than could be incurred by pursuing a pacific course. The true Patriot, therefore, except in cases of unavoidable necessity, will be the last to involve his country in the crimes and the miseries of war.

Let it be granted, then, that true Patriotism consists in the love of our country—and though it does not forget the duties of common benevolence which are due to all men, nor seek to elevate its own country by the destruction or injury of another, it does, notwithstanding, cherish for her a peculiar interest. Now if that interest is felt, it must and will be exhibited in effort to promote the highest good of the country. The question then arises, wherein does the highest good of a country consist?—and then, whoever is most effectual in securing that good, he, it must follow, is the best Patriot.

We contend, and shall prove, that the religion of Jesus Christ, is itself the highest good of a country, as well as of an individual. “Righteousness exalteth a nation,” saith an inspired writer, “but sin is a reproach to any people.” This is a proposition susceptible of demonstrative proof, both from

the very nature of the case, and the history of nations. Lord Bacon mentions four pillars of government—"Religion, justice, counsel, and wealth;" but it may easily be shown, that they are all included in, or secured by the first. On this single pillar the whole superstructure must rest; when this stands symmetrical and firm, the government is secure, but when this begins to crumble or show marks of decay, the whole fabric is about to fall.

If we consider any of the truths which the Sacred Scriptures unfold, or any of the duties which they enjoin, either to God, to ourselves, or our fellow men; or if we reflect upon the various and soul-stirring motives which they present, we shall find that they are all intended, and wisely adapted to promote the public good. Take for example the grand idea, which forms the foundation of our holy religion—the existence and perfections of God, as He is revealed in His word. Here is a Being—our Creator, Benefactor, and Judge; Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, a Being of spotless purity, of boundless mercy, and of infinite justice. Can it be possible that a belief in the existence of such a God—a God who approves virtue and abhors vice—who is the continual witness of all our thoughts, and words, and actions; the constant companion of all our steps; the unerring and impartial discerner of all our motives, and the future Judge, who, according to our present life, is to determine our eternal destiny—can it be possible that a belief in this primary and fundamental truth can be fully entertained, and not exert a most powerful and happy influence over the minds and the conduct of men? In whatever station they may be placed, or whatever means of usefulness they may possess, is it not calculated to secure fidelity to the trust assigned them, whether as the rulers or the ruled? Now the very first duty enjoined by our religion, is, not only a full belief in His existence, but a supreme love towards this great and good Being; and from this pure fountain of love to a Holy God, are to flow forth all the other duties which we owe to ourselves and our fellow men.

Glance now at what are called the *Personal* and the *Social*

duties ; and though their ultimate and supreme object is of far higher importance, see if they are not also calculated to promote the public welfare. Among those which are called *Personal duties*, we find *Humility, Meekness, Temperance, Purity, Industry, Diligence, Contentment, Cheerfulness, Self-denial*, and *the pursuit of Knowledge*. Need I stop here to show you, how these duties, in their very nature, are adapted to secure not only individual, but public good ? Need I pause here to show you what crimes and miseries have been brought upon society through a disregard to these requirements ? As their opposites, we have *Pride, Anger and Revenge, Intemperance, Debauchery, Indolence, Covetousness and Ambition, Sensuality and Ignorance*. And has not each of these been productive of unspeakable injury, and must they not, in the very nature of things, always and inevitably inflict the same evils on society ?

Look now at some of the *Social duties*, as they are termed, or those duties which God in his word, requires of us towards our fellow men. Here are those which attach to the relations of life. Such as *the duties of Husbands and Wives—of Parents and Children—of Masters and Servants* ; in all of which, mutual affection and mutual services are demanded, all designed and adapted to promote the common good. Here *the Ruler and the Ruled—the Magistrate and the People*, will find precepts, and principles, and laws, prescribed with the wisdom, and enforced with the authority of God. Here all men, in all stations, at all times, in all their dealings or intercourse with their fellow men, are most solemnly required to “*do justice and to love mercy.*” Here the axe is laid at the root of all that mean, contemptible, and blinded selfishness, which is the cause of all evil and injury, and men are taught to think, and speak, and act from more exalted views.

Is it not plain, then, that the religion of the gospel is essential to the good of a community ? Here we are required to cultivate that *Charity* which shall lead us to seek the public welfare. Here we are taught to seek that *knowledge* and *virtue* which shall prepare us to frame, or correct, or support the laws, and those principles which shall lead us to administer

them in justice, or to obey them while in force. We are required to promote the harmony of the community by becoming "*peace makers*," between those of conflicting interests or parties. We are required to promote the wealth of the community, (its sufficient and substantial wealth,) by *frugality, humility, industry, and charity*. We are required to promote the happiness of the community by acts of *kindness and benevolence*. In short, we are required to improve our powers and opportunities—to fill with fidelity the sphere in which God has placed us—to practice the most spotless integrity, and the most liberal charity, and to live not simply for ourselves but for the good of others.

It is true also, that the Christian religion presents *motives* to the faithful performance of all these duties which can be derived from no other source. The faithful and virtuous are cheered on in their course, even through reproach and sorrow, by the prospect of *eternal felicity*; and the sordid, plotting, selfish, vicious man, is met, even in his temporal successes, by the warnings of future and unending wrath, and entreated in the accents of divine love, to turn from his wicked ways and live. On the one hand, the bright and the unfading joys of Heaven are held forth, to encourage, to strengthen, and inspire the righteous; and on the other the deepest horrors of an eternal hell, to alarm, to arrest, and reclaim the wicked. Who can deny our position then, that this religion, enjoining such duties, enforcing them by such powerful motives, is itself the highest good of a community; and as the Christian is himself governed by its principles, and by his example and life, seeking to extend their influence, is he not the best, nay is he not the only TRUE PATRIOT.

This truth will farther be seen if you examine the history of our Religion. On every land where her instructions have been given and received she has conferred the richest blessings. That erring and weak minded, though well meaning men, have in some instances mistaken her instructions, and misrepresented her nature, we do not deny; and that others, under pretence of being her friends and followers, have inflicted the sorest evils on society—have stirred up sedition and

strife, and propagated falsehood and vice, is equally true. But is it just to ascribe these evils to religion, when, as we have shown, it is her object and her effort to remove them? Is a man who may be misunderstood or misrepresented, either by his real or pretended friends, to be answerable for their ignorance or their crimes? Religion is one thing, and the ignorant conceptions, and impious perversions of men are another—and we are bound in honesty, and as just reasoners, to distinguish between them. And yet it has been truly said, by the distinguished Edmund Burke, that “for every injury to society which can possibly be ascribed to Religion through the ignorance or wickedness of its professed friends, we may point to a thousand inflicted by Atheism and Infidelity.” Look on the other hand at the advantages which it has actually conferred on every land where it has been introduced. To appreciate these you have only to compare Christian with heathen nations. You have only to go back and trace the mighty transformations which have taken place through the influence of Christianity. If you study her history, you will find that she has always been the parent and the patron of Science and the Arts. Under her smiles you will see the School house and the College springing up by the side of the Sanctuary. You will see that those who first opened the treasures of Knowledge in Britain, were *Christians*; that he who established and cherished the distinguished school of Canterbury, from which the light of knowledge first beamed upon England, was *a Christian*; that the first monarch who gave to England a written code of laws was *a Christian*; that he who first gave to the German nations a written language, and instructed them in the knowledge of letters, was *a Christian*: that they who landed on the shores of Ireland on a mission of mercy, and first gave to its inhabitants an alphabet, were *Christians*; that they also who first carried the light of science to the Moravians, Bulgarians, and Bohemians, were *Christians*. In short, I might occupy the day, did I attempt to point out all the places to which Christianity first gave the knowledge and the love of learning. But this is not all. She has not only established her schools, and semi-

naries, and colleges, but with an open hand she has endowed them, and with an unfainting heart she has toiled in them, for the diffusion of useful knowledge. And in the same sublime spirit she is still pursuing and extending her efforts. It was her divine work also first to blend the light of *Christian morals* with the light of science. She unfolded those exalted virtues, without which even knowledge has always proved a curse instead of a blessing. She first pointed out the true greatness of genius and the highest aims of science, by teaching men to devote them to the good of others, and to value them only as they enabled them to secure this end. Accordingly it was her hand which first adorned our world with Asylums for the poor and the afflicted. It was through her influence that woman was raised from degradation, and instead of the slave, became the companion, the equal, and the glory of man. It was her benign spirit that first abolished the cruelties of heathen lands. She threw down tyrants from their thrones—reformed the laws of nations, and revealed and enforced the principles of a wise, a just, and a benevolent policy. Can Atheism or Infidelity point us to a single spot which has been thus beautified by their labors? Dare they come forth to the light of day and stand an equal test? No, no, in their very nature they must tend to corruption, anarchy, and crime, and their history has abundantly illustrated the fact.

From what has been said, we trust that our position has been sufficiently established; that the Christian not only may be, but that he must be a patriot—and that the Christian patriot is the best, and the only true patriot.

Let us now turn for a moment briefly to consider the special need in which, as a nation, we stand of such men. And I must here protest that in the remarks which are to follow, I have no intention to attack any political party of the day. I shall speak of the nature of our government, and show wherein evils are to be apprehended, and endeavor to point out a remedy. Whatever may be the corruptions of the present dominant party in politics, we doubt not, that while human nature is the same, and while our government remains the

same, unless the remedy is applied in time, if the opposing party possessed the power, it would not be long before they would become equally corrupt. I must also be permitted to say, that however persons may object to any interference with politics on the part of the clergy, in the performance of their professional duties on the sabbath, I hope that on this occasion, I may be allowed to offer my views on general principles, without subjecting myself to any such imputation.

We congratulate ourselves, and well we may, on the form of government which we enjoy. It possesses many and great privileges which belong to no other under heaven; nor can we conceive of a better in theory, whatever evils may follow its application. And it cannot be denied that there are many and great dangers to be apprehended, which ought to be known and seen that the means for their prevention may be employed.

A republican government, for example, throws all the power into the hands of the people. In all cases the majority are to rule, and accordingly we hear much said about, "*the sovereignty of the people.*" Now it is evident that this form of government, presupposes two things, which at present do not exist in reality. It presupposes that *the intelligence necessary to judge as to the capacity of candidates for public office, or the public measures pursued, is to be found in the majority.* But is this so? According to the present standard throughout our land, is not the intelligence as likely to be found in the minority? Nay, is it not generally the case that intelligence belongs to the few? The number of those who have the means and the ability, and who devote themselves to its attainment, are always comparatively few. The majority of almost any community are far more likely to be influenced by wheedling promises, or cunningly devised flattery, than by sound reasoning, or modest truth.

A republican government also presupposes that moral integrity is to be found in the majority—that they will judge and act for the public good. But according to the general standard of morals, is this so in fact? Do we not in this

assumption forget that men are depraved, and that, in the great majority of cases, they act from purely selfish motives? Whether we speak of public officers or their constituents, have we not reason to fear that their own advantage, instead of that of the public, will be the *primum mobile*, the main spring of their actions? And that in this way we must expect that such offices as are at the disposal of those in power will be made a means of bribery; and, on the other hand, that there will be multitudes among the people ready to sell their influence and their votes to the highest bidder? It has been said, and it is a favorite saying with us, and one too which our form of government supposes always to be true, that "*vox populi, vox dei*," but if we remember that neither intelligence nor moral integrity are to be found with the many; and if we examine the pages of history, sacred or profane, we shall find it has at least in an equal number of cases proved that *vox populi, vox diaboli*. Now see how religion comes in to correct these evils; here, and here only, is the remedy. It is her effort to diffuse intelligence, and to inspire correct principles, so that they shall *in fact* be found in the majority; and then our government will be founded on just premises, it will then rest on a firm and true basis, and in all cases the voice of the people will be the voice of wisdom and of God.

Another evil to which we are greatly exposed, under our form of government, is that very erroneous and loose ideas of *liberty* are likely to obtain among the people. We boast of our liberty, and truly it is one of the richest blessings we enjoy, but we ought never to forget that the richest blessing may be turned into the most tremendous curse. It is easy to see how this can be done. Already there are multitudes in our land who seem to understand that *liberty* means an individual right to say or to do, just what we please, and to have adopted as a good Christian principle the heathen maxim,— "*Rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire, quæ velis, et, quæ sentias, dicere licet.*"

But is this liberty, or is it licentiousness? Is it freedom, or anarchy and confusion? Government is always necessary,

for its necessity is founded in the very constitution of things. It is indispensable to the public good, and the degree of individual liberty under any form of government is just that, and no more, which is most likely to secure this object. If, on the one hand, there may be on the part of the executive government an infringement on individual liberty, to such an extent as to oppress the people—to trample upon their natural rights and to keep down all energy and manliness of thought and of action; on the other hand, it is possible to have too much liberty—a land may be too full of it, and finally be destroyed by it. And are we not in danger of the latter evil? Is there not a growing disposition in the community to resist all constraint, and all authority, and, to an alarming extent, to assume the right of individual dictation and control? And there are those who turn as a sanction for these reckless and lawless principles, to our own Declaration of Independence, where they tell us, they find their sentiments, when it is said that “all men are born free and equal.” But is it not evident that this proposition must be understood in a limited sense? And does not the subsequent part of that distinguished document show us that it was so understood by its illustrious supporters? The necessity of a government—a government clothed with authority—is still recognized; and it is only grossly oppressive and tyrannical measures—pronounced so, not by a few individuals, but by the great body of the wise, the intelligent, and the good, it is only such measures which, as a whole, it can justly be said to resist. Very different however is the sense in which it is construed by multitudes in the present day. By them it is turned against the very principles and laws which our fathers toiled and bled to establish. Hence we have our reckless *reformers*, and *disorganizers* and *levelers*, who seek to demolish all distinction, and all authority. And they tell us that “*all men are born free and equal.*” If all men are *born free*, then surely we may have liberty to ask of them a proof of their assertion; and if all men are *born equal*, they must be competent to meet the demand. As to all men being born free in this sense, we say it is not true. So far from it that no man is born thus free. From our first moments we are

in subjection to higher power and authority, as children, as subjects of a civil government, and of the moral government of our Creator. Now in either of these relations can it be said that all men are born free? Are they not bound by the laws of nature—by the laws of the land—and by the laws of God? They may possess the power to resist either, or all of these, it is true, but they have not the right, nor the ability to avoid the consequences. If it be said by the advocates for lawless liberty, that they speak of men being born free and equal, only in reference to civil government, we reply, that as civil government is essential to the welfare of man, in his present state, if on the one hand he looks to it for the protection of his own life and privileges, he is bound on the other to render it that homage and obedience, which are to clothe it with power and influence over the conduct of others.

But in this sense we are also told by our champions for liberty and equality, that all men are born equal. And in what sense is this true? Are they born with equal powers, physical or intellectual? Are they born with equal advantages, from temporal circumstances, for moral or intellectual culture? Or, even admitting that they are so born, is it true, as these men assume, that they continue so? Is one man, whose capacities and whose education are inferior, as competent to decide questions in law, as another whose mind for years has been absorbed in the study of jurisprudence? Is one man as competent to govern as another? Are all men equally able to understand, and equally prepared to perform the duties of any office? Is every passenger in a steamboat as competent to take command, and has he the same right to do so, as the captain who has devoted his time and his study to the subject? These, it must be seen, are most dangerous sentiments, subversive of all order and government, destructive to all human rights, and ruinous to the best interests of our country. The idea in itself is also most absurd. Suppose, if you please, that the plan were practicable, and that all men should be reduced to perfect equality, with their present various dispositions and powers, how long would such a state of things last? Would not those of strong and cultiva-

ted minds, or those of deep sagacity, and cunning, and ambition, soon be seen rising above their fellow men? And we doubt not, if the thirst for distinction and the resistance of control could secure it, that many of those who are now the warmest advocates for *equality*, would be the very first to assume the rod of despotic domination, and the same spirit that now leads them to oppose personal distinction, and legal authority, would then show itself in the most cruel and unlimited tyranny. But the thing is impracticable. Where shall we find this equality? Neither in heaven, earth, nor hell! Perhaps the nearest approach to it, is in the savage state. And is this the object at which our self styled *reformers* are aiming? Would they throw us back again into all the crimes and miseries of savage life?

But if these advocates for equality—these sterling, disinterested patriots—these enlightened reformers, and benevolent and philanthropic levelers, are sincere in their professions, why do they not give us a practical evidence of the fact, by showing us an example? Why do they not themselves, instead of assailing those above them, descend to the grades of society below them, *if there are such*? Why do they not throw away their own false dignity, and false shame, and false pride, and herd with the lowest and vilest in their hovels of filth? No, no, this is not their object. It is to pull down those who are above them to an equality, or even subjection to themselves. Depend upon it, gentlemen, all these boisterous professions about "*equal rights*"—all this desire to break up established forms, and established authority—all these cries for liberty, and democracy, and equality, are only the overflowings of pride, and envy, and restless ambition. They are intended to flatter, and wheedle the people. It is the same policy which was adopted by Voltaire, Condorcet, D'Lambert and others of the infidel leaders in the French Revolution. It was a favorite saying of theirs—

“L'égalité naturelle des hommes, et la souveraineté du peuple.”

And it was this maxim which enabled them to deceive the people, and secured to them such immense influence. In this

way, by base flattery and pretended philanthropy, they obtained for their principles that ascendancy which finally resulted in such appalling scenes of anarchy and blood. Now let this wild-fire, this spirit of misrule, spread through our land—let these disorganizers and levelers succeed in their efforts, and the same tragic scenes will again be witnessed, till our own native vallies shall ring with the cries of civil conflict, and our own native soil be crimsoned with the blood of our kindred and our friends. But for all these evils, religion is a sufficient and sure remedy. Only diffuse its heavenly truths—only extend the knowledge of its enlightened principles—only bring to bear upon the public mind its powerful motives, and inspire in the public heart its divine spirit, and our country will be safe and prosperous; our laws will be respected and obeyed—our people contented and happy—our magistrates honored and beloved, and our just rights and privileges preserved.

Another source of danger to which, under our form of government we are greatly exposed, is the virulence of party spirit. The existence of party combinations appears to attach necessarily to every form of free government we admit. And in the same degree that you extend the influence and the privilege of the elective franchise, you open still wider the way for conflicting interests and opposing parties. And to a certain extent, when under proper control, these party combinations are, no doubt, essential to the progress of true principles. But one thing is certain, that though we admit the necessity of these combinations, under existing circumstances, there can be no necessity nor utility in that servile adherence to a party which destroys the sense of individual responsibility—which chains down all independence and manliness of thought and of action, and leads a man to loose himself in his subjection to a party. Is this a spirit becoming a child of our Fathers? Is it consistent with our free institutions? Is it consistent with a just and wise independence, or with an enlightened liberty of conscience? or is it loading ourselves with chains, as galling and oppressive as those which the doomed subject of a tyrant is condemned to bear? There is a despotism in

“*party spirit*” which even the advocates for unlimited democracy appear blind to perceive and powerless to resist—and we, gentlemen, have need of christian patriots, in this respect, who shall be the salt of our land, to show us that there are higher motives than the favor of a party, and more exalted ends of action than personal emolument, or the love of office.

Though it should be granted also, that party combinations are inseparable from a free government, does it therefore follow that the malevolence and the vituperation which are now exhibited by our political parties are unavoidable? Must our citizens be divided into separate factions—marshalled in different clans; and then assail each other’s reputation—destroy each other’s influence, and with all the hostility of bitter foes, be arrayed against each other on the arena of political conflict? Is that malignant, infernal spirit, essential to the operation of our free government, by which one party attacks the private character of every opposing candidate for office—throws out its vile slanders, and covers him with abuse? Is this spirit, so conspicuous in all opposing parties throughout our land, a spirit of patriotism? Is it consistent with a sound policy? Is it conducive to the public good? Or does it tend to alienate the affections of one part of the community against another, and to produce internal divisions and commotions of the most alarming nature? Through the influence of this growing evil we have already heard the cry for a disruption of our happy confederacy. There are those at the North who in this hostile manner have denounced the citizens of the South—and from the South denunciation has been hurled back in the same menacing tone. If this state of things is allowed to continue, who does not see that disunion must be, and a civil war may be the result. Then farewell to the liberties of our country—farewell to the institutions which our fathers fought and bled to purchase, and farewell to the sweet smiles of God upon us as a nation. Let this result be fully weighed by our pretended reformers, and our hot-headed politicians, and by all our citizens. Let them consider if any possible calamity can befall us as a nation more deplorable

than this. Here also we see our need of christian patriots. Religion comes in to soften and allay this violence and hostility. If we are told that it exists as much in the religious as the political affairs of the country, we again reply, that true religion is not to be condemned because its professed friends are frail and imperfect, or even hypocrites and deceivers. The true spirit of religion is a spirit of peace and of love. Though there may be fanatics and enthusiasts who may otherwise represent it, and with a stubborn and reckless hand scatter around them "fire-brands, arrows and death"—the scriptures expressly declare that "the wrath of man cannot work the righteousness of God." They tell us that genuine religion is "first pure—then peaceable—gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality (or contention,) and without hypocrisy." That men must and will have their own views as to general principles, whether in religion or politics, we admit, and they should have them; but the only spirit in which the gospel allows their advancement is a spirit of meekness and of love. It demands of its followers that kindness and humanity which are the opposites of angry and malevolent aspersions, and though they may differ in judgment, this is the "one spirit" which is to animate them all. And in all true christians, and true patriots, this spirit is found. I rejoice, gentlemen, that we are not wholly destitute of such examples. I remember that I am addressing an audience, many of whom, on a previous anniversary of this institution, listened to the honest and resistless eloquence of a christian patriot, who is now in Heaven—the late Hon. Wm. Wirt. His motives were assailed by calumny, it is true, but he was a great and a good man. Never has our land given birth to a better statesman, or a more disinterested lover of his country. Would to God we had many more like him, to follow in his footsteps, and to spread around them the heavenly light which his life and his death displayed.

Did time permit, gentlemen, I might show you our special need of christian patriots to guard us also against the prevalence of a monied aristocracy.

Our land has rung with congratulations, that in this respect,

pre-eminently, we are superior to the older nations of the world—we have no aristocracy! But of all the aristocracies with which the earth has ever been cursed, none is more to be dreaded than that constituted by wealth—because in this case, there is often neither strength of mind, nor moral excellence, nor refinement of feelings or manners to sustain it. And yet are we in no danger of this evil? See what multitudes are struggling after wealth with as much zeal and parsimony as though it were “the chief end of man” to be rich. Doubtless there are many rich men who are very excellent men, and who are highly deserving of our esteem and praise—but an inspired writer has told us that “the *love* of money is the root of all evil”—and is not this *love* of money the reigning sin of the day? And is it not evidently on the increase in our land! Why? surely not because it enables its possessors to procure merely the luxuries of sensual indulgence—but there is an increasing disposition in the public mind to regard them with respect and homage, simply because they are rich. Wealth in our land, therefore, is sought with avidity, not only for its own sake, but that it may procure public respect, and serve as a stepping-stone to distinction and influence. And, alas! through the folly of the community, it is becoming one of the surest means of obtaining them. Only let a man grow rich, no matter how, no matter from what—and influence and honor seem to be the necessary concomitants—though he may be niggardly in his spirit, screwing and over-reaching in his dealings, illiberal to the poor, without generosity and integrity, destitute of all that is noble in heart, and strong or refined in thought.

“Stat fortuna improba noctu,
 Arridens nudis infantibus: hos fovet omnes,
 Involvitque sinu; domibus tunc porrigit altis,
 Secretumque sibi mimum parat; hos amat, his se
 Ingerit, atque suos ridens, producit alumnos.”

Is such a man worthy of respect or influence, merely because he is rich? Does wealth give him brains, or manliness, or integrity? Does it put knowledge into his head, or hones-

ty, or honor, or truth into his heart? Yet we might suppose that such an impression obtained among the crowd, for, like the besotted children of Israel, they are ready to bow down in their idolatry and worship even a calf, if it has but the glitter of gold. This has been the sin and the folly of our land, and God is visiting us, as a nation, with his judgments.—Whatever we may think of second causes, there is a cause which lies back of them all, and directs them all; and it is time for the people to learn that riches never make a part of the man. They can soon be stripped off, and if you wish to know what *the man himself* is, you must strip them off, and look into his mind, and look into his heart. You are to judge of the man by what you find *there*. You are to lay aside the outward show, the tinsel and the ornaments; throw them all off, and then in excellence of heart, in power of thought, in dignity of spirit, in elevation and grandeur of soul, what have you left? that is *the man*. So common sense, and so the religion of the gospel, teaches us to value men, by what *they are*, not by what *they have*. And therefore it offers to us its instructions and its admonitions to seek those riches in wisdom and moral excellence, which shall endure—something which shall indeed be a part of ourselves, and it thunders its anathemas upon the man and the people, who make gold their god.

But, gentlemen, I have already trespassed upon your patience, and therefore, in conclusion, I pass on briefly to consider our special need of Christian patriots, from the influence which our country is to exert over the future destiny of the world. It is already a matter of doubt with many whether we can succeed—whether men are competent, on republican principles, to govern themselves. The eyes of the world are upon us. If we fail, despots and tyrants will rejoice at our fall, but the lovers of liberty—of enlightened liberty—the lovers of humanity and sound morals will come and weep over our grave. It becomes every American to know and feel, therefore, that the cause of his country is the cause of the world; and that every man, while he resists not the movings of more expanded benevolence, is bound especially to look to

his own native land ; here he must employ his principal means and throw his example and his efforts on the side of that religion which “ exalteth a nation.”

Christians must take a deeper interest in this matter. They must bear their part with a meek and gentle, but decided spirit, in the political affairs of their country. Not as noisy, intriguing, office seeking, nor party serving politicians, but as *Christians*. Their influence, as such, must be felt in all the walks and relations of life, and in *the ballot box*, too, as well as that of others. Away with the *cant* and ridiculous rodomontade of a union between “ church and state.” Our constitution very wisely recognizes no such union, but it very wisely no where forbids the rights of citizenship to Christians—nor does it, either in letter or spirit, prohibit the full exercise of their Christian influence and efforts.

We here see also the absurdity of that popular prejudice which precludes worthy and intelligent Christians from our public offices. As though their belief in the great and solemn truths of our holy religion disqualified them for any public trust. As though religion was opposed to correct principles of civil government, and to that moral integrity which aims to promote the public good. On the contrary, we here see the vast importance of raising the influence of Christianity throughout our land. Of seeking out the educated and competent Christian, from his humble and modest retirement, and of clothing him with the honors of office, who, like the father of his country, will impart as much as he receives, and, with the good of his country in view, will follow out the maxim, “ *Non laudem quaero, nec culpam timeo.*”

We here see also the necessity of diffusing the knowledge and the pure principles of Christianity. It must be evident to every reflecting mind, that to us, as a nation, religion is of peculiar importance. There is no government on earth in which it is so essential to success. With religion, enlightened, and pure and practical, it must prove the best which has ever been established—but without it, it needs no prophetic vision to foresee that it will prove the worst. The very fact, that the power is thrown into the hands of the people, shows us

the greater necessity of diffusing intelligence and sound morality, that their power may be wisely and honestly exerted. The spirit of religion will teach us how to appreciate and improve our liberty, but *liberty without religion is a dangerous thing*; and the more you remove or diminish the restraint of executive authority, unless you supply its place by intelligence and moral worth, the more you open the way for ignorance and corruption. We ought to remember, therefore, that unless we properly improve our liberties—unless we double our diligence in extending the knowledge of truth and the love of virtue among the people—unless we fortify our cities, and villages, and country towns, with libraries of useful and moral books, easy of access to the community—unless we see to our common and higher schools—to the character and competency of our instructors, and increase their numbers—unless we furnish our own destitute places with those who shall proclaim the truths of the gospel—unless we revere the Sabbath and the Sanctuary of God—unless we encourage, and aid, and multiply our Sabbath schools, and guard the instruction of our children and youth, and give free course to the word of life; in one word, unless religion is more widely diffused, and felt through our land, our very liberties will prove “savors of death unto death,” and, in letters of blood, the page of history shall record, for all future ages, that *the American revolution was a curse instead of a blessing to mankind*. We rejoice in our independence, and it is right that we should, but let us not forget, that we are *dependent* still. Oh, yes! there is an arm above—the arm of a just and a holy God, which, in one moment can cast all our boasted glory in the dust and make us “a reproach and a by-word in all the earth.” And, gentlemen, *nothing can save us but the religion of Jesus Christ*. Take away these precious truths, or let the public mind remain in ignorance, and what have you done? Have you not torn away the strongest inducements to virtue, and let loose upon the world the ferocious and desolating passions of the human heart? Have you not left the soul a doomed slave to its deep depravity? Have you not robbed innocence and benevolence of their dearest support

amid trials and sorrows? Have you not spread desolation and mourning over the land, and brought down upon it the curse of the Almighty? for he has declared "the nation that will not serve me shall perish."*

And now, gentlemen, I must close. The subject to which I have invited your attention is one of momentous importance in every respect. I regret that it has not had a more able advocate; but if my remarks shall only elicit your own future reflections, one important point will be gained.

The religion of the gospel however, gentlemen, has still higher and holier objects. It secures not only temporal, but also eternal honors and eternal peace; and I cannot close this address to you, the companions and friends of my early years, without pressing it upon your personal attention, as the only way of salvation for the wretched and the lost. How my heart rejoices in the wonders which God has been, and is still working in this, the city of my birth, and especially among the children of this, my *Alma Mater*. With the exception of nine only, we are permitted to trust that all who are still under her fostering wings, within the last few months, have been brought by experience to taste the preciousness of a Saviour's love; and many of her sons, who have gone out from her side, but have still shared in her interest and her prayers, have also been convinced of the truth and the blessedness of the gospel of Christ. Let me cast in my mite of encouragement to such of you, my friends and my brothers. Rejoice in the Lord "who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Be his, entirely, and always his, and "be strong in the power of his might." Commence your Christian life with a high standard of personal consecration; and by habitual watchfulness, devotion, spirituality, and prayer, let your future career be like "the path of the just, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Lean continually upon Jesus Christ, and he will sustain you; put your trust in him, and he will never disappoint you; give your warmest love to him, and he will never deceive you.

* Isaiah lx. 12.

And why are there any who still reject his invitations? Why, amid these displays of his mercy and his grace, should a single one resist the Holy Ghost, and perish? Oh! come to Christ,—“the spirit and the bride say come—and let him that heareth say, come—and let him that is athirst, come.” Let the guilty and the hopeless, come—let the heavy laden and the broken hearted, come—let the deceived, the deluded, the despairing, come—let the joyless and the friendless, come—let the prodigal, come—let the penitent and the humble, come. Let the ambitious renounce their vain hopes, and come—let the proud forsake their high thoughts, and come—let the worldly break away from their perishing idols, and come,—come, and receive pardon—come, and find peace—come, and accept “the gift of God,”—*eternal life*. My friends, my brothers, come to Jesus Christ—come—come—come.

We must now separate, perhaps forever. The world is before us, and while we live, and after we are dead, our influence in it must be felt. Let each and all of us, therefore, by every means in our power, devote ourselves to the advancement of that religion, which is so necessary to our country's good—to the temporal and eternal happiness of our fellow men, and so essential to our own. We must now enter the busy scenes of the world—we are to mingle with its dying, yet immortal inhabitants. But our journey must soon be over, and then, however diversified or distant the ways we pursue, we shall meet again, at the bar of our common Judge. Oh may it be a meeting of happiness and love; and may the friendships of earth be then continued and consummated in Heaven.

